

CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this book I told the story of meeting a three-year-old orphan on a road lined with huts filled with the Rwandan dead. I still think of that little boy, who if he lived would be a teenager as I write. What has happened to him, and the tens of thousands of other orphans of the genocide? Did he survive? Was he reunited with any members of his family, or was he raised in one of Rwanda's overcrowded orphanages? Did anyone care for him and love him for himself, or was he raised with hate and anger defining his young life? Did he find it in himself to forgive the perpetrators of the genocide? Or did he fall prey to ethnic hate propaganda and the desire for retribution and take his part in perpetuating the cycle of violence? Did he become yet another child soldier in the region's wars?

When I think about the consequences of the Rwandan genocide, I think first of all of those who died an agonizing death from machete wounds inside the hundreds of sweltering churches, chapels and missions where they'd gone to seek God's protection and ended instead in the arms of Lucifer. I think of the more than 300,000 children who were killed, and of those children who became killers in a perversion of any culture's idea of childhood. Then I think of the children who survived, orphaned by the genocide and the ongoing conflict in the region—since 1994, they have been effectively abandoned by us as we abandoned their parents in the killing fields of Rwanda.

When we remember the Rwandan genocide, we also have to recognize the living hell these children inherited. My work after the genocide has intimately acquainted me with the circumstances in which the children

of genocide and civil war are forced to survive. In December 2001, as part of my duties as special adviser on war-affected children to the minister responsible for CIDA, I conducted a field visit to Sierra Leone to get first-hand information on the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers and bush wives—children who had been abducted from their families and had then fought for several years as part of the once powerful rebel force, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). I travelled deep into the heart of rebel territory, near the towns of Kailahun and Daru in the far eastern sector of the country. I remember a visit that my small team, which included retired Major Phil Lancaster, made to the local demobilization centre. Sitting down with a group of the boys, all around thirteen years of age, we were soon discussing tactics, bush life and the brutality of civil war. They were only a few days into the retraining process, and they fervently hoped—now that they were permitted to hope—that they had a promising future in a country that could sustain peace. But, talking with them, it was clear that if things did not work out in the camp, they would return to the free and violent life of terrorism in the bush, where they would carry on taking what they wanted by force. The rehabilitation and reintegration period was scheduled to last at best three months, and they wanted to know what would happen next. Who would pick up the ball? Certainly not their families or communities, who had yet to accept them back, nor their devastated country in which teachers and other educated persons and potential leaders had been a favourite assassination target. Abducted at nine or even younger, a number of these boys had become RUF platoon commanders, and in terms of experience they were thirteen going on twenty-five; if laying down their weapons meant they had no future except to join thousands of others in displaced and refugee camps that dotted the countryside, they would not countenance it. Some of them were running camps within the camps for the younger children; if these combat-tested leaders were not specifically targeted for advanced education and social development programs, they would surely lead the children back into the bush. Simple, well-intentioned Dick-and-Jane schooling was not going to be enough to meet their needs.

Even worse off were the girls, who were much shyer about coming

forward for help. Many of them had serious medical problems caused by rape, early child-bearing and unassisted births. Their state of health was appalling. A high proportion had been infected with HIV/AIDS by the male adults in the rebel army, and were so emotionally scarred and so inexperienced with "normal" life that it was difficult for them to care properly for their children. Where would they find the necessary love to give their babies when they could not remember ever having received it themselves? In time, the boys were generally accepted back into the community, but the girls were often shunned and abandoned, since in this male-dominated culture they were considered to have been permanently sullied by the uses to which the soldiers had put them. If they tried to go home, they and their children became outcasts in their communities; if they went to the displaced and refugee camps, they again became the prey of adult males. Some of the girls had fought or held considerable responsibilities in the rebel formations; if properly supported, there was a chance they could become leaders—the forerunners of change on the gender-equality front. The demobilization and reintegration camps were their best chance, which was nearly no chance at all, especially if the aid community didn't get behind them and help.

