Part II: Five Case Studies

It is hard to imagine that throughout the twentieth century the extermination or attempted extermination of an entire group occurred time after time. Despite widespread acknowledgment that genocide should not and will not be tolerated, both the United States and the world have struggled to respond to this recurring problem for a variety of reasons. The complexity of balancing a country's role in the international community requires many hard decisions and difficult trade-offs.

In Part I of the reading you learned how genocide is defined and about the evolution of the international community's response to it. In this section, you will examine five sketches of genocides that occurred during the twentieth century. (The map on page ii provides an overview of other genocidal acts that occurred during the twentieth century.) Each case study touches upon the events leading up to the genocide, the actual events of the genocide, and the various responses of the United States and the international community. In addition, there are controversies that surround each case study. A box in each case study touches on some of the disputes and disagreements.

You will see that there are a number of common threads that run through these genocides. These case studies are not meant to be comparative, yet the elements of fear, the struggle for power, economic and political distress, propaganda, and increasing nationalism can be found in each. It is also important to take note of the advances and the setbacks to the international commitment to "never again" allow genocide to occur.

The Armenian Genocide

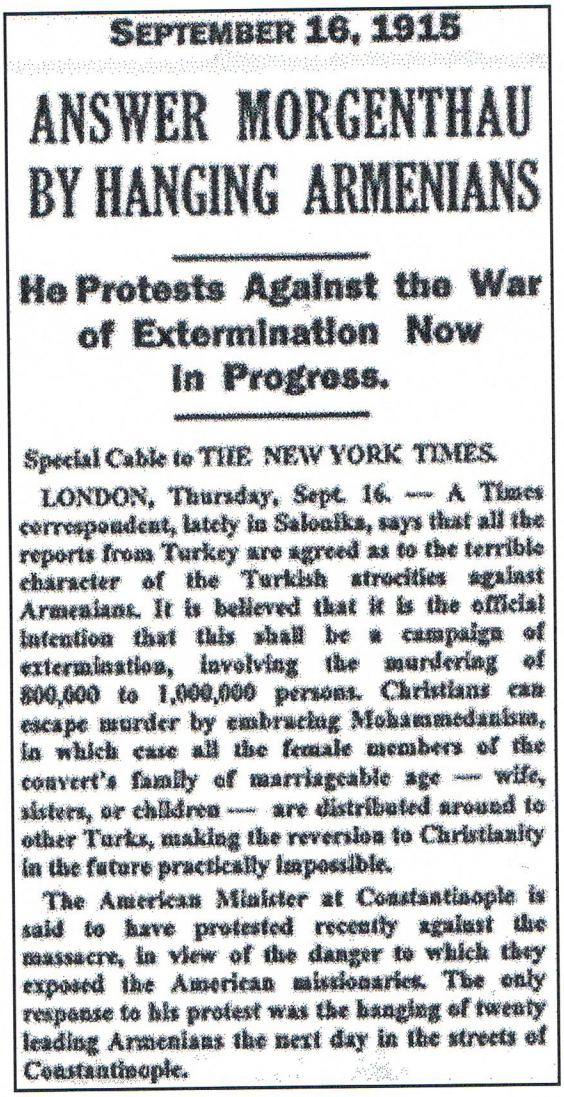
In 1915, the Turkish government began an organized campaign of deportation and annihilation of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. By 1923, 1.5 million Armenians, over two thirds of the Armenian population, had been murdered, deported, or forced into the desert where they starved to death. The international community did not intervene to stop the massacre. The atrocities committed against the Armenian people at the hands of the Turkish government was one of the first genocides of the twentieth century.

What were the origins of the Turkish-Armenian conflict?

Turkish invasions of the Armenian kingdoms began in the eleventh century. By the sixteenth century most of the Armenian kingdoms were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. As a Christian minority, Armenians were relegated to second-class citizenship and suffered official discrimination. Despite these factors, the Armenians existed in a state of relative peace with ethnic Turks and most were loyal to the Empire.

The Ottoman Empire began to weaken during the nineteenth century. European powers vied for control over the Empire. Internal corruption increased and economic conditions worsened. As Armenians began to demonstrate their desire for political representation, ethnic tensions increased between the Turks and the Armenians. Near the turn of the century the government ordered massacres in an effort to lessen Armenians' expectations for government representation and protection. The massacres led to the death of more than three hundred thousand Armenians.

In 1908, the Young Turks (officially named the Committee of Union and Progress, or CUP) led a revolution and seized power from the sultan. The Armenians initially celebrated this change in power. The new rulers, who originally promoted a platform of equality and constitutionalism, quickly turned to extreme nationalism. Afraid of external conquest, the Young Turks used propaganda and fear to drum up widespread support for an entirely



SEPTEMBER 16, 1915

ANSWER MORGENTHAU BY HANGING ARMENIANS

He Protests Against the War of Extermination Now In Progress.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Thursday, Sept. 16. — A Times correspondent, lately in Saloniki, says that all the reports from Turkey are agreed as to the terrible character of the Turkish atrocities against Armenians. It is believed that it is the official intention that this shall be a campaign of extermination, involving the murdering of 800,000 to 1,000,000 persons. Christians can escape murder by embracing Mohammedanism, in which case all the female members of the convert's family of marriageable age — wife, sisters, or children — are distributed around to other Turks, making the reversion to Christianity in the future practically impossible.

The American Minister at Constantinople is said to have protested recently against the massacre, in view of the danger to which they exposed the American missionaries. The only response to his protest was the hanging of twenty leading Armenians the next day in the streets of Constantinople.

ethnic Turkish state rather than the existing multinational empire. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and Turkey's entrance into the war, nationalism increased, serving to further the idea that "Turkism" should replace "Ottomanism." The Armenians came to be seen as a roadblock to the Turkish state. Plans were drawn to remove the roadblock.

How was the genocide committed?

On April 24, 1915 over two hundred Armenians were rounded up in Constantinople, marking the start of the Armenian Genocide. They were arrested, deported, and executed. From that day forth, deportation, execution, and starvation became the plight of the Armenian people.

