

Northwest History Consortium

US State Department Foreign Policy:

US Inaction to the Rwandan Genocide of 1994

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12th Grade

National Standard

Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the present) / Standard 1

Standard 1: Recent developments in foreign and domestic politics

BACKGROUND

Throughout the 1900's a large degree of ethnic tension resulted between two groups of people in the African country of Rwanda. These two groups, the peasant Hutu's and the aristocratic Tutsi's, had accumulated a deep rift between them that spilled into and affected the social and political climate of Rwanda.

By 1993, the Hutus had achieved nearly 20 years of longstanding political power in Rwanda. In recent years however, the country was disrupted by Civil War as rebel Tutsi forces sought a voice in the political realm.

In August of 1993, to help stem the ethnic divide and create peace in Rwanda that allowed both Hutu's and Tutsi's access to the political system, the Arusha Peace Accords were signed. These 5 accords, among other things, called for an end to civil war, the creation of more viable political parties, merging of rebel forces and government police to keep the peace, etc. It appeared that a new era of peace had come to Rwanda.

In October of 1993, the United Nations set up a special peace keeping task force to help keep the peace and assist the government transition in Rwanda. However, eight months later, a plane carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana back to the capital city of Kigali was shot down killing everyone on board. While suspicion of taking the President Habyarimana's plane down centered around both rebel Tutsi forces and even radical Hutu's who opposed the Arusha accords, this event plunged the country of Rwanda into mass genocide within days of the President Habyarimana's death.

Ninety days later, nearly a million Rwandan Tutsi's had been slaughtered by the Hutu's. During this ninety day span, the west including the United States stood by watching and failed to intervene. Following the genocide, many questions centered on the failed response of the western world, including the United States which could have possibly prevented hundreds of thousands of deaths that occurred during the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Northwest History Consortium

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PROBLEM

Problem to be determined by the students as part of the PBL process.

Notes for the teacher:

- * **Prewrite or discussion:** What do you know about the Rwandan Genocide?
- * **After-reading background information / scenario / task:** The groups will determine what problem or issue they are trying to solve or answer.
- * **Introduction to project:** The class will watch either Hotel Rwanda or Beyond the Gates, followed by one of the two possible documentaries as well. This will bring the topic into their minds in a clear and real way and be the starting point for their congressional hearing research.

SCENARIO

It is early September, 1994. You are a high ranking staff member for the US State Department who is now being called to testify at a special hearing before members of the United States Congress about the murder of nearly 1 million Tutsi's in Rwanda. This "ethnic cleansing" enacted by Rwandan Hutus has left the small African country in a state of war, chaos, and political collapse.

On April 6th, 1994 a plane carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down as it approached the capital city of Kigali. This action sparked the beginning of mass genocide in Rwanda. By July of 1994 nearly 1 million Tutsi's had been killed. In the aftermath of this horrific loss of human life, questions began to circulate as to why the United States did not come to the aid of those being slaughtered.

On April 10th of 1994 the US State Department removed the US Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, and Deputy Chief of Mission, Joyce Leader, from the country, which essentially took out all US presence in the small African nation. A small peacekeeping UN force was also ordered to not intervene, and their requests for intervention were ignored not only by the United Nations, but also the United States.

Now, in the aftermath of this genocide, the United States Congress wants to know how much was known and why action was not taken by the United States Government in Rwanda. As a high ranking staff member in the US State Department you, and two other State Department officials, have been asked to testify in a special Congressional hearing that is determined to find out whether or not the United States' failure to intervene in Rwanda was a violation of US foreign policy regarding genocide and crimes against humanity. State Department and US Government policy calls for intervention in certain types of crimes against humanity, and definite intervention when genocide is known to be occurring.

What exactly happened in the days leading up to the start of the genocide? What was the

Northwest History Consortium

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response of the United Nations, the United States, and the West in general to this event? How much did high ranking US political figures know before and during the genocide? What events, beliefs, and philosophies contributed to the failed US response in Rwanda?