This was the fate that may have awaited the boy on the Rwandan road; the fate all the children of the Rwandan genocide would have been lucky to avoid. These disordered, violent and throwaway young lives—and the consequences of the waste of these lives on their homelands, and inevitably on the rest of the world—are the best argument to vigorously act to prevent future Rwandas.

Too many parties have focused on pointing the finger at others, beyond the perpetrators, as the scapegoats for our common failure in Rwanda. Some say that the example of Rwanda proves that the UN is an irrelevant, corrupt, decadent institution that has outlived its usefulness or even its ability to conduct conflict resolution. Others have blamed the Permanent Five of the Security Council, especially the United States and France, for failing to see beyond their own national self-interest to lead or even support international intervention to stop the genocide. Some have blamed the media for not telling the story, the NGOs for not

reacting quickly and effectively enough, the peacekeepers for not showing more resolve, and myself for failing in my mission. When I began this book, I was tempted to make it an anatomy of my personal failures, which I was finally persuaded would be missing the point.

I have witnessed and also suffered my share of recriminations and accusations, politically motivated "investigations" and courts martial, Monday-morning quarterbacking, revisionism and outright lies since I got back to Canada in September 1994—none of that will bring back the dead or point the way forward to a peaceful future. Instead, we need to study how the genocide happened not from the perspective of assigning blame—there is too much to go around—but from the perspective of how we are going to take concrete steps to prevent such a thing from ever happening again. To properly mourn the dead and respect the potential of the living, we need accountability, not blame. We need to eliminate from this earth the impunity with which the génocidaires were able to act, and re-emphasize the principle of justice for all, so that no one for even a moment will make the ethical and moral mistake of ranking some humans as more human than others, a mistake that the international community endorsed by its indifference in 1994.

There is no doubt that the toxic ethnic extremism that infected Rwanda was a deep-rooted and formidable foe, built from colonial discrimination and exclusion, personal vendettas, refugee life, envy, racism, power plays, *coups d'état* and the deep rifts of civil war. In Rwanda both sides of the civil war fostered extremism. The fanatical far right of the Hutu ethnicity was concentrated in the MRND and its vicious wing in the CDR party, and was nurtured by an inner circle around the president, Juvénal Habyarimana, and his wife. The Tutsis also had their hard-liners, in the persons of some of the embittered refugees of the 1959 revolution, and sons and daughters raised in the poverty and double standards of Uganda, permanently gazing across the border to a homeland denied to them until they took it by force; among them also were vengeful Hutus who had been abused by the Habyarimana regime.

Together these extremists created the climate in which a slaughterer of an entire ethnicity could be dreamed up—an attempt to annihilate

every Tutsi who had a claim on Rwanda, carried out by Rwandans on Rwandans. The violent extremism was nurtured over decades of an armed peace, but it could have been controlled or even eradicated before Hutu Power enacted its "final solution." Through our indifference, squabbling, distraction and delays, we lost a great many opportunities to destabilize the génocidaires and derail the genocide. I can easily delineate the factors that might have guaranteed our success, beginning with having the political and cultural savvy from the start to ensure an effective military and civilian police presence on the ground in Rwanda as soon as the Arusha Peace Agreement was signed; providing UNAMIR with hard intelligence on the ex-belligerents' intentions, ambitions and goals so that we didn't have to fumble in the dark; providing the mission with the political and diplomatic muscle to outmanoeuvre the hard-liners and also to push the RPF into a few timely concessions; reasonable administrative and logistical support of the mission; a few more well-trained and properly equipped battalions on the ground; a more liberal and forceful application of the mandate; and to bring it all off, a budget increase of only about US\$100 million.

Could we have prevented the resumption of the civil war and the genocide? The short answer is yes. If UNAMIR had received the modest increase of troops and capabilities we requested in the first week, could we have stopped the killings? Yes, absolutely. Would we have risked more UN casualties? Yes, but surely soldiers and peacekeeping nations should be prepared to pay the price of safeguarding human life and human rights. If UNAMIR 2 had been deployed on time and as requested, would we have reduced the prolonged period of killing? Yes, we would have stopped it much sooner.