Turkish officials claimed that the Armenians planned to revolt and destroy the Ottoman Empire. This claim produced widespread Turkish support for the deportation of all Armenians. Government orders gave Armenians three days to pack their belongings and leave. To protect against potential resistance, all able-bodied Armenian men were shot. The women, children, and few surviving men began a long march to non-existent relocation centers in the Syrian Desert. These massive caravans were denied food and water and were raided and attacked by bands of Turks under commission by the government. Hundreds of thousands of people died during deportation.

> ***"By continuing the deportation of orphans to their destination during the intense cold we are ensuring their eternal rest."***
>
> —Talaat Pasha, Turkish Minister of the Interior

Turkish officials who resisted the deportation process were replaced by other officials that the government considered to be more reliable.

> ***"It was first communicated to you that the Government, by order of the Jemiyet, had decided to destroy completely all Armenians living in Turkey. Those who oppose this order and decision cannot remain on the official staff of the Empire. An end must be put to their existence, however criminal the measures taken may be, and no regard must be paid to age, or sex, or conscientious scruple."***
>
> —Talaat Pasha

How did the United States respond to the Armenian Genocide?

President Woodrow Wilson characterized the situation in the Ottoman Empire as a civil


Armenian National Institute, Inc. Elder Photo Collection.

Young Victims of the Armenian Genocide.

war. He saw the events as "sad but justified to quell an internal security threat." Determined to keep America out of World War I, he did not see meddling in the "sovereign affairs" of another country as the way to maintain America's desired neutrality. Most citizens of the United States agreed with President Wilson's non-interventionist policy.

There was some dissent among the American people about non-intervention, however. U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau lobbied furiously for intervention.

"I earnestly beg the [State] Department to give this matter urgent and exhaustive consideration with a view of reaching a conclusion which may possibly have an effect on checking [Turkey's] government and certainly provide opportunity for efficient relief which now is not permitted."

—Ambassador Morgenthau

Dissenters did not believe that a desire for neutrality should exempt a government from the duty to intervene in the face of such atrocities. Despite their efforts to persuade the United States and the rest of the world to intervene, little was done to ease the suffering of the Armenians. President Wilson maintained that keeping the U.S. out of World War I was his top priority.

How did the international community respond to the Armenian Genocide?

The international community condemned the Armenian Genocide and threatened to hold the Young Turks personally responsible for the massacres against the Armenians. This proved to be more of an idle threat than a true commitment. Preoccupied with World War I as well as their own domestic issues, other governments took no strong actions to curb the killing or bring the perpetrators to justice. Furthermore, no law yet existed prescribing how to respond to such an event.

Some small international efforts to raise money and offer support did take place during the genocide. While not enough to curb the ever increasing death toll, these relief efforts did ensure the survival of those few Armenians who managed to escape death. Additionally, there were instances of resistance to the Turkish government within the Ottoman Empire itself. Though few and far between, these efforts made a difference in the survival of the Armenian people.

"While some Turks robbed their Armenian neighbors, others helped by hiding them in safe dwellings.

"The Forgotten Genocide"

Today, the Turkish Government dismisses all charges of genocide and denies that the relocation of Armenians was actually a plan to exterminate the whole of the Armenian population. The United States, along with many other members of the international community, has not pressed Turkey to admit to the genocide. Turkey's proposed admission into the European Union has caused a stir among those working to gain an acknowledgment and apology from the Turkish government. Many are enraged by the idea that Turkey could be allowed to join the EU without admitting to the genocide. Others contend that too much time has passed to open old wounds.

While some Kurds willingly participated in the massacres, others guided groups of Armenians through the mountain passes to refuge on the Russian side. Finally, while some Arabs only saw the Armenians as victims, others shared their food."

—Scholar Reuben P. Adalian

What happened after World War I ended?

World War I ended in 1918. In the postwar period, four hundred of the Young Turks who were directly involved in the orchestration of the Armenian Genocide were arrested. There was also a change in government within the Empire. Domestic trials ensued and charges were pressed for crimes ranging from "unconstitutional seizure of power" to "conspiring to liquidate the Armenian population." The leaders of the Young Turks were condemned to death for their roles in the genocide. They eluded justice by fleeing to foreign countries and were not pursued by the new Turkish government or the international community. Many Turks joined the new Nationalist Turkish movement led by Mustafa Kemal. The killing of Armenians continued. By 1923, nearly 1.5 million Armenians had been killed under government orders.

In 1923 the Ottoman Empire, renamed Turkey, was declared a republic and received international recognition. With this new beginning, the Turkish-Armenian issues of resettlement and restitution were swept aside and forgotten by most of the world. The few Armenian survivors of the genocide migrated around the world, seeking refuge in over two dozen countries.

The Holocaust

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany began a war of conquest and expansion when it invaded Poland. Three days later Great Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany. Within months, nearly all of Europe was at war. In six years, the Nazis exterminated some twelve million civilians (including six million Jews) whom they considered inferior in a genocide widely referred to as the Holocaust. Hitler's "Final Solution" to the "Jewish Question" took place under the guise of war.

What were the origins of the Nazi persecution of the Jews?

In 1933, the people of Germany faced great economic hardship. Nearly six million people were unemployed. The Nazi Party, promising to revitalize the economy, rose to power. With Chancellor Adolf Hitler as leader, the Nazis significantly reduced unemployment and restored a sense of national pride in the country. Racism, particularly anti-Semitism, was at the heart of Hitler's philosophy. He believed that the Germans were the "master race," entitled to rule the world. In his mind, Jews were poisoning the blood and culture of the German people, and preventing the Germans from attaining their political and cultural potential.

Hitler labeled Europe's 9.5 million Jewish people as "vermin that must be expunged" and an obstacle to German domination in Europe. As he gained more and more supporters throughout Germany and elsewhere in Europe, already present anti-Semitism drastically increased.

