

Washington is careening toward a debacle in Africa policy

by Linda de Hoyos

It is becoming increasingly recognized among those who make policy for the United States toward Africa, that the attempt to hitch the Clinton administration's "partnership" with that great continent to the "new breed" of African leaders in East Africa, is a failed policy. On the most basic level, the members of the "new breed"—Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, Rwandan Vice President Paul Kagame, and Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila—by their very character as military dictators, violate the stated principles of U.S. foreign policy. The bloc is already falling to pieces, with a new war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and a highly publicized falling out between Uganda's Museveni and his erstwhile puppet Laurent Kabila. Efforts on the part of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice and Rwanda's Kagame to patch together the Eritrean-Ethiopian alliance against Sudan have so far failed, and are not expected to succeed. But the more serious problem for U.S. foreign policy in Africa lies to the south, in the environs of the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.), in the northern provinces of Rwanda, and the rural districts of Burundi. For it is here, *where genocide continues to the present moment*, that American foreign policy toward Africa is being discredited for many years to come.

To those policymakers in Washington who recognize the debacle but do not want to change the axiomatics of the policy, the failure centers around the embarrassing antics of Congo President Kabila. For those who had honestly hoped that Kabila would usher in democracy, after the long dictatorship of President Mobutu Sese Seku, the Kabila regime has proved a bitter disappointment. For others, it is Kabila's failure to offer even a modicum of cooperation to bring foreign investment into the country, and his outlandish demands for extortion to those who seek to come into the D.R.C., as in the case of American Mineral Fields, that has made him a liability.

Thus, it is likely that with the expected June 22 release by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan of some version of the UN investigation team's results, the blame for the mass murder during the Zaire war will be pinned on Kabila. The drumbeat is building in the Western press for a more suitable substitute, and even Roger Winter of the U.S. Committee of Refugees, who was with Kabila on the ground when Kabila's troops, along with the Rwandan and Ugandan armies, massacred the refugees at the Mugungu camp in November 1996,

are castigating the man.

A new face in Kinshasa, however, will not alleviate the debacle toward which U.S. policy toward Africa is now speeding. For all the while, the Rwandan and Ugandan grip on the regime in Kinshasa is tightening, as their troops become further embroiled in unwinnable wars against insurgencies of resistance in Rwanda and the eastern provinces of the D.R.C., where the Ugandan-Rwandan regimes of Kagame and Museveni have carried out a brutal military occupation of the region, against the population's will.

The annexation of eastern Zaire by the combined forces of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, in violation of international law, is going "unnoticed" by the international community.

In 1996-97, American statesman Lyndon LaRouche warned the Clinton administration that unless it broke with the policy of the British Commonwealth for genocide by British-backed warlords in East Africa, it would be enmeshed in an "African quagmire" worse than that of Vietnam. This advice was not heeded.

Hence, although American investors—presumably for whose sake the U.S. policy was instituted—are shut out of Kabila's D.R.C., the eastern section of the country, where the Congo's mineral and agricultural wealth is located, is being annexed by Rwanda and Uganda, *as per the British Privy Council's decades-long policy for the splitting of the Congo along precisely those lines*. According to reliable sources, the gold from eastern Zaire's Kilimoto, mined by Barrick Gold, now goes to Museveni's Uganda—with no taxes or any other monies being paid to Kinshasa.

However, because the United States has officially and unequivocally pinned its policy toward Africa on the "new breed," beginning with Museveni and Kagame, while the British take the loot, at the end of the day—and that day is coming sooner rather than later—it is the United States that will take the blame for the genocide and war that continue to take place in these regions.

It is to be noted that the international press and the non-governmental organizations, as well as the United Nations, are barely active in the war zones of North and South Kivu and northern and central Rwanda. A military cordon sanitaire has been constructed around the region. Information is hard to come by; people tell their stories at their own risk. Many of the intellectuals, businessmen, and local leaders in both Rwanda and Kivu who would have the means and capability

to tell their stories, have been systematically silenced. The publicized arrests or murder of potential witnesses reporting to the UN investigation team point to a far wider pattern of “disappearances” throughout the region. Reports that surface of continued mass murder in these regions receive little if any publicity from the international press. The massacres are carried out, as the Nande Cultural Association states, “in the silence” (see *Documentation*).