If we had chosen to enhance the capabilities of UNAMIR in these ways, we could have wrested the initiative from the ex-belligerents in reasonably short order and stymied the aggression for enough time to expose and weaken the "third force." I truly believe the missing piece in the puzzle was the political will from France and the United States to make the Arusha accords work and ultimately move this imploding nation toward democracy and a lasting peace. There is no doubt that those two countries possessed the solution to the Rwandan crisis.

Let there be no doubt: the Rwandan genocide was the ultimate responsibility of those Rwandans who planned, ordered, supervised and eventually conducted it. Their extremism was the seemingly indelible and ugly harvest of years of power struggles and insecurity that had been deftly played upon by their former colonial rulers. But the deaths of Rwandans can also be laid at the door of the military genius Paul Kagame, who did not speed up his campaign when the scale of the genocide became clear and even talked candidly with me at several points about the price his fellow Tutsis might have to pay for the cause. Next in line when it comes to responsibility are France, which moved in too late and ended up protecting the génocidaires and permanently destabilizing the region, and the U.S. government, which actively worked against an effective UNAMIR and only got involved to aid the same Hutu refugee population and the génocidaires, leaving the genocide survivors to flounder and suffer. The failings of the UN and Belgium were not in the same league.

My own *mea culpa* is this: as the person charged with the military leadership of UNAMIR, I was unable to persuade the international community that this tiny, poor, overpopulated country and its people were worth saving from the horror of genocide—even when the measures needed for success were relatively small. How much of that inability was linked to my inexperience? Why was I chosen to lead UNAMIR? My experience was in training Canadian peacekeepers to go into classic Cold War-style conflicts; I had never been in the field as a peacekeeper myself. I had no political expertise, and no background or training in African affairs or manoeuvring in the weeds of ethnic conflicts in which hate trumps reason. I had no way to gauge the duplicity of the ex-belligerents. The professional development of senior officers in matters of classic peacekeeping, let alone in the thickets of the post-modern version (which I prefer to call conflict resolution), has often been reduced to throwing officers into situations and seeing whether they can cope. While the numbers of UN troop-contributing nations has increased well beyond the more traditional contributors (among which Canada was a major player), there are still no essential prerequisites of formal education and training for the job. As the conflicts grow increasingly ugly and

complex and the mandates fuzzy and restrictive, you end up with more force commanders like myself, whose technical and experiential limitations were so clear. There will continue to be a need for UN-led missions and these missions will continue to increase in complexity as well as have more international impact. As a global community, it is crucial that we develop an international pool of multidisciplinary, multi-skilled and humanitarian senior leaders to fill these force commander billets.

Still, at its heart, the Rwandan story is the story of the failure of humanity to heed a call for help from an endangered people.

The international community, of which the UN is only a symbol, failed to move beyond self-interest for the sake of Rwanda. While most nations agreed that something should be done, they all had an excuse why they should not be the ones to do it. As a result, the UN was denied the political will and material means to prevent the tragedy.

Like many governments and NGOs, the UN more or less muddled through the tumultuous 1990s, a decade marred by the proliferation of armed conflicts that defied the codes of former wars. My own country, Canada, was carried by altruistic impulses into operations in places such as the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Cambodia and Mozambique. During the Cold War, peacekeeping missions generally monitored the implementation of peace agreements and prevented isolated incidents from leading to a resumption of conflict. In the nineties the focus shifted: the mission aim was to bring about a form of order, whether it be a system of humanitarian relief or an agreement forced on warring factions. UNAMIR started out as a classic Cold War-style peacekeeping mission but then found itself in the middle of a civil war and genocide. In all these situations, a humanitarian catastrophe was either the catalyst for the security problem or the result of it. Displaced and refugee populations were on the move, in numbers rarely ever witnessed, and were prey to extremists, warlords and armed bandits. More often than not, peacekeeping missions had to make ad hoc responses, mounting tardy attempts to assist in the resolution of both the conflicts and the humanitarian crises.