On April 1, 1933 Hitler called for a boycott of Jewish businesses. This boycott was meant to officially mark Jews as different and inferior, as well as to plunge them into economic distress and strip them of any political or social power. A few Germans defied the boycott but the great majority avoided Jewish businesses from that day forth. The success of this boycott, in essence, gave Hitler the encouragement to begin systematically exporting and exterminating all European Jews.

"This was the day of the greatest cowardice. Without that cowardice, all that followed would not have happened."

—Rabbi Baeck, Holocaust survivor

How did Hitler implement his "Final Solution"?

Before invading Poland, the Nazis drew up plans to annihilate the whole of European Jewry and all other "undesirables" (namely Slavs, Gypsies, German homosexuals, and mentally and physically disabled people). The Nazis built concentration camps and trained traveling killing squads. Great fear and loyalty were instilled in the Nazi army and the German people. Beginning in 1941, all Jews over the age of six were forced to wear the yellow Star of David on their outer clothing. During the war, ghettos were established for the Jewish people as well as transit camps and forced labor camps.

USHMM, courtesy of Hans Frankl.

A sign reading "Jews are unwanted here."

Killing during the Holocaust was a highly organized and industrialized process. The Nazis devoted significant bureaucratic and military resources to implement their plans. Hundreds of thousands of people were sent to extermination camps where they were systematically murdered in gas chambers. Others were worked to death at labor camps (concentration camps). They never received adequate sustenance, were constantly exposed to poor conditions, and were subjected to severe mistreatment. Still others were killed by mobile killing squads that traveled throughout the Soviet Union and elsewhere murdering millions.

In the final months of the war, in a last ditch attempt to prevent the Allies from liberating large numbers of prisoners, the Nazis instituted "death marches" for prisoners. Food, water, and rest were not provided; the goal of these marches was death for all. In total, more than six million Jews were exterminated in the Holocaust, along with six million other "undesirables."

How could it have happened?

World War II ended in Europe on May 8, 1945. Germany's troops surrendered unconditionally. The liberation of the concentration camps revealed the horrors of the Holocaust for the world to see. Today, many wonder how it was possible for the Holocaust to occur. Where was the international community? Where was the United States? Why didn't someone stop Hitler? The answers to these questions are complex, confusing, often frustrating, and sometimes completely nonexistent.

Some contend that it was not until the end of the war when the camps were liberated that the world finally understood the severity of the situation. Others claim that governments and individuals alike knew what was taking place and chose not to stop it. The truth probably lies somewhere in between and differs

Holocaust Victim Count

The number of victims of the Holocaust is widely disputed. Due to the incineration of bodies, mass grave burials, and lack of complete records it is impossible to know with certainty how many people were killed in the genocide. Politics, denial, and differing historical interpretations also play into the uncertainty. Moreover, because the Holocaust was orchestrated under the veil of World War II, it is sometimes difficult to establish which deaths were part of a targeted extermination campaign (the Holocaust) and which deaths were wartime casualties. The most widely, though certainly not universally accepted estimate is twelve million Holocaust victims—six million Jews and six million others.

widely for each country and individual. At the end of the war, however, when the concentration camps were liberated, there was no denying the gravity of the situation.

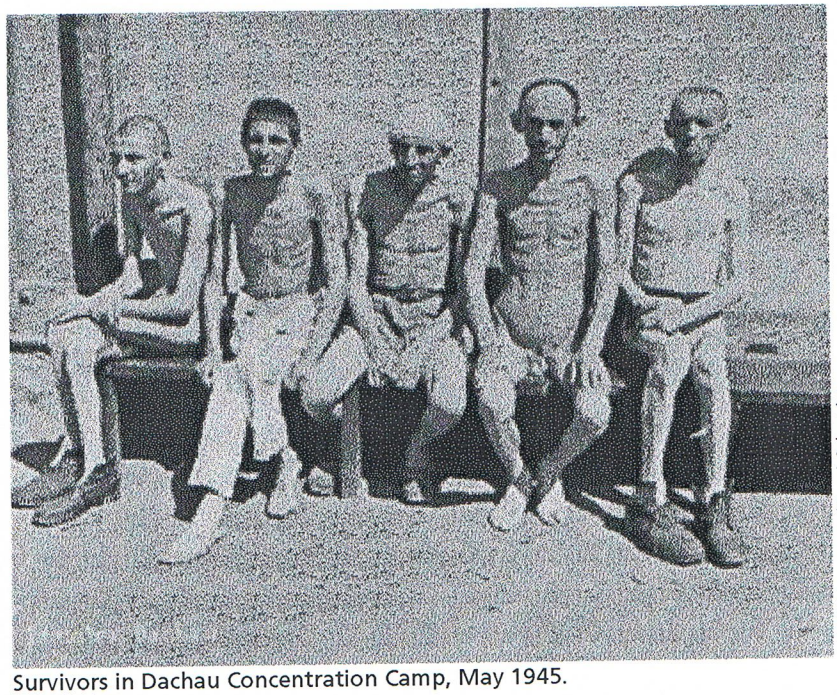
How did the world respond?

The United States, along with much of the world, ignored early signs of the extent of Nazi fanaticism. Because of Hitler's high popularity among the German people and his significant political successes, some countries and individuals even strongly supported Hitler's actions and ideals. When Europe was engulfed in fighting, each country struggled with loyalty issues, national interests, security, and fear. Many countries allowed some German Jews to enter and attempted to defend their country and their Jewish citizens militarily. Others sided and even collaborated with Hitler. Some remained uninvolved.

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, most Americans did not want to get involved in the war that embroiled much of the rest of the world. The great majority believed that the United States should stay out of Europe's problems. In addition, the country was beginning to recover from the economic hardships of the Great Depression. President Roosevelt, who anticipated the need to stop Hitler, was unable to take action against the Nazis because domestic political opinion did not support it. When, on December 7, 1941 Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the United States immediately declared war on Japan. Several days later Germany declared war on the United States.

