

THE RETURN TO *REALPOLITIK*: AMERICAN IDENTITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND  
THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION IN THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD, 1991-1994

A Thesis  
by  
DAVID CHARLES TYSON

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APPROVED BY:

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Dr. Michael Krenn  
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

---

Dr. Karl Campbell  
Member, Thesis Committee

---

Dr. Jeremiah Kitunda  
Member, Thesis Committee

---

Dr. Lucinda McCray  
Chairperson, Department of History

---

Edelma D. Huntley  
Dean, Cratis Williams Graduate School

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## **Abstract**

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David Tyson  
B.A., North Carolina State University  
M.A., Appalachian State University

Chairperson: Dr. Michael Krenn

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between the identity crisis in the United States during the early 1990s, a result of the end of the Cold War and the abatement of anti-communism, and the rejection of liberal internationalist principles by the Clinton administration. This rejection was most apparent in the withdrawal of American troops from Somalia and the lack of an interventionist or humanitarian response to the genocide in Rwanda. The goals of this study are to demonstrate the lack of consensus amongst foreign policy intellectuals and policymakers in the absence of anti-communism and containment policy, to establish the real world implications of ideological uncertainty and doubt in the United States, and to assert the importance of the early 1990s as a pivotal point in the history of American foreign policy. Ultimately, this study concludes that the identity crisis of the 1990s and its influence on the Clinton administration fostered the inaction of the United States during the Rwandan Genocide of 1994.

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The shining example they set is ever before me and their ceaseless adoration ever surrounds

me. For their sage counsel, their friendship and their trust, I am profoundly appreciative of

the encouragement of Dr. Miller and Miss Ellen. For making it all worth it, I owe more than I

can ever express to the love of my life, Jessica. In triumph and trial, her love and faith have

exceeded my wildest imagination.

## **Dedication**

To my dearest friend, Jessica

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States and its leaders in the Clinton administration grappled with a new identity crisis in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War. Foreign policy specialists and policymakers found themselves embroiled in a debate over the role of the United States in the international arena in the early 1990s, ultimately unable to achieve a sustainable and permanent consensus on whether the United States should encourage multilateral humanitarianism and democracy promotion or solely engage in foreign affairs when the express interests of the nation were threatened. Whereas anti-communism fostered consensus between these ideological camps throughout much of the Cold War in the form of containment policy, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Soviet communism left Americans and their leaders without a clear purpose or direction in foreign affairs. The debate regarding America's role in the world devoid of the foil of the USSR ultimately resulted in the inaction of the Clinton administration in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994 and the return to *realpolitik*.<sup>1</sup> Without a clear overarching principle to guide its foreign policy, the Clinton administration professed support for the tenets of liberal internationalism (multilateralism, humanitarianism, and democracy promotion) until the failure of the intervention in Somalia caused it to reevaluate its ideology. By 1994, the Clinton

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<sup>1</sup> In the United States, *realpolitik* primarily refers to the power politics and pragmatic approach to international relations promulgated by Henry Kissinger during the presidential administration of Richard Nixon. He advocated for foreign policy built upon national interests and strategic precepts rather than on lofty ideological notions. For an excellent example of Kissinger's notion of *realpolitik* applied to many historical foreign policy developments in the United States and elsewhere, see Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

administration's reaction to the identity crisis of the post-Cold War became one of adherence to national security interests as the premier determinant in American foreign affairs.<sup>2</sup>

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 stands as one of the most egregious and horrifying demonstrations of human cruelty in twentieth century history. Leaving hundreds of thousands dead and countless more displaced, traumatized, and permanently maimed, this unspeakable sequence of violence generated calls for action and intervention from around the world. Global leaders, including many politicians and policymakers in the United States, condemned the bloodshed and expressed sorrow for the massive loss of life; however, the nations of Western Europe and the United States remained largely on the sidelines, allowing the genocide to unfold unimpeded. These nations evacuated their citizens from the small East African nation and extricated all but a handful of UN troops. The words of Western nations did little to stop the machetes from wreaking havoc in the capital city of Kigali and across all of Rwanda. The question that arose immediately in the media, amongst government officials, and within the scholarly community was simple: Why did the United States not lead the way to stop the Rwandan genocide? The United States failed to intervene in Rwanda due to the identity crisis that plagued the nation in the years following the Cold War.