How do we pick and choose where to get involved? Canada and

other peacekeeping nations have become accustomed to acting if, and only if, international public opinion will support them—a dangerous path that leads to a moral relativism in which a country risks losing sight of the difference between good and evil, a concept that some players on the international stage view as outmoded. Some governments regard the use of force itself as the greatest evil. Others define “good” as the pursuit of human rights and will opt to employ force when human rights are violated. As the nineties drew to a close and the new millennium dawned with no sign of an end to these ugly little wars, it was as if each troubling conflict we were faced with had to pass the test of whether we could “care” about it or “identify” with the victims before we’d get involved. Each mission was judged as to whether it was “worth” risking soldiers’ lives and a nation’s resources. As Michael Ignatieff has warned us, “riskless warfare in pursuit of human rights is a moral contradiction. The concept of human rights assumes that all human life is of equal value. Risk-free warfare presumes that our lives matter more than those we are intervening to save.” On the basis of my experience as force commander in Rwanda, *jàcasse*.

We have fallen back on the yardstick of national self-interest to measure which portions of the planet we allow ourselves to be concerned about. In the twenty-first century, we cannot afford to tolerate a single failed state, ruled by ruthless and self-serving dictators, arming and brainwashing a generation of potential warriors to export mayhem and terror around the world. Rwanda was a warning to us all of what lies in store if we continue to ignore human rights, human security and abject poverty. The tens of millions of three-year-olds like the one I met on that Rwandan road deserve and must have nothing less than a chance at life as a human being and not as someone’s slave, vassal, chattel, or expendable pawn.

Are there any signs that we are prepared to take the higher road in international human relations? Not many. Look at the conflict that has engulfed the whole Great Lakes region of central Africa since the genocide. In September 1994, when I returned to New York for a debriefing after my mission, I arrived determined to argue one last time for Homeward Bound, my operational plan, which I personally presented to the Secretariat, to

the troop-contributing nations and to the media. UNAMIR 2 was designed to support the swift return of the more than 2 million refugees hunkered down in camps within kilometres of the Rwandan border, as well as to move 1.7 million internally displaced persons in the HPZ toward their homes. NGOs, UN agencies and the RPF would be called upon to sort out resources and the fair redistribution of land and homes, while UNAMIR 2 would guarantee the security and coordination of the return journey. With Shaharar Khan's full support, I lobbied extensively to persuade people of the necessity of the exercise: the refugees could not be allowed to settle into the camps or disaster would follow. We needed to separate the displaced Rwandans from the génocidaires—arresting the perpetrators so they would face justice—and then get the Rwandans back to Rwanda.

We needed to mount this operation or face the consequences, I argued. The two million Rwandan refugees in neighbouring nations, still suffering in horrendous conditions in refugee camps under the thumb of the génocidaires, living on the scraps of international conscience, with no voice and little hope, were the fuel that could ignite the entire Great Lakes region of central Africa into an even larger catastrophe than the Rwandan genocide.

At the meeting of the troop-contributing nations, the French ambassador to the UN rose as soon as I had finished speaking, and pronounced my plan unworkable. He left before hearing my response. His attitude infected the other nations, who as a result suffered severe cold feet on account of the admittedly risky nature of my plan. Ultimately, however, it was the apathy of the United States, whose conscience had apparently been satisfied with the over-aid effort to Goma, that once again stifled any urge to act. From 1994 to 1996, the génocidaires in those camps launched raids in Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. In 1996, Rwanda's RPF regime invaded Zaire in retaliation and forced most of the refugees to return home. Hundreds of thousands of others perished on the roads and in the jungles of the Kivu region, once again running from the RPF.