In 1942, President Roosevelt began to receive information about Nazi extermination practices. Although the Allies warned the Nazis that they would be held accountable for their crimes, the Allies took little action during the war to stop the genocide. For example, some wonder why the United States did not choose to bomb the concentration camps or the railroads that transported Jews and others to their death. Military officials decided that resources could be better used for other war missions. The Nazi death camps received publicity in the U.S. newspapers, but the stories were met with skepticism and disbelief. The military successes of the Allies changed the course of the war, but did not significantly curb Germany's highly organized, well-established killing system.

> ***"The responsibility for this crime of murdering the entire Jewish population of Poland falls in the first instance on the perpetrators, but indirectly also it weighs on the whole of humanity, the peoples and governments of the Allied States.... By passive observation of this murder of defenseless millions and of the maltreatment of children, women, and old men, these***



USHMM, courtesy of Francis Robert Artz.

Survivors in Dachau Concentration Camp, May 1945.

countries have become the criminals' accomplices...."

—Polish Jew Szmul Zygielbojm, May 1943
Written in his suicide letter

What happened after the war?

The Allied forces set up refugee and displaced person camps. Between 1948 and 1951 nearly seven hundred thousand Jews emigrated to the newly established state of Israel. Thousands of others relocated to countries around the world. International commitment to humanitarian assistance and intervention proved to be stronger than ever after the genocide ended.

The world vowed that such atrocities would "never again" take place. Dozens of countries drafted and signed the Genocide Convention.

The Cambodian Genocide

The Communist Party of Democratic Kampuchea, known commonly as the Khmer Rouge, took control of Cambodia on April 17, 1975, replacing Lon Nol's Khmer Republic. This takeover occurred after five years of violent civil war in Cambodia. Many Cambodians were elated at the change in government and celebrated the prospect of a new era of peace in their country. The celebration ended quickly as the Khmer Rouge began a campaign of mass starvation and killing which led to the deaths of nearly two million Cambodians.

What led to the Cambodian Genocide?

In 1970, Cambodia's leader Prince Sihanouk and his monarchy were deposed in a military coup. Lieutenant Lon Nol took over and formed a new right-wing government. Prince Sihanouk and his supporters joined a communist guerrilla organization called the Khmer Rouge. In 1970, the Khmer Rouge attacked Lon Nol's army, starting a civil war. In 1975 they finally overthrew Lon Nol's government and took power. The civil war had ended but an even more brutal phase began.

Pol Pot, the leader of the new Khmer Rouge, imagined a classless society in Cambodia—a communist utopia. Immediately after taking power, he led his new government in a campaign to rid the country (renamed "Democratic Kampuchea") of all class distinctions that existed between rural and urban populations. The Khmer Rouge envisioned a Cambodia without cities, private property, or money, where all goods would have to be exchanged and bartered. All urban Cambodians were forced out of the cities and made to live an agrarian life-style.

"We will be the first nation to create a completely Communist country without wasting our time on the intermediate steps."

—Khmer Rouge Minister
of Defense, Son Sen

The Khmer Rouge attempted to destroy one society and mold another. Pol Pot wanted an entirely self-sufficient country, capable of feeding itself, defending itself, and expanding to gain more land and power in Asia.

Auto-Genocide

Auto-genocide (self-genocide) is the term given by the UN Human Rights Commission to genocide of a people against itself rather than another ethnic group. A large percentage of the deaths in the Cambodian Genocide were of ethnic Khmer people—people from the same cultural group as the Khmer Rouge. It is for this reason that the Cambodian Genocide is often referred to as an "auto-genocide." There were, however, many other groups targeted by the Khmer Rouge as well.

As part of the "transition," all banks and forms of currency were destroyed. Telephone and postal services were abolished. Media was censored. Religion was forbidden. Clothing was collected and destroyed; the entire country was forced to dress in the same government-issued black pants and shirts. Every hospital was closed and medicines were banned. The educational system was dismantled and all books were confiscated and burned.

How was the genocide carried out?

An estimated 1.7 million people died under the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979 as a result of execution, starvation, disease, exposure to the elements, and overwork. The new leadership killed any perceived resistors or "non-valuable" members of society. The transition to communism also resulted in an abrupt transition to a repressive and murderous regime. Former Lon Nol government soldiers, civil servants, Buddhist monks, ethnic and religious minorities, elderly citizens, intellectuals, and groups of people thought to have contact with Vietnamese, such as Eastern Khmers, were among those hunted down. The simple act of wearing glasses—thought to be a symbol of intelligence and literacy—often brought execution.

Urban dwellers were made to leave the cities and towns and move to work camps in rural Cambodia. Food productivity drastically fell with the transition to communal agriculture. The Khmer Rouge government continued to export a large percentage of the available food to China to repay past debts. The Khmer Rouge kept rations dangerously low while forcing people to work long hours in the hot sun. Malnutrition increased and starvation led to the death of hundreds of thousands of people. The great majority of deaths during the genocide resulted from deliberate starvation and malnutrition.

> ***"To spare you is no profit, to destroy you is no loss."***
>
> —Khmer Rouge slogan

Men, women, and children "disappeared" from villages and work camps on a regular basis. Families were split up and fear and distrust were cultivated among citizens. The government used propaganda and food to entice starving individuals to turn on oth-

Courtesy of Bruce Sharp. www.mekong.net.

Snapshots of genocide victims taken before their execution at Tuol Sleng Prison in Phnom Penh—the Khmer Rouge's largest torture and killing center.

ers, making a large-scale revolt against the Khmer Rouge highly unlikely. Resistors to Khmer Rouge policies faced execution, often by disembowelment, by beatings, or by having nails hammered into the back of their heads. Additionally, the Khmer Rouge instilled in the Cambodian people an intense fear and hatred of the Vietnamese people, whom they called "monsters." A border dispute with Vietnam had led to war between the two countries. Many Cambodians believed following the Khmer Rouge orders was the only way to escape a full scale Vietnamese invasion—an event that they believed would lead to a certain and horrific death for all.