Only five years prior to this terrible humanitarian catastrophe, the world and the United States' role in it changed forever. After more than four decades of geopolitical bipolarity between the world's two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, the Cold War

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the effects of containment policy and anti-communism on American identity during and after the Cold War, see John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Henry Nau, *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). For multiple perspectives on American foreign policy and identity entering the 1990s, see Greg Schmergel, *US Foreign Policy in the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

abruptly and unexpectedly ended. Leaving in its wake an uncertain international system, this sudden shift in the global dynamic created an identity crisis in the United States, a debate that played out in the pages of magazines and newspapers, on television news, on the presidential campaign trail, and in the halls of both Congress and the White House. This debate involved scholars of history, politics, international relations, and economics in addition to the members of the government and the media in the United States espousing their respective ideologies in every available outlet. Those subscribing to a realist ideology, including large portions of the Republican Party, believed that the United States should only pursue foreign endeavors that directly addressed its own national security interests.<sup>3</sup> Those of the liberal internationalist persuasion, containing many members of the Clinton administration and the Democratic Party, asserted that America stood for something greater than its own national interests and should promote the ideals of freedom, democracy, and human rights across the world.<sup>4</sup>

This dichotomy, though not wholly new, grew more distinct in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union due in large part to the removal of anti-communist sentiment as the primary instigation for American foreign policy. Without the specter of Soviet communism looming in the distance and providing direction for the foreign affairs of the United States, these two groups split apart. During the Cold War, realists and idealists often found their interests aligned due to anti-communism. Humanitarian interventions and democracy promotion in the Third World had direct national security implications because they contained the spread of Soviet communism to new frontiers; however, with the Cold War concluded and the USSR in

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<sup>3</sup> James A. Leach, "A Republican Looks at Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Summer, 1992), 17-31; Richard G. Lugar, "The Republican Course," *Foreign Policy*, No. 86 (Spring, 1992), 86-98.

<sup>4</sup> Lee H. Hamilton, "A Democrat Looks at Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Summer, 1992), 32-51; Harris Wofford, "The Democratic Challenge," *Foreign Policy*, No. 86 (Spring, 1992), 99-113.

tatters, the interests of realists and idealists irreparably diverged, resulting in direct and profound impacts on both the fabric of American identity and the nation's international relations.

The identity crisis of the 1990s in American foreign policy developed in three distinguishable phases. The first of these phases began with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and lasted through the first few months of President Clinton's tenure in the White House in 1993. During this formative period, both the realists and the idealists sought to establish primacy in influence over the course of American foreign relations by outlining their visions of the future as well as their interpretations of the past. Realists saw the end of the Cold War strictly as a strategic victory leading to a world fraught with complex problems, while idealists heralded the collapse of communism as an ideological triumph and the dawn of a new peace.<sup>5</sup> The climax of this first phase of the identity crisis was the election of 1992, during which these issues received considerable attention on the national and international stage. President George H.W. Bush and then Governor Bill Clinton deliberated American foreign policy from their entrenched positions as a realist and a liberal internationalist, respectively. Clinton's victory at the polls in November of 1992 signaled an end to the Cold War pragmatism and *realpolitik* practiced by the Bush administration.<sup>6</sup> He and his top aides planned for a turn towards humanitarianism, multilateralism, and democratic promotion. As National Security Advisor Anthony Lake stated,

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<sup>5</sup> See Alvin V. Rubinstein, "New World Order or Hollow Victory?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Fall, 1991), 53-65; John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," in Charles Kegley and Eugene R. Wittkopf, Eds., *The Future of American Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); and Edward N. Lutkin, "Is America on the Way Down? Yes," *Commentary*, Vol. 93 (March, 1992), 15-21.