The result has been a continuing regional war. From the Rwandan exodus in 1994 until genocide broke out once again in 2003, it has

been estimated that four million human beings have died in the Congo and the Great Lakes region and, until very recently, the world did nothing except to send an undermanned and poorly resourced peacekeeping mission. Five times the number murdered in Rwanda in 1994 have died and, once again, only when the television cameras of the world captured the event were nations embarrassed into sending a half-hearted temporary mission to try and stop the killing. For the veterans and survivors of Rwanda, watching the recent events in the Congo has been like watching an instant replay of the horror we lived in 1994—only worse. It is heart-rendingly obvious that a decade after the disaster in Rwanda, we are once again witnessing human destruction on a grand scale, which is inspiring the same Pontius Pilate reaction from the developed world. The only difference this time is that the international media have been far more aggressive than they were in 1994 (whether because of the recent memory of Rwanda's genocide or the need to fill the proliferating twenty-four-hour news channels) and have been able to move public opinion. However, the mission, from its conception, has suffered the same financial, logistical and political deficiencies that UNAMIR faced in Rwanda. And as in Rwanda, once again France is sending in troops, ostensibly to keep the peace, but also insisting that they be kept outside of the UN command structure. They do not want to be curtailed in their initiatives and actions on the ground by the overly restrictive and still ad hoc DPKO military command structure, and I acknowledge that there is some wisdom in that. But the downside is that the new French intervention in central Africa is another example of the First World's growing tendency to work around the UN and take action either unilaterally or in concert with a small coalition to impose its will on others—which does absolutely nothing to reform or strengthen the UN's capacity to resolve conflicts that threaten international peace and security. The authority of the UN to conduct conflict resolution is being eroded, not strengthened.

What is the reason for this *marche seul* by the developed nations? In the last decades of the twentieth century, self-interest, sovereignty and taking care of number one became the primary criteria for any serious provision of support or resources to the globe's trouble spots. If the

country in question is of any possible strategic value to the world powers, then it seems that everything from covert operations to the outright use of overwhelming force is fair game. If it is not, indifference is the order of the day.

To imagine that these same world powers have magically leapt ahead in this new age of humanity (as Kofi Annan named it in his seminal speech at the millennium UN general assembly in September 2000) could not be further from the truth. It will take the world's dedicated will and means to move from the twentieth century—the century of genocide—to the century of humanity.

Although often couched in the empathetic phrases of humanitarian aid and of supporting the right of persons to be free from tyranny, ephemeral interventions and relief efforts tend to dry up as soon as CNN puts yet another disaster on prime time to capture the fickle heart of the international community. Though I too can criticize the effectiveness of the UN, the only solution to this unacceptable apathy and selective attention is a revitalized and reformed international institution charged with maintaining the world's peace and security, supported by the international community and guided by the founding principles of its Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UN must undergo a renaissance if it is to be involved in conflict resolution. This is not limited to the Secretariat, its administration and bureaucrats, but must encompass the member nations, who need to rethink their roles and recommit to a renewal of purpose. Otherwise the hope that we will ever truly enter an age of humanity will die as the UN continues to decline into irrelevance.

At the Canadian Forces Peace Support Training Centre, teachers use a slide to explain to Canadian soldiers the nature of our world. If the entire population of the planet is represented by one hundred people, fifty-seven live in Asia, twenty-one in Europe, fourteen in North and South America, and eight in Africa. The numbers of Asians and Africans are increasing every year while the number of Europeans and North Americans is decreasing. Fifty percent of the wealth of the world is in the hands of six people, all of whom are American. Seventy people

are unable to read or write. Fifty suffer from malnutrition due to insufficient nutrition. Thirty-five do not have access to safe drinking water. Eighty live in sub-standard housing. Only one has a university or college education. Most of the population of the globe live in substantially different circumstances than those we in the First World take for granted.

But many signs point to the fact that the youth of the Third World will no longer tolerate living in circumstances that give them no hope for the future. From the young boys I met in the demobilization camps in Sierra Leone to the suicide bombers of Palestine and Chechnya, to the young terrorists who fly planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, we can no longer afford to ignore them. We have to take concrete steps to remove the causes of their rage, or we have to be prepared to suffer the consequences.