The radical rule of Pol Pot ended in 1979 when the Vietnamese army invaded and overthrew the Khmer Rouge government, capturing Phnom Penh.

How did the world respond?

There was little international effort to stop the killing in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge expelled all foreigners from the country immediately after taking power. It was nearly impossible for the outside world to gain firsthand knowledge of what was taking place in Cambodia, so news coverage was sparse. At the same time, the Vietnam War was coming to an end as the United States withdrew from South Vietnam. Communism and capitalism were both vying for political dominance around the world. Most governments were focused on their own affairs. There were networks of people who helped smuggle Cambodians out of the country and to safety, as well as many small international efforts to raise funds, but over all, very little attention, time, or money was devoted to the Cambodian Genocide. Yet again, genocide was underway as the world watched.

Artist Terry Colon.

Uncle Sam and Pol Pot shake hands.

How did the United States respond?

U.S. policy in the Vietnam War contributed to the rise of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. During the Vietnam War, Cambodia had attempted to stay neutral, yet both North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces used Cambodian territory to hide, supply, and train their troops. As this military activity increased in Cambodia, President Nixon authorized B-52 bomber raids on Cambodian sanctuaries. From 1969 to 1973 there were more than thirty-six thousand B-52 bombing missions against Cambodia. The resulting political, economic, and social instability, coupled with the pre-existent peasant unrest, contributed to the Khmer Rouge's rise to power.

During the Ford administration (1973-1976) the United States maintained economic embargoes against the Communist countries of Vietnam and Cambodia. No significant measures were taken to curb the human rights abuses in Cambodia; the United States was more concerned about containing communism and winning the Cold War. In addition, other significant issues focused U.S. attention elsewhere. Finally, the United States had not yet signed the Genocide Convention and most did not feel obliged to contribute time, energy, or money to solving the problem in Cambodia.

Jimmy Carter became president in 1976 and inherited the "Cambodian Problem" just as it began to erupt into a massive blood bath. As the killing increased and it became

more and more obvious that genocide was underway, President Carter's administration struggled to balance its commitment to human rights with broader imperatives such as winning the Cold War. Disturbed by the number of tyrannical regimes the U.S. had supported in the name of anti-communism, Carter made an effort to give priority to human rights.

> ***"I want our country to set a standard of morality. I feel very deeply that when people are deprived of basic human rights that the president of the United States ought to have a right to express displeasure and do something about it. I want our country to be the focal point for deep concern about human beings all over the world."***
>
> —Jimmy Carter

Though he emphasized human rights and tried to make them a vehicle of his foreign policy, his efforts proved largely ineffective as Cold War initiatives and domestic priorities required most of his attention. In addition, the Vietnam War had left most American citizens and government officials averse to the idea of going back into Southeast Asia. In the end, very little was done to stop the genocide.

What happened in Cambodia after the genocide?

The genocide ended in 1979 when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in response to a border dispute. The Vietnamese overthrew the Khmer government and forced them into exile in the countryside. The Vietnamese established a temporary coalition government under which it was once again legal to own property and Buddhism was revived as the state religion. However, because of animosity toward Vietnam and Cold War allegiances, the United States and its allies continued to recognize the exiled Khmer Rouge government. The UN allowed it to maintain its seat in the General Assembly.

Civil unrest, hunger, and devastation persisted. The infrastructure of the country had been almost completely destroyed during Pol Pot's reign. Nearly all intellectuals had been killed, countless women were widowed and children orphaned, and land mines still covered the countryside. These factors made Cambodia's recovery from the genocide difficult. In addition, there was very little international commitment to helping Cambodia with this process.

In recent years the international community, with the United States taking much of the lead, has begun to assist Cambodia with its quest for justice and reconstruction. In 1991 a peace agreement was signed among opposing groups including the Khmer Rouge. Democratic elections, under the observation of a UN peacekeeping force, were arranged in 1993.

The former monarch was restored in what ended as disputed elections. The process of establishing international criminal trials to hold Khmer Rouge leaders accountable for genocide and crimes against humanity began in 1998. Leader Pol Pot died in 1998, before he could be tried. An agreement between the UN and Cambodia to establish an international genocide court was reached in March 2003, amidst much debate and disagreement. Some social and economic reconstruction programs have also begun, despite occasional political instability. Progress is being made in the country, though many large obstacles remain.

The Bosnian Genocide

In 1984, Sarajevo, Yugoslavia was home to the Winter Olympics. Known as a multicultural and cosmopolitan city, Sarajevo seemed to be an ideal host for the world games. Fewer than ten years after the Olympics, the city barely stood. Nearly every inch of it was riddled with bullet holes, and Yugoslavia had disintegrated into war. Sarajevo was no longer seen as a symbol of successful multiculturalism, but rather as a city of hatred and ethnically motivated killing. The Bosnian Genocide was underway.

What were the origins of Yugoslavia's unrest?

Yugoslavia came into existence in 1918. From its birth, the country struggled with the competing politics of the Eastern Orthodox Serbs and the Roman Catholic Croats. Nazi occupation during World War II brought severe bloodshed to the country. More than one million Yugoslavs died, many in massacres. Serbs, Muslims, and Croats all perpetrated these atrocities and all suffered severe losses. Tens of thousands of Serbs, in particular, fell victim to wartime massacres, as the Croats collaborated with the Nazis.

By 1945, the defeat of the Nazis and a cruel civil war had brought Communist leader Marshal Tito to power. Tito's iron-fisted rule and popularity as a wartime hero held Yugoslavia together during the Cold War. Under Tito, an intricate federal system distributed political power among Yugoslavia's ethnic groups. Despite his efforts, Tito could not completely erase the hatred and anger that had taken root during World War II. After his death in 1980, the country's power-sharing arrangement fell apart. A political and economic crisis followed. Leaders on all fronts used ethnic tensions to try to gain more political power. In the Republic of Serbia (part of Yugoslavia), for example, Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in the late 1980s by rekindling ethnic Serbian nationalism. Milosevic's moves to assert Serbia's dominance in turn fueled nationalism in Yugoslavia's other republics.