<sup>6</sup> Theodore C. Sorenson, "America's First Post-Cold War President," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Fall, 1992), 13-30.

the United States would move from a policy of the “containment” of communism to one of the “enlargement” of the democratic sphere of influence.<sup>7</sup>

However, the 1992 election represented neither an absolute affirmation of the tenets of liberal internationalism and idealism in the United States nor an end to the identity crisis. By late-1993 and early-1994, the tide of higher public discourse amongst intellectuals and policymakers shifted again, signaling the beginning of the second phase of the identity crisis.

When President Clinton changed the primary mission of the United States’ presence in the embattled nation of Somalia from one of humanitarian relief and aid to one of peacemaking and nation building, the debate in the United States flared up again.<sup>8</sup> Both sides called into question the viability of such endeavors when the domestic economic situation in the United States created significant cause for concern. When, in October of 1993, 18 American soldiers lost their lives in the Battle of Mogadishu (more commonly known as Black Hawk Down), the proponents of *realpolitik* gained the upper hand in the debate. Using the tragedy as an example of the inevitability of the loss of American lives when adhering to liberal internationalist principles, the realists within the academic community and the political establishment condemned Clinton’s idealist foreign policy as naïve and even reckless, with many members of Congress declaring “that the administration had no clue as to what policy to pursue” in Somalia.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Anthony Lake, “Speech of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Anthony Lake at Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, September 21, 1993,” in Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Albina Shayevich and Boris Zlotnikov, *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches with Commentary* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 20-22.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumerian Press, 2008), 119-120.

<sup>9</sup> George J. Church, “Anatomy of a Disaster,” *Time*, October 18, 1997, 48, as quoted in Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumerian Press, 2008), 164.

Without the firm backbone of anti-communism to bolster his decision-making in Somalia, Clinton and his administration retreated from their initial idealistic hope for multilateral humanitarianism and democracy promotion. Thus, the third and final phase of the identity crisis began, made blatantly manifest in the inaction of the United States in Rwanda in the spring and summer of 1994. Unable to successfully draw a direct line from the ethnically charged massacre that was unfolding daily in Rwanda to the national security interests of the United States, the Clinton administration willfully chose not to act or intervene. Dedicated to inaction, members of the administration refused to even classify the events in Rwanda as genocide.<sup>10</sup> Far from the portrayals of President Clinton's foreign policy as misguided, blundering or inept, he and his counterparts in the administration remained idle to the uncertainty rampant in the ideological milieu of the early 1990s. This decision remains one of the most controversial and critical choices of Clinton's first term in the White House, setting the tone for his foreign policy throughout the remainder of his presidency.

As with any decision of such great import, the failure of the United States to stop the genocide in Rwanda engendered many different interpretations and conclusions amongst contemporary observers and subsequent scholars. In *The International Dimension of Genocide in Rwanda*, historian Arthur J. Klinghoffer laid the blame for the United States' inaction on the inability of the United Nations to effectively organize any viable mechanism for the deterrence of the violence because, throughout the Cold War, political justifications for interventions superseded humanitarianism, leaving the UN with little incentive to develop an effective means of dealing with international crises. Major world powers, such as the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and others, simply circumvented the UN and carried out their own

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas Jehl, "Officials Told to Avoid Calling Rwanda Killings 'Genocide,'" *The New York Times*, June 10, 1994.

intervention campaigns. It was only after the end of the Cold War that the UN began to take a leading role in curbing conflicts such as those in Rwanda and Somalia. According to Klinghoffer, by deferring to the UN, the Clinton administration placed its faith and power in an organization whose “legal constructs and supportive machinery for the new international order were not yet sufficiently developed.”<sup>11</sup> While Klinghoffer’s interpretation regarding the UN’s inefficacy may be accurate, his failure to address the ongoing identity crisis in the United States during the early 1990s resulted in only a partial analysis.