Kampala and Kigali run the show

Although ministers in the Museveni and Kabila governments have exchanged diplomatic barbs, and there is talk of their division, first highlighted by the British Reuters wire service, for Congolese, on the ground, there is no division in policy between Kabila and his “puppet masters” in Kigali and Kampala. In Kinshasa, according to reliable sources, the appointment of Deogratias Bagera to the post of Minister to the President, indicates that this cohort of Kagame is “running the show there.” The chief of the Armed Forces remains James Kabari, a Rwandan coming from Uganda with the Rwandan Patriotic Front, who was forwarded to Kabila’s army by Kagame, as the Rwandan Defense Minister admitted in a July 1997 interview with the South African *Mail and Guardian*. Kabila’s arrest of several cabinet ministers on charges of speculation has only increased the power of the “Tutsis” in Kinshasa, centered around Bagera, Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha, and Minister of Education Kamara Rwakaikara.

The rearrangement of the cabinet has been preceded by a ruthless crackdown against all *Congolese* opposition forces, including the April 3 banning of Azadho, the Zairean human rights association, which had a long record of opposition to Mobutu, but which had reported on the atrocities against civilians during the Zaire war; the April 8 arrest of *Le Palmares* editor Michel Kadi Luya; the April 12 arrests of Rev. Paul Nsapu, president of the Voters League, and Sabin Banza, president of the Human Rights Now Committee; and the May 15 arrest of Pascal Kambale, vice president of the newly reorganized Azadho.

Meanwhile, on April 28, according to AFP, Kabila’s D.R.C. reached accords with Uganda and Burundi for a “joint strategy for putting our common enemies out of action,” according to Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji. This accord, in combination with the Rwandans, represents the determination to take brutal action to put down the resistance in Kivu. This resistance has been led by the Mai-Mai, comprised of two separate groups that had originally joined Kabila for the “liberation” of Zaire from Mobutu. Although the international press attempts to portray this resistance as coming from Mobutu’s old army, the Armed Forces of Zaire, and the Rwandan Interhamwe, the Mai-Mai represent a grassroots resistance to the seizure of their land and productive capabilities by the Rwandan-dominated administration and Rwandan troops. “They will not stop,” said one well-placed source. “The Congolese people will never permit the annexation of part of this country. There are many groups in the Congo. We have a

sense of nation; we will never permit it.”

That is the quagmire unleashed by London’s warlord policy for Africa; it is a quagmire that the Clinton administration can avoid only if it makes a hard about-face and cleans out the incompetents who have hooked U.S. policy to London’s killers Museveni and Kagame.

Investigate genocide in post-1994 Rwanda

On the morning of March 30, 1998, a pool report was distributed by the White House on the occasion of President Clinton’s visit to the African country of Botswana. Among the reports was an interview filed by Kathy Lewis of the *Dallas Morning News* with U.S. Ambassador Robert Krueger, current U.S. ambassador to Botswana, and former ambassador to Burundi. A political appointee, Krueger had reported publicly on the slaughter of Hutu villagers by the Burundian Tutsi military. His life had been threatened by the newspaper of former Tutsi dictator Jean Baptiste Bagaza, and during one tour of the countryside, Krueger’s convoy was attacked, and he narrowly escaped with his life. The Lewis interview focused on Botswana, but Krueger also commented on the situations in Rwanda and Burundi.

As Lewis reported on the interview:

“He [Krueger] said Paul Kagame and his ‘Rwanda Patriotic Force’ came in and drove out the Hutu army that was responsible for much of this slaughter. The Tutsis then went back, but revenge is an extremely virulent disease in Central Africa. And then began the counterslaughter of Hutus by the Tutsis in Rwanda, including the RPF forces.

“I visited countless refugee camps—every couple of weeks or so—these would be, then, Hutu refugees coming from Rwanda into Burundi. I always took along an expatriate British person, whom I knew would not be partial in translating.”

“Over time, he said, he interviewed hundreds of refugees.

“Their answer was always the same. They were living in these miserable little blue plastic hovels, that were only three and one-half feet high. Nobody could say you wanted to live there—it’s wet earth.

“They were all afraid to go home. . . . Some of them would go back and those who would go back either would never return, meaning they were killed, or some who did return would come back with stories of others, Hutus being slaughtered in their villages.

“You would have asked them when they would go back and they would tend to say, when the RPF is gone. A vast majority of these people are women and children. None in Burundi were engaged in guerrilla fighting. There were Tutsi Burundian armies in charge of all these camps. So I have

no reason to believe that the unanimous statements of these people were false.’

“Asked if he’s in a position to know if the RPF is still doing it, he said:

“ ‘If you had visited Auschwitz and then someone came to you and said there are reports of comparable camps elsewhere, have you seen them. If you have seen Auschwitz, you don’t have to see all the others to know what is going on. I don’t think that what is going on in terms of revenge is of the same scale in Rwanda now as what went on before. I am certain that it is not. But if you asked me what one can reasonably suppose took place in the former Zaire’ . . . ”

As Lewis reported, Krueger “also told a story about being at a missionary refugee camp New Year’s 1995 that was eight miles from the Rwandan border. He said they heard shooting all night long and about 275 refugees came over.

