The downing of the President’s plane on 6th April 1994 was the spark that ignited a long planned genocide. 12 were killed on the plane, including three French pilots/staff (the private jet had been a gift from France to Habyarimana), a million more would die over the next 100 days.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A:** Suspects Identified **at the Time** | | | | |
| **Accused** | **By Whom** | | **How likely? Value & Limitations of Accusers?** | |
| Belgium / Belgian Peacekeepers | RTLM and Mobutu (President of Zaire, affiliated with Hutu Power elements). They rightly said Belgian Peacekeepers were near the airport. They maintained that this was part of a wider Belgian plot to destabilise the whole region | |  | |
| Extremist Hutu Elements within the army | Belgium. The Belgian government, acting on intel from its peacekeepers, argued that the culprit was Hutu Power extremists within the army who wanted the peace talks to fail and force the genocide. It was claimed they were led by Bagosora, chief of staff in the Ministry of Defence, who had stormed out of the Arusha Accords negotiations in order to “prepare for the apocalypse”. | |  | |
| RPF | The French government. The French ambassador initially accused the RPF who (they claimed) hoped that the Hutu extremists would attack the RPF in response – this would give the RPF the excuse to re-open the civil war. | |  | |
| Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana with help from Belgium | Habyarimana’s widow (who immediately left to France) claimed that this was a simple coup by PM Uwilingiyimana to take power from the president. The Belgian’s were also implicated in this story as they were in charge of the airport. This was supported by the Head of the MRND at the time. | |  | |
| The French | Jean Kambanda, interim leader of the government after the assassination. He did not tell this story until after the genocide and when he was living safely in exile in Zaire. However, it is supported by a range of circumstantial evidence and was voiced by some at the time:   1. Eye witnesses reported seeing white men on Masaka hill with the presidential guard near the airport. 2. Within hours a top French minister and friend of Mitterrand was found dead in his office in Paris with two bullets in his head – there was no suicide note 3. The French had interfered in favour of the Hutu regularly against the RPF – perhaps it was in there interests to try and install a stronger Hutu leader (or worse!) 4. The French did not begin an investigation for 10 years (despite three French citizens being on the plane) – their investigators focused only on members of the then Rwandan government (i.e. members of the RPF at the time). | |  | |
| **B. HARDTALK INTERVIEW WITH KAGAME – GUILTY?** | | | |
| **Evidence from the interview that he was responsible?** | | **Evidence he was not responsible?** | |
|  | |  | |

**C. Plan your answers** to the questions on the source sheet. You will not have time to fully write them all up, but refer to the technique sheet on the Weebly if you need help with expectations.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **What evidence does Source C offer to support the claim that Paul Kagame’s rebels were responsible for the shooting down of the presidential aircraft? (2 marks)** |
|  |
| 1. **What do the maps in Source E indicate about the likely source of the missiles that shot down the presidential aircraft? (3 marks)** |
|  |
| **2. Compare and Contrast the reasons given in Sources D and E for believing that foreign elements were responsible for the assassination of the two heads of state. (4 marks)** |
|  |
| **3. With reference to origins, purpose and content, assess the values and limitations of Source D for historians studying who was responsible for bringing down the president’s aircraft. (6 marks)** |
|  |
| **4. Using the sources and your own knowledge, how far do you agree with the claim that those responsible for the death of the two presidents came from within Rwanda itself? (9 marks)** |
|  |

D. Do you agree with the Mutsinzi Commission’s 2007 findings? Assess the values and limitations of their findings.