Similarly, Jared Cohen, in *100 Days of Silence: America and the Rwandan Genocide* argued that the United States’ deference to the UN resulted in disappointment because of structural deficiencies within the UN; however, Cohen went one step further and condemned the inaction of the United States as morally irresponsible, stating that the Clinton administration caved to pressure from “Republicans in Congress who were eager to criticize the Democratic President who they viewed as inexperienced in foreign policy.”<sup>12</sup> In his estimation, the United States should have taken a leadership role in confronting the genocide in Rwanda if not through total military intervention, then through “small-scale interventions” that “were often ignored or never proposed.” Cohen’s acknowledgement of the political pressures from the Republican Party on President Clinton and his foreign policy team still fell short of examining the underlying identity crisis behind such political pressures.

Michael Barnett’s *Eyewitness to Genocide* also strongly condemns the lack of an intervening response by the United States in Rwanda. He, too, placed guilt upon the United States for allowing an incompetent UN to dictate the international response to the horrors in

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The International Dimension of Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 5.

<sup>12</sup> Jared Cohen, *100 Days of Silence: America and the Rwandan Genocide* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 3.

Rwanda, positing that this submission was simply a way for the United States to absolve itself of any responsibility or culpability. Barnett granted that both internal and external pressures forced both the United States and the UN to be “selective Samaritans,” unable to help everyone, everywhere, all the time. However, he stated, “All... rules and restraints are supposed to vanish in the face of crimes against humanity and genocide.”<sup>13</sup> Barnett’s characterization of the Clinton administration’s idleness in moral terms also disregards the transformation of American identity and, consequently, foreign policy at the time of the genocide in Rwanda. The United States’ role in the world remained uncertain and the ideological crisis of the 1990s extended far beyond Rwanda, Somalia, or any other individual foreign policy decision. In the face of such tragedy, it is easy to pass moral judgment on the Clinton administration for not acting to curb the bloodshed in Rwanda. Klinghoffer, Cohen, Barnett, and others slung criticism at the United States for remaining inert and willfully opposing action without attempting to accurately identify the root cause of such a course of action.<sup>14</sup> Their desire for direction and purpose on the part of the Clinton administration was unreasonable given that it had neither in the wake of the identity crisis of the early 1990s.

Several other scholars examined the phenomenon of this identity crisis, though they largely failed to connect this development to the genocide in Rwanda. William Hyland, historian and international relations essayist, asserted, “As Bill Clinton took the oath of office there was intellectual confusion over the nature of the post-Cold War world, and therefore over what the

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to Genocide* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 18.

<sup>14</sup> Linda R. Melvern, “The Security Council: Behind the Scenes in the Rwandan Genocide,” in Adam Jones, ed. *Genocide, War Crimes and the West* (New York: Zed Books, 2004); Fred Grünfeld and Anke Huijboom, *The Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda: The Role of Bystanders* (Leiden, NL: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007).



aims of American foreign policy should be.”<sup>15</sup> He conflated the decline of anti-communism with the rise of such ideological puzzlement, stating, “It was becoming clearer that the president could not sound the trumpets and call the nation to action if the enemy was a petty Middle Eastern dictator, not the evil empire of communism.”<sup>16</sup> Though Hyland’s examinations dealt primarily with European security, the new Russia, East Asia, and Latin America, his assertions stand true for interventionism in East Africa during the first Clinton administration.