“ ‘They came in and said that the RPF had come in and was slaughtering their refugee camp on the Rwandan side of the border,’ he said.

“He said the UN reported 13 dead.

“He said some refugees said there were thousands killed and that he doesn’t know [if] there were thousands, but he knows it wasn’t 13.

“Krueger said he talked to someone at the State Department about it, who told him they were getting lots of different reports with lots of different numbers. ‘The fact that I was right there meant nothing to this particular desk officer who didn’t want to know about it,’ he said.”

Renewed campaigns in 1997

Krueger’s interview corroborates the charges made by former Rwandan Patriotic Front cabinet minister Seth Sendashonga in December 1995, when he left the Kigali regime, reporting that the RPF had murdered more than 300,000 people in the country since coming to power. Sendashonga was assassinated in Nairobi, Kenya, in April.

Accounts indicate that this murder campaign wound down during 1995-96. But with the return of approximately 600,000 refugees from eastern Zaire in the late months of 1996, murdering sprees in Rwanda carried out by the Rwandan Army became the norm again.

According to a report published by Amnesty International on Sept. 25, 1997, “Rwanda: Ending the Silence,” the following pattern was established:

“During January 1997, massacres began to be reported with increasing frequency. For example, on 4 January 1997, at least 55 people were reportedly killed by RPA soldiers in Nkumba commune, Ruhengeri, during a military search operation. . . . On 20 January 1997, RPA soldiers reportedly rounded up unarmed local residents during a military search operation in Nyamugali commune in Ruhengeri and killed 28 of them. . . . On 3 March 1997, at least 150 unarmed civilians, and possibly as many as 280, were killed by RPA soldiers in a military search operation in the communes of Kigombe, Nyakinama and Mukingo, Ruhengeri. . . . Between 9 and 11

May 1997, at least 1,430 civilians were reportedly killed by RPA soldiers in the sectors of Ryinyo, Kintobo, Gatore, Rukoma, Gitwa, Runigi, and Mukamira in Nkuli commune, in Ruhengeri. . . . Around the same period, 423 people were reportedly killed in neighboring Nyamutera commune. . . . From mid-May to mid-June 1997, hundreds of killings were reported from Cyabingo commune, Ruhengeri. . . .”

The significance of the report is the established pattern of RPA indiscriminate killing in northern Rwanda, where the citizenry is more than 90% Hutu. Since then, there have been more frequent reports — whose source is the Rwandan News Agency — of killings of civilians allegedly carried out by “Hutu extremists” in the same area. A low-intensity and very likely unstoppable war is now progressing throughout much of rural Rwanda.

One Rwandan source has reported that his family reports from home that “there are only two men left in my county” in Ruhengeri. The county would normally have 1,000 men. “They [the RPA] kill the strong ones, anyone who could resist, or anyone who could possibly report what is going on. Since early last year, people have been given a choice to either die in their homes, or to die fighting, and so many of them have chosen to fight, as there is nothing to lose.”

Documentation

Congo: slaughter in Kivu

In May, the Nande Cultural Association published a “Memorandum of the Nande People on the Multiple Massacres and Violations of Human Rights by Kabila and his Allies, in Beni, Butembo, and Kivu in general, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.” We print excerpts from the document:

From Feb. 20-23, a massacre of more than 300 civilians took place at Butembo, by the AFDL army of Kabila, supported by the Rwandan and Ugandan armies. . . . Under the pretext of pursuing the Mai-Mai who are reacting against the army’s extortions against the civilians, the army surrounded the city, ransacked all the homes, one by one, and killed all the young men they could find.

- From April 2-6, 1998, more than 40 civilians were killed in Beni, under the same pretext. . . .

- From April 14-18, 1998, the city of Butembo was again encircled by 6,000 soldiers from the AFDL, Rwandan and Ugandan armies. For four days, no one was permitted to enter or leave. All the radio and telephone communications were cut by the army. Massacres on a large scale are carried out in silence. . . .

This first accounting does include those who were killed in the outskirts of the town (notably: in the localities of Butuhe, Bunyuka, Vuhovi, Kyondo, Musienene, etc.), torching

whole villages, raping, looting, and massacring hundreds of villagers, according to a well-known technique and earlier practiced by the Rwandan army in Rwanda and in Masisi (see *Human Rights Periodical*, Report of AZADHO, #B021, banned in D.R. Congo, February 1998).