Congress is looking for detailed answers surrounding this entire event. Your testimony before Congress will help shape and clarify US foreign policy going forward in regards to human rights violations and acts of genocide around the world.

TASKS

After meeting with current US Secretary of State Madeline Albright, you and two senior State Department officials have been tasked to prepare oral testimony for the Congressional hearing. In addition, Secretary Albright has asked you to leave members of the committee a professional report detailing your findings.

RESOURCES

Book

Illibagiza, Immaculee. Left to Tell: Discovering God Amongst the Rwandan Holocaust. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc., 2006.

Documentaries

"Ghosts of Rwanda." PBS Frontline (WGBH). ©1995 - 2010. Boston, MA. 2004.

"Rwanda: Do Scars Ever Fade?" The History Channel. ©1996 - 2010. New York, NY. 19 December 2004.

Internet

"Arusha Accords." 21 October 2010. Wikipedia Foundation, Inc. 2001 - 2010. Los Angeles, CA. 17 November 2010 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arusha_Accords>.

Ferrogario, William. "The US and Genocide in Rwanda 1994: Evidence of Inaction." 20 August 2001. The National Security Archive. ©1995 - 2010. Washington, DC. 17 November 2010 <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB53/index.html>>.

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Northwest History Consortium

US State Department Foreign Policy:

US Inaction to the Rwandan Genocide of 1994

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<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/index.htm>>.

LeBlanc, Lawrence J. "United States Foreign Policies Toward Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity." 2010. Enotes, Inc. ©2010 Enotes, Inc. Seattle, WA. 17 November 2010
<<http://www.enotes.com/genocide-encyclopedia/united-states-foreign-policies-toward-genocide>>.

Movies

Beyond the Gates. Dir. Michael Caton-Jones. Perfs. Hugh Dancy, John Hurt, Clare-Hope Ashitey, et al. IFC Films, 2007.

Hotel Rwanda. Dir. Terry George. Perfs. Don Cheadle, Sophie Okonedo, Joaquin Phoenix, et al. MGM Studios, 12 April 2005.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment for this project will consist of three parts:

Part I:

Along with oral presentation, each group will prepare “an official” written report detailing their findings. This will amount to 40% of the overall grade for this project.

Part II:

Oral presentations (testimony in a Congressional hearing setting) will be graded using the Congressional Hearing Rubric. This will amount to 60% of the overall grade for this project.

Part III:

Each individual will also be scored on their contribution and use of class time during this project.

Northwest History Consortium

US State Department Foreign Policy:

US Inaction to the Rwandan Genocide of 1994

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RUBRIC

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Knowledge Gained / Comprehension of Topic	Clear and demonstrated understanding of topic. Information is accurate and complete.	Understanding of content is evident. Most information is accurate.	Lacking a clear understanding of content. Information is disorganized and has some inaccuracies.	No understanding of content. Information is inaccurate and irrelevant.
Use of Class Time / Cooperation with Group	Excellent Effective Engaged	Satisfactory	Needs to be improved	Group was disengaged and work was incomplete.
Use of Primary Sources / Content Evaluation / Effectiveness	Project included several quotes from primary sources, authentic accounts, pictures etc. This info was presented in an organized and effective way.	Included quotes, information from primary sources, but it is not presented in a clear organized manner.	Very few quotes and information from primary sources. Stories/project lacks effectiveness.	No evidence of any primary sources in project.
Completion of Task Requirements	Group very effectively completed required tasks	Satisfactory completion of required tasks	Needed improvement	Did not complete project tasks

REFERENCES/CITATIONS

“History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States.” UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 17 November 2010 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html>>.

Reimer, Jason. “Congressional Hearing Rubric.” NWESD Organization. 2009. Anacortes, WA. 17 November 2010 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/10.1_Rwanda.Genocide.Reimer.12.pdf>.

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