Richard Melanson, author of *American Foreign Policy Since the Vietnam War*, traced the struggle for American identity and foreign policy back to the late phase of the Cold War. Finding its original roots in the collapse of what he termed the Cold War “consensus” after the disastrous war in Vietnam, he contended that the end of the Cold War created even more difficult challenges than Vietnam. Melanson stated, “Civil wars, politically caused famine, ethnic strife, and massive human rights violations in areas of questionable importance” to the United States constituted unique affronts to the previously mutually agreeable interests of realists and idealists.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the remote nature of Somalia and Rwanda and their respective troubles and tribulations contributed to the Clinton administration’s rejection of liberal internationalism in 1993 and 1994.

Finally, Melvyn Leffler and Jeffrey Legro addressed the identity crisis of the 1990s by stating that the post-Cold War period was “an era that began with carefully managed euphoria that morphed into a benign indifference to most matters international.”<sup>18</sup> Whereas the Cold War

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<sup>15</sup> William G. Hyland, *Clinton’s World: Remaking American Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since the Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Nixon to Clinton* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 26.

<sup>18</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, Eds. *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy After the Berlin Wall and 9/11* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 4.

era conjured both feelings of nationalism and humanitarianism, the post-Cold War world excited neither. The brief, fleeting idealism of 1989-1992 quickly gave way to the realization that America faced a world “far more turbulent and perilous than anticipated.”<sup>19</sup> The examination of the particular cases of Somalia and Rwanda open a window into this new American consciousness in ways that other foreign policy developments of the day cannot. They are the only decisions made by the Clinton administration in its first term completely separate from the residual global maladies of the Cold War and the dictates of America’s tangible national security needs. The crisis in the Balkans and the restructuring of Eastern Europe belong in the first of these categories while developments regarding China, North Korea and the Middle East belong in the latter. The civil war in Somalia and the genocide in Rwanda had negligible relevance to the immediate results of the Cold War. Neither of them presented an imminent threat to the United States economically or militarily. They both stand as the litmus tests for the Clinton administration’s promise to promote the principles of liberal internationalism. In retreating from these tenets after the intervention in Somalia and choosing to stand on the sidelines during the genocide in Rwanda, Clinton and his advisors embodied the uncertainty and ambiguity of the period. Optimism and altruism succumbed to pragmatism and reticence. The realities of the new world order clashed with the idealism so prevalent only a few short years before. In Rwanda and across the spectrum of America’s foreign policy decision-making, the return to *realpolitik* was complete.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 12.

## Chapter 2: Out With The Cold, In With The New

On the cold, crisp afternoon of January 20, 1993, Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas became the 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States. Standing before Chief Justice of the Supreme Court William Rehnquist and accompanied by his wife, Hilary, and his daughter, Chelsea, Clinton repeated the time-honored and hallowed oath of office on the steps of the Capitol. Throngs of eager onlookers crowded the steps, issuing back along the length of the National Mall in the heart of Washington, D.C. Members of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Armed Forces, and the general citizenry cheered as Howitzer cannons signaled the peaceful, democratic transfer of power. As the newly sworn-in President Clinton stepped to the podium to deliver his inaugural address, cameras from news organizations around the world flashed to capture the moment. The scores in attendance and countless masses watching from their respective homes fell silent to hear Clinton's words of promise, progress, and hope. For the first time in more than forty years, a newly elected President could honestly proclaim, "Today, a generation raised in the shadows of the Cold War assumes new responsibilities in a world warmed by the sunshine of freedom but threatened still by ancient hatreds and new plagues."<sup>20</sup>

His message was clear: The Cold War was over and America stood as the ideological and geopolitical victor. Though much of his speech centered upon the domestic and economic concerns so prevalent in the minds of the American people, President Clinton declared that the

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<sup>20</sup> William J. Clinton, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, University of California, Santa Barbara. < <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46366>> Accessed March 3, 2014.