> ***"Yugoslavia's tragedy was not foreordained. It was the product of bad, even criminal, political leaders who encouraged ethnic confrontation for personal, political and financial gain."***
>
> —Richard Holbrooke, Chief Bosnia Negotiator for the United States

In 1991 and 1992, Yugoslavia's federal system completely disintegrated, with the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia declaring independence. Fighting erupted in Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 and spilled over into Bosnia in early 1992. (Only two republics—Serbia and Montenegro—remained part of Yugoslavia.) Bosnia became the site of yet another twentieth century genocide.

Who was targeted during the Bosnian Genocide?

Muslim and Croat civilians—mostly men—were targeted during the genocide. While they supported the creation of an independent state, local Serbs saw themselves and their land as part of Milosevic's "Greater Serbia." The Serbs attempted to expel Muslims and Croats from Serb areas. Specifically targeting civilians, the Serbs used torture, gang rape, concentration camps, and massacres to carry

out their "ethnic cleansing" against Bosnian Muslims and Croats. During the war, Muslims and Croats were guilty of atrocities as well. However, Serb forces were responsible for most of the brutality against civilians.

How did the world respond?

The international community played a complicated role in the Bosnian Genocide. Asserting that the stability of the continent was at stake in Bosnia, while denying that the events amounted to genocide, the European Union unsuccessfully attempted mediation. The UN then sent a peacekeeping force to the country in 1992 and established six "safe areas" using lightly armed troops from European nations. Serbian aircraft were prohibited from flying over the country and economic sanctions were imposed on the Yugoslav government.

Nevertheless by 1993, Bosnian Serb forces controlled 70 percent of Bosnia's territory and their plan for "ethnic cleansing" continued. The European leaders were eager to assert their leadership and peacekeeping abilities and the United States was willing to step back. (The United States government was also reluctant to call events in Bosnia a genocide.)

"We do not interfere in American affairs. We hope that they do not interfere in ours."

—Jacques Delor, Chairman of the European Commission

The peacekeeping effort proved to be largely ineffective in stopping the genocide. The so-called UN safe areas all fell to the Serbs and were "ethnically cleansed," most infamously perhaps in Srebrenica where UN troops, who had promised to protect Bosnian Muslims, withdrew. Some eight thousand Bosnians were massacred.

"The tragedy of Srebrenica will forever haunt the history of the United Nations. This day commemorates a massacre on a scale unprecedented in Europe since the Second World War—a massacre of people who had been led to believe that the UN would ensure their safety. We cannot undo this tragedy, but it is vitally important that the right lessons be learned and applied in the future. We must not forget that the architects of the killings in Srebrenica and elsewhere in Bosnia, although indicted by the international criminal tribunal, are still at large. This fact alone suggests that the most important lesson of Srebrenica—that we must recognize evil for what it is and confront it not with expediency and compromise but with implacable resistance—has yet to be fully learned and applied. As we mark the anniversary of the death of thousands of disarmed and defenseless men and boys, I wish to express once again to their families and friends my deepest regret and remorse. Their grief cannot be assuaged and must not be forgotten."

—Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, July 11, 2000

Ethnic Cleansing

The term "ethnic cleansing" is often used either in addition to or instead of "genocide" when describing the Bosnian case. Some scholars contend that the deaths that occurred in Bosnia were part of an ethnic cleansing campaign that was full of genocidal acts but was not an actual genocide. Those who characterize the Bosnian case solely as ethnic cleansing believe that the Serbs' intention was not the complete extermination (i.e. genocide) of all Bosnian Muslims, but rather the forced and complete exportation of them (i.e. ethnic cleansing). This position holds that genocidal acts were used to attempt to instill the fear and devastation necessary to get the Muslims to leave their land and take refuge elsewhere, but that complete extermination was never a goal. On the other hand, many scholars claim that the number of genocidal massacres used to carry out the ethnic cleansing campaign leaves little question that the events should be considered a genocide. In April 2004, the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal announced that the persecution and killing of Bosnian Muslims by Serbs was indeed a genocidal campaign.

How did the tide turn in Bosnia?

In 1995, an alliance between Croatia and Bosnia's Muslims tilted the balance of power on the battlefield against the Serbs. In addition, as Serbian massacres of Bosnian Muslim villagers and artillery attacks against Sarajevo continued, journalists and individual citizens galvanized public opinion in the United States and worldwide, calling for an intervention to stop the bloodshed.

Ultimately, it was the United States that took the lead in bringing peace to Bosnia. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) launched a bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serb army. NATO's air war, led by U.S. pilots, allowed Bosnian Croat and Muslim fighters to take the initiative on the ground.

By the fall of 1995, a new map of Bosnia had taken shape. The Serb-held portion of the country shrank to 49 percent, while the Muslims extended their control to 29 percent of the territory and the Croats to 22 percent. Ironically, the ethnic cleansing that the international community had tried to prevent was mostly complete; Bosnia consisted of three largely ethnically pure regions, each with its own army. In all, more than two hundred thousand people had died in the struggle and 2.3 million had lost their homes.

In October 1995, a cease-fire was reached. A formal peace agreement was signed in Dayton, Ohio in December, 1995. The agreement was meant not only to end the war, but also to build a democratic, multi-ethnic state. To a large degree, it is the United States that has stood behind the international commitment to maintain Bosnia's borders and to compel the young state's three main ethnic groups to share the responsibilities of government. When U.S. peacekeepers

UN Photo 186725/J. Isaac. Reprinted with permission.

A Muslim man and his grandson stand amid the destruction in Stari Vitez.