The global village is deteriorating at a rapid pace, and in the children of the world the result is rage. It is the rage I saw in the eyes of the teenage Interahamwe militiamen in Rwanda, it is the rage I sensed in the hearts of the children of Sierra Leone, it is the rage I felt in crowds of ordinary civilians in Rwanda, and it is the rage that resulted in September 11. Human beings who have no rights, no security, no future, no hope and no means to survive are a desperate group who will do desperate things to take what they believe they need and deserve.

If September 11 taught us that we have to fight and win the "war on terrorism," it should also have taught us that if we do not immediately address the underlying (even if misguided) causes of those young terrorists' rage, we will not win the war. For every al-Qaeda bomber that we kill there will be a thousand more volunteers from all over the earth to take his place. In the next decade, terrorists will acquire weapons of mass destruction. It is only a matter of time until a brilliant young chemist or smuggler obtains a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon and uses it to satisfy his very personal rage against us.

Where does this rage come from? This book has demonstrated some of the causes. A heightened tribalism, the absence of human rights, economic collapses, brutal and corrupt military dictatorships, the AIDS pandemic, the effect of debt on nations, environmental degradation,

overpopulation, poverty, hunger: the list goes on and on. Each of these and so many other reasons can lead directly to a people having no hope for the future and being forced in their poverty and despair to resort to violence just to survive. This lack of hope in the future is the root cause of rage. If we cannot provide hope for the untold masses of the world, then the future will be nothing but a repeat of Rwanda, Sierra Leone, the Congo and September 11.

Several times in this book I have asked the question, "Are we all human, or are some more human than others?" Certainly we in the developed world act in a way that suggests we believe that our lives are worth more than the lives of other citizens of the planet. An American officer felt no shame as he informed me that the lives of 800,000 Rwandans were only worth risking the lives of ten American troops; the Belgians, after losing ten soldiers, insisted that the lives of Rwandans were not worth risking another single Belgian soldier. The only conclusion I can reach is that we are in desperate need of a transfusion of humanity. If we believe that all humans are human, then how are we going to prove it? It can only be proven through our actions. Through the dollars we are prepared to expend to improve conditions in the Third World, through the time and energy we devote to solving devastating problems like AIDS, through the lives of our soldiers, which we are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of humanity.

As soldiers we have been used to moving mountains to protect our own sovereignty or risks to our way of life. In the future we must be prepared to move beyond national self-interest to spend our resources and spill our blood for humanity. We have lived through centuries of enlightenment, reason, revolution, industrialization, and globalization. No matter how idealistic the aim sounds, this new century must become the Century of Humanity, when we as human beings rise above race, creed, colour, religion and national self-interest and put the good of humanity above the good of our own tribe. For the sake of the children and of our future. *Peux ce que veux. Allons-y*

GLOSSARY

5ième Brigade-Group 5th Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (CMBG), an all-arms francophone formation, based in Valcartier, Quebec

5ième Régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada (5 RALC) The francophone artillery regiment of the Canadian Army, Regular Force, based in Valcartier, Quebec, which General Dallaire joined and later commanded

ACABQ or Fifth Committee The UN General Assembly Committee, which meets in private closed session to establish and approve the budgets of peace-keeping missions

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Adinkra, CO Ghanaian Battalion advance party A small, select group of officers that is deployed prior to a main body to handle operation and administrative matters that will facilitate the deployment of the main body (mission)

Madame Agathe Agathe Uwilingiyimana, prime minister of the interim government

Aide-de-camp An officer assigned as personal assistant to a senior commander

Akagera Park (also known as Kagera Park) The last refuge of grassland wildlife in northeastern Rwanda. Due to its remote location, the only RGF camp in the area at Gahiro was a site suspected as a training centre for the Interahamwe. Also known as A'Kagera Park

Akagera River The river that divides Rwanda from Tanzania and flows into Lake Victoria

General Jean Victor Allard A famous World War II hero and subsequent Canadian CDS

Amahoro Stadium Complex consisting of a stadium, training facilities, parking lot and an athletes' hotel located in the east end of Kigali; was the location of the UNAMIR headquarters. Amahoro means peace in Kinyarwanda