United States would act “when our vital interests are challenged, or the will and conscience of the international community defied.” He emphasized multilateralism and the promotion of budding democracies across the globe as key tenets of American foreign policy in the wake of the collapse of Soviet communism. He portrayed America’s role in the post-Cold War world as that of a shepherd leading its international flock towards liberal ideals and democratic freedoms, stating, “Our hopes, our hearts, our hands are with those on every continent who are building democracy and freedom. Their cause is America’s cause.” He took the tone of an idealist, speaking of the transformative power of American principles and alluding to a world on the cusp of a new era of peace. While acknowledging the challenges ahead, President Clinton assertively proclaimed, “America must continue to lead the world we did so much to make.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the first post-Cold War presidency began in earnest. As the new commander-in-chief walked the streets of Washington that afternoon flanked by all the pomp and pageantry typical of presidential inaugurations, he did so as the first president in more than forty years to be free of the threat of Soviet communism. As intimated in his inaugural address, Clinton intended to seize the moment and forge a new path for American foreign policy; however, the idealism of that propitious January afternoon faded quickly, replaced by pragmatism and reluctance for international endeavors, multilateral or otherwise, not directly concerning the national security interests of the United States. For all the conviction and gusto in Clinton’s inaugural remarks, there existed an undercurrent of doubt and uncertainty at the highest levels in the United States regarding the nation’s very identity and its role in the post-Cold War international geopolitical system.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

In just two short years, this identity crisis, when coupled with the realities faced by the Clinton administration in its new foreign policy, resulted in a shift in higher public discourse back to a nationalistic *realpolitik*. Without returning to the complete isolationism of the 1930s, as many feared, nor fully embracing Woodrow Wilson's principled diplomacy, leading American intellectuals and policymakers perpetuated the realism that defined much of the icy relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent abatement of American anti-communist sentiment, the advancement of neo-Wilsonian democracy promotion by the Clinton administration, and the nature of interventions and foreign affairs in the post-Cold War world combined to form the end of the brief hope for an idealistic foreign policy in a world on a teleological progression toward universal liberal democratic principles.

In the spring of 1990, just months after the first bricks of the Berlin Wall came crashing down, William Hyland, then the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, one of the marquis journals regarding international relations, wrote of the resurgence of the Great Debate of the 1930s. Hyland characterized this conflict as one between “the dictates of geopolitics and the values the United States has championed – human rights and democracy.” The most important question facing America, he asserted, was “the proper balance between concern for human rights and the requirements of *realpolitik*.”<sup>22</sup> Mirroring and expounding upon Hyland's contentions, Charles William Maynes crafted a concurrent article in *Foreign Policy* in which he wrote of the dangers of depriving the “American foreign policy establishment of its main organizing principle: anti-communism.” The effect of such a deprivation, he argued, would be a dispute between disparate domestic factions “struggling to maneuver into place three very different foundation stones on

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<sup>22</sup> William G. Hyland, “America's New Course,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Spring, 1990), 4.

which a new foreign policy consensus might be built: national interest, democratic values, or global partnership.”<sup>23</sup> The words of these two scholars, published at the very outset of a new decade and a new era in world history, proved prophetic, effectively outlining the identity crisis taking shape in the 1990s.

The ideological and philosophical debate amongst foreign policy scholars and intellectuals constituted the first major manifestation of the identity crisis in the immediate post-Cold War era. With titles ranging from university professors, think tank fellows, former government officials, and publication editors, these men and women contemplated the nature of the “new world order” in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, including but not limited to America’s new role in such a world and the implications of that new role on the landscape of American identity and foreign policy. In the pages of *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *World Policy Journal* and other influential periodicals specializing in foreign policy and catering to an educated and informed readership, these intellectuals and their arguments both represented and addressed the tests facing the United States in the uncharted territory of a world devoid of Cold War bipolarity in geopolitics. Though their subjects varied and their assertions were diverse, the vast majority of intellectuals agreed that the absence of anti-communism created a void in American policy and identity. Without the threat of Soviet communism as a factor in foreign affairs, these intellectuals searched for new unifying factors and principles in order to construct a relevant and practical post-Cold War ideological framework for American international relations. As a result, they brought into question the notion of American supremacy and preeminence in the geopolitical arena, one of the key facets of the nation’s identity throughout the Cold War.