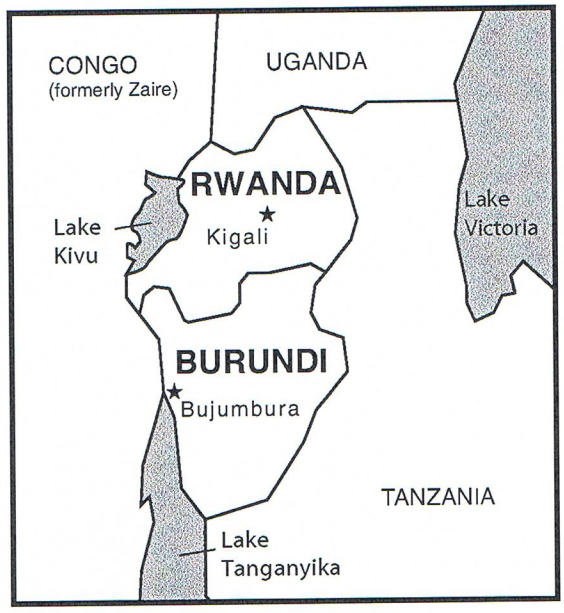
first entered Bosnia, President Bill Clinton pledged that they would stay no longer than a year. By 1999, he conceded that accomplishing his goals in Bosnia would require many years, even decades, of international involvement.

Today, thousands of refugees who were victims of "ethnic cleansing" have returned to their homes. The former leader of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, was charged with "crimes against humanity," "violations of the laws or customs of war", and genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) at the Hague. He died in March 2006, having been held since 2001. Many other officials are being tried in the International Criminal Court as well, though motivation to track down the top Serbian officials who remain at large is wanting.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in economic aid have been spent to restore the economy. The United States and its allies remain hopeful that their investment will pay off. More than one million refugees have returned to their homes. Politically, voters from all three ethnic groups have consistently supported candidates with nationalistic views. The multi-ethnic central government envisioned by the Dayton Treaty exists largely on paper.

The Rwandan Genocide

In the spring of 1994, the world watched as violence engulfed the tiny central African country of Rwanda. Over the course of one hundred days, nearly one million people were killed at the hands of army militias, friends, family members, and neighbors. In a country that had a total population of fewer than eight million, these numbers are mind-boggling. In a world that had pledged "never again," the reality seemed instead to be "again and again."



What are the origins of the Tutsi-Hutu conflict?

The hostility between Hutus and Tutsis, however intense, reaches back only a few decades. Although a minority, making up approximately 15 percent of the population, the Tutsis have long held most of the land in Rwanda (and neighboring Burundi). For centuries, they were primarily cattle herders while the Hutus, making up 84 percent of the population, were farmers. (The Twa people comprise the remaining 1 percent of the population.) Under German and then Belgian colonial rule, the economic differences between the two groups deepened. The Belgians openly favored the Tutsis. Educational privileges and government jobs were reserved solely for the Tutsis. Identity cards were issued to document ethnicity. (These types of cards were later used to identify the Tutsi during the 1994 genocide.) This colonial favoritism contributed to tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis.

Despite the growing tensions, widespread violence did not break out between the two groups until the country gained independence in 1962 as Rwanda-Urundi. (The country later split into the nations of Rwanda and Burundi.) In the late 1950s, the Belgians hastily organized elections in Rwanda and Burundi as their colonial empire in central Africa began to crumble. Hutu parties gained control of the

Courtesy of USHMM. Photo by Jerry Fowler.

Identity cards were used to identify Tutsis during the genocide.

Rwandan government in 1959, reversing the power structure and triggering armed opposition by the Tutsis. In three years of civil war, fifty thousand Rwandans were killed and another one hundred thousand (almost all Tutsi) fled the country. In neighboring Burundi, the Tutsis took advantage of their control of the army to override election results and seize political power. During the next three decades, Burundi's Tutsi-led government crushed repeated Hutu uprisings. In 1972 as many as one hundred thousand Hutus were killed in Burundi.

Ethnic conflicts notwithstanding, the vast majority of Hutus and Tutsis struggled side by side for survival as small farmers. By 1994, Rwanda, with a population of 8.4 million people and a land area the size of Maryland, was among the world's most densely populated and poorest nations. Poverty and the scarcity of land played into the hands of politicians seeking to further their power by igniting ethnic tensions.

What events led to the Rwandan Genocide?

In 1990, the region's problems were further complicated by the invasion of Rwanda by the rebel army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Most of the soldiers in the RPF were Tutsi refugees who had been living in neighboring Uganda since the early 1960s. In August 1993, the Arusha Accords peace agreement between the rebels and the government was signed in Tanzania and a small UN force was put in place to oversee the accord.

Events in Burundi, however, soon reignited tensions. In October 1993, Tutsi army officers killed Burundi's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, in an attempt to overthrow the new government. Burundi plunged into violence. As many as one hundred thousand people, most of them Hutu, were killed.

Hutu extremists in Rwanda used the Burundi crisis as an opportunity to fan hostility against Tutsis in their country. In April 1994, Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana was killed in a suspicious plane crash, along with the second president of Burundi. Within hours of the crash, Hutu extremists executed eleven UN peacekeepers from Belgium and began carrying out a well-organized series of massacres. After the murder of the Belgians, the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda was brought to an abrupt halt as nearly every UN soldier was evacuated at the demand of their individual countries.

How was the genocide carried out?

The Rwandan Genocide lasted for one hundred days. Nearly one million people were killed in this time. Machetes and clubs were the most widely used weapons. Thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus were hacked to death each day by Hutus, many of them friends, neighbors, and relatives. Civilian death squads called *Interhamwe,* or "those who fight together" had trained prior to the start of the genocide and were responsible for the largest massacres. The majority of other

Hutus were given machetes and incited over the radio to kill. Told that the Tutsis would destroy Rwanda and kill all of the Hutus, the Hutus were made to believe that they had to kill the Tutsis first. Hutus who refused to kill or who attempted to hide Tutsis were killed as well. The largest massacres occurred in areas where Tutsis had gathered together for protection, such as churches, schools, and abandoned UN posts.

Radio played an integral role in the genocide. A nation crazed with fear and desperation heard repeated broadcasts labeling the Tutsi as "cockroaches" and "devils." Loudspeakers in the streets disclosed names and locations of Tutsis on the run. The United States, the only country in the world with the technical ability to jam this hate radio, refused, stating that it was too expensive and would be against people's right to free speech.