The precise ledger on these killings certainly will never be known, since human rights associations are prohibited. The searches carried out by the army were accompanied by systematic pillaging of the inhabitants' possessions. The troops demand money (in dollars!). Whole families were beaten up because they don't have the money demanded. All vehicles and goods of any value were carried off.

These killings, abductions, extortions, and looting continue to this day in Beni, Butembo, and in all the surrounding villages, and this, within a generalized indifference. If the international community does not react, the Nande people is on the way to being decimated according to a methodically prepared and executed plan by the AFDL army of Kabila, with the support of the Rwandan and Ugandan armies. . . .

There have been numerous arrests, followed by torture of the civilian population, among the customary chiefs, priests, intellectuals, and other leaders of the Nande population.

A dozen Nande leaders in Beni and Butembo have been arrested, tortured, and taken by the army to a destination, up to now unknown. Among them, we can cite:

- Mr. Kakule Matumo Kitswiri, Paul, Professor and Dean of the Political Science Faculty at the Catholic University of Graben in Butembo.
- Mr. Atshongia M. Kasereka, customary chief of the local Beni collectivity, at Mbau.
- Mr. Kapupa, customary chief of the Batangi group, at Mavivi.
- Mr. Kapisa, businessman in Beni.
- Mr. Ngolo, businessman in Butembo.

All are being charged and considered as heads of the Mai-Mai.

One example of these latest arbitrary arrests (Sunday, May 3) is that of Abbé Muholngu Appollinaire, Malumalu, Vice-Rector of the Catholic University of Graben, because he is one of the initiators of the *Wima* ("Stand Up") network, whose aim is to bring together social activists in the Butembo region on behalf of peace, development, and respect for human rights. The absurdity of his arrest hides the more diabolical intentions toward the Nande people, which Kabila helps to bring to their knees. . . .

- All the Nande customary chiefs and city fathers were called together and brought to the provincial capital, Goma, for supposed competency tests. Any chief who failed, would see himself automatically removed from his post and replaced. The present AFDL ruler would then name whomever he wished, with no regard for traditions in the matter.

- Remember, all the customary chiefs in the Masisi, Walikale, and Rutshuru territories have already been replaced, with the present Governor of Nord-Kivu (Mr. Kanyamu-

hanga) and the Rwandan army, by Rwandans who came right away from Rwanda with their herds. (cf. *Human Rights Periodical*, Report of AZADHO, #B021, February 1998, p. 15).

- Traditional warriors are forbidden to drill under pain of death.
- Prayer gatherings are forbidden, because they are considered gatherings to plot and overthrow the government.
- All family gatherings (such as wakes, children's communion) are forbidden.
- Any gathering of more than three persons is considered as being an enemy grouping, and is therefore forbidden.
- All hotels in the town of Butembo are shut.
- An order has gone out to all leaders of cities, localities, or neighborhoods to carry out a census of the population and to hand out special identification cards, as well as the national identity card. Any person without such a card is automatically a Mai-Mai, arrested and shot without further legal proceedings. . . .

These regimes, organized on an ethnic basis, seek to control a large portion of East and Central Africa, from Eritrea to Congo, by way of Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania (cf. Memorandum of March 14, 1998 addressed to the President of the United States of America by the collective Congolese opposition parties during his recent visit to Africa).

It is this urge for power and domination that impels them to occupy Kivu province in one way or another, with the cooperation of Kabila's AFDL in power in Kinshasa, following the secret accords passed at Lemera, Sud-Kivu between the latter and the three leaders of the above-cited countries. Following these accords, the occupation of Kivu was to take place over the ten years from 1998-2008, essentially in two phases.

The first phase of this occupation would be carried out by a forcible military occupation, in order to break any attempt at resistance among the local populations. These military operations would, in general, be justified on the pretext of hot pursuit of armed Hutu extremists (the Interhamwes), the genocidalists from Rwanda seeking refuge in Kivu province, and against the "Mai-Mai" groups presented as the latter's accomplices. This phase is under way today.

This would be followed by a second phase of transferring populations from Rwanda and Burundi into Kivu, giving them automatic Congolese nationality, taking into account their complicity with the AFDL rulers of Kabila in Kinshasa.

It is forecast that with the execution of such a plan, practically imposed on Mr. Kabila by the above-cited foreign countries, in exchange for their military support in the so-called liberation war in Congo, a plan for the implosion of the Democratic Republic of Congo is being readied. According to this plan, Katanga would fold up, undergoing a new secession; other provinces (notably the two Kaisai provinces) would do the same, leaving Kivu occupied by Rwanda and Burundi, as land to be peopled by these two countries.