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<sup>23</sup> Charles William Maynes, “America Without the Cold War,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 78 (Spring 1990), 8.

Hilton Kramer, author of *The Twilight of the Intellectuals*, asserted that the Cold War “was always as much a war of ideas as it was a contest for military superiority.”<sup>24</sup> Intellectuals became important weapons for the United States to combat the USSR on the battlefield of ideas. The more than forty-year standoff between the world’s two superpowers pitted capitalism against communism, democracy against autocracy. It represented, in the minds of many intellectuals, politicians and ordinary citizens, a Manichean struggle between the forces of good and evil. Randall Bennett Woods, author of *Quest for Identity*, deftly identified this notion and how it culminated under the Reagan administration of the 1980s. He stated, “Soviet communism represented all the negative forces abroad in the world: atheism, state socialism and immorality. Likewise, anti-communism was a crucial component of the struggle to resurrect the hallowed principles of liberty, free enterprise, patriotism and family values.”<sup>25</sup> The Cold War brought clarity to American identity and fostered nationalism within both the intelligentsia and the general populace, providing the foil for American greatness and exemplifying the need for a strong and pervasive American presence in the world.

Therefore, the end of the Cold War in a political and military capacity also represented an end to its particular ideological struggles and conflicts. With the philosophical foe of communism removed and the Manichean division of Cold War ideology eliminated, American intellectuals debated the nature of the peace, the implications for American identity, and the way forward in an unknown new world, often arriving at competing conclusions and offering disparate recommendations. Their estimations, pontifications, and hypotheses laid the foundations upon which was laid much of post-Cold War thought and policy. In the immediate

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<sup>24</sup> Hilton Kramer, *The Twilight of the Intellectuals: Culture and Politics in the Era of the Cold War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 1999), xv.

<sup>25</sup> Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 450.

aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, deliberations among these men and women diverged into two distinct schools of thought predicated on contrasting ideological assumptions.

The first philosophical group to arise in the wake of the conclusion of the Cold War was idealist in nature. Typified by thinkers such as Francis Fukuyama, these intellectuals held three core beliefs that informed their ideology. First, they maintained that Western liberal democracy was not only vastly superior to Soviet communism but also that its superiority contributed the demise of the communist bloc. In 1989, Fukuyama, at the time a member of the RAND Corporation's Political Science Department and a scholar affiliated with US State Department, argued,

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.<sup>26</sup>

Many other intellectuals supported Fukuyama's assertion that the triumph of liberal democracy in the "realm of ideas" represented the beginning of a new epoch in global history.<sup>27</sup> This optimism and idealism derived directly from the nationalism of the United States during the Cold War built upon the foundation of anti-communism. The belief in the greatness of the United States and its supremacy over the Soviet Union translated expressly into the idealism of Fukuyama and others.

The second major school of thought regarding American identity and foreign policy in the post-Cold War era was significantly less idealist in nature. They held that the superpower status of the United States no longer had relevance in the new world order and that the removal

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<sup>26</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16 (Summer, 1989), 4.

<sup>27</sup> See Paul H. Nitze, "America: An Honest Broker," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Fall, 1990), 1-14; Charles Krauthammer, "Universal Dominion: Toward A Unipolar World," *The National Interest* 18 (Winter, 1989-90), 46-49; Larry Diamond, "Promoting Democracy," in Eugene R. Wittkopf, ed. *The Future of American Foreign Policy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); and Stanley Kober, "Idealpolitik," *Foreign Policy*, No. 79 (Summer, 1990), 3-24.