How did the international community respond?

Prior to the start of the genocide, the United States and the United Nations both disregarded warnings they received from Rwandans as well as from General Romeo Dallaire, head of the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. These warnings clearly stated that a plan to exterminate the Tutsis was underway. Dallaire made an urgent request to be granted permission to raid the Hutu weapons caches. He was denied permission on the grounds that it was too dangerous, unprecedented, and against his mandate. He was instructed to inform the Hutu leaders that a genocide was about to begin. As the organizers of the genocide, these Hutu leaders were already well aware of this.

Once actual killing broke out, world leaders condemned the violence in Rwanda, but balked at intervening to stop it. U.S. officials in the Clinton administration refused to define the killings as "genocide," in part because they did not want to be obligated to intervene under the Genocide Convention. Even as the rivers filled with corpses and the streets were lined with severed limbs, the international community did not intervene. Many characterized the conflict as "ancient ethnic hatred" and saw the risk of intervention as too high.

Eventually, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) stepped up its assault against the government and the massacres came to a halt. By July 1994, the RPF had seized the capital and forced the Hutu army to flee in panic. Fearful of reprisals, as many as two million Hutus abandoned their homes, many taking refuge in the Congo. International forces, including two thousand American troops, ar-

UN Photo 186797/J. Isaac. Reprinted with permission.

Rwandan children who lost their parents in the genocide rest at a camp in Goma.

rived after the massacres had ended to protect international relief operations for the nearly two million Hutu refugees, including many of the killers. The last UN peacekeepers left Rwanda in early 1996.

Why did the international community fail to intervene?

In the years since the Rwandan Genocide, diplomats and scholars have debated why the international system failed Rwanda's victims. The reasons remain unclear. State sovereignty, apathy, financial restraints, bureaucracy, fear, safety concerns, and "Somalia Syndrome" are among them. In 1998, while visiting Rwanda, President Clinton apologized for his administration's part in disregarding the events of 1994.

> ***"The international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy, as well. We did not act quickly enough after the killing began. We should not have allowed the refugee camps to become safe havens for the killers. We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide. We cannot change the past. But we can and must do everything in our power to help you build a future without fear, and full of hope."***
>
> —President Bill Clinton in Rwanda, 1998

Despite President Clinton's apology and the apologies of others, the United States and other nations have done little to address the deeper causes of one of the world's bloodiest and most explosive conflicts. Progress has been made in preventing a new round of bloodletting between Tutsis and Hutus, but some worry that the international community is not doing all that it should. The country, with its fragile stability and complicated past, could easily explode into violence again, as could neighboring Burundi.

> ***"If it were to happen again tomorrow, would the international community be there? Quite honestly, I don't know."***
>
> —UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

How is Rwanda recovering from the genocide?

Rwanda's government has taken steps to heal the wounds of Tutsi-Hutu conflict within Rwanda. Almost all of the Hutu refugees have returned home. Local and national elections

Somalia Syndrome

In 1993, U.S. troops stationed in Mogadishu, Somalia on a humanitarian mission were involved in a clash with Somali militia. The firefight that ensued on October 3, 1993 was the bloodiest firefight involving U.S. troops since Vietnam. The conflict resulted in eighteen dead Americans and nearly one thousand dead Somalis. The American troops were killed and dragged through the streets of the capital city of Mogadishu. Broadcast for the world to see, the American public was outraged. All American peacekeeping troops in Somalia were removed as the country slipped into chaos. This battle changed America's responses to the world's humanitarian crises, especially those in Africa. America's reluctance to get involved in certain conflicts, often those involving ethnic strife, is commonly referred to as the "Somalia Syndrome."

> ***"Three brief years separated the vigorous military intervention that overrode Iraqi sovereignty and supported humane values in defense of some 1.5 million Kurds in April 1991 from the total passivity in responding to the Rwandan bloodbath during which perhaps a million people were murdered in April 1994. In between, there was Somalia."***
>
> —Scholar Thomas G. Weiss

have been held and both Hutus and Tutsis fill top government positions. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (in Arusha, Tanzania) has tried more than fifty of the top organizers of the genocide, though there are currently thousands of suspects still awaiting justice, and many others at large. In 2005 the government released about half of its prisoners, many of whom had already served the maximum sentence for their alleged crimes. Over thirty thousand accused remain in jail.

A local, traditional justice system known as *Gacaca* (pronounced ga-cha-cha) is trying to bring justice and healing to the remaining victims and perpetrators. These courts try lower-level participants in the genocide, and have sentenced over thirteen hundred people so far. Some Rwandans say they have been threatened from testifying in these courts.

Memories of the 1994 genocide remain fresh, though the government says its promotion of national unity is working. Countless Hutus and Tutsi live as displaced persons or refugees. Intermarriage and close friendships between Tutsis and Hutus are no longer as common as they once were. Moreover, Rwanda's poverty, which has worsened since 1994, threatens to touch off further ethnic conflict. Regional instability and the massive refugee problem in the African Great Lakes Region are additional factors that threaten stability in Rwanda.

"Rwanda has a problem. On the surface, things are becoming normal. But some of the flowers which are flowering have bodies beneath them."

—Esther Mujaway, Rwandan counselor

The case studies discussed in this reading represent only some of the genocides that have scarred the twentieth century. The frequency with which genocides have occurred in the past suggests that the world will see more cases of genocide in the future. In the coming days you will have an opportunity to consider a range of alternatives for U.S. policy on this issue. Each of the four viewpoints, or options, that you will explore is based in a distinct set of values or beliefs. Each takes a different perspective on our country's role in the world and our relationship with the UN. You should think of the options as a tool designed to help you understand the contrasting strategies from which Americans must craft future policy.

At the end of this unit, you will be asked to make your own choices about where U.S. policy should be heading. In doing so, you may borrow heavily from one option, combine ideas from several, or take a new approach altogether. You will need to weigh the risks and trade-offs of whatever you decide.