of anti-communist sentiment from the equation resulted in rudderless foreign policy decisions. As William Pfaff asserted, “Remove the rivalry and the category [of superpower] vanishes.”<sup>28</sup> These intellectuals argued for a new course of foreign policy and a new American identity based upon the realities of the post-Cold War. *Foreign Affairs* devoted an entire issue to such concerns and debate in the winter of 1991. In this issue, William Hyland reemphasized the need for a new consensus and a new direction in foreign affairs, one that placed domestic concerns over foreign concerns without completely turning to isolationism. He stated,

Policymakers will have to placate nationalistic sentiment at home and satisfy several overlapping centers of power abroad. On occasion there will have to be compromises on issues such as free trade, the crusade for democracy, human rights and the rule of law – the very principles of the new world order. Much like the policy of containment, a prolonged pragmatism may be necessary to finally realize those laudable goals.<sup>29</sup>

David Gergen supported Hyland’s assertions in an article published in the same seminal issue of *Foreign Affairs*, claiming, “The United States cannot achieve order in its streets or even its capital, much less in the rest of the world.”<sup>30</sup>

This ideological debate amongst intellectuals soon translated into a practical debate amongst politicians and government policymakers. Democrats fell in line with Fukuyama’s optimism for idealism and liberal internationalism. Republicans subscribed to Hyland’s and Gergen’s realism and pragmatism. Each side called for a new world order, though built upon vastly different foundations, for both liberals and conservatives understood the importance of what Congressman James Leach called “a hinge of history,” a momentous point in time when the future of the nation’s identity and role in the world would change dramatically.<sup>31</sup> President

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<sup>28</sup> William Pfaff, “Redefining World Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990/1991), 34.

<sup>29</sup> William Hyland, “The Case for Pragmatism,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (1991/1992), 45.

<sup>30</sup> David Gergen, “America’s Missed Opportunities,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (1991/1992), 1.

<sup>31</sup> James A. Leach, “A Republican Looks at Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Summer, 1992), 17.

George H.W. Bush initiated the international conversation about a new world order in a meeting with Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in Helsinki, Finland in 1990 and again in speech before a joint session of Congress on September 11, 1990. In this speech, Bush sounded like a conservative brand of idealist, calling for a “a new era: freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice and more secure in the quest for peace.” He expressed his desire for a world “in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice.”<sup>32</sup> His actions, however, reflected a strong commitment to the tenets of realism and *realpolitik*, calling for prudence and shrewdly dealing with individual policy decisions separately rather than as part of a grand design. President Bush assembled a team of conservative realists to lead his foreign policy team, including Brent Scowcroft as his National Security Advisor, James Baker as his Secretary of State, and Dick Cheney as his Secretary of Defense. He and his advisors would create a new world order through practical solutions and collective security rather than ideological frameworks and ambitious designs.<sup>33</sup>

As the election neared, President Bush placed a renewed emphasis on issues within the United States to address the growing focus of the American public on domestic problems. Despite his impressive foreign policy credentials, he attempted to downplay foreign affairs in favor of internal projects. In his State of the Union Address on January 28, 1992, President Bush stated,

I mean to speak this evening of the changes that can take place in our country, now that we can stop making the sacrifices we had to make when we had an avowed enemy that

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<sup>32</sup> George H.W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990,” George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Texas A&M University.  
<[http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=2217&year=1990&month=9](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=2217&year=1990&month=9)>  
Accessed January 30, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Colin Dueck, *Hard Line: The Republican Party and US Foreign Policy Since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 233-236.

was a superpower. Now we can look homeward even more and move to set right what needs to be set right.<sup>34</sup>

His pivot towards domestic concerns in the early months of 1992 and those leading into the election in November proved too little too late. His challenger, then Governor Clinton, had already implemented a highly effective campaign strategy built upon domestic policy concerns, such as unemployment, deficit reduction, infrastructure deficiencies and healthcare reform. Clinton won the election with “370 votes, carrying such strategically important states as California, New York, Ohio and Illinois.”<sup>35</sup>

By focusing on domestic issues, Clinton negated the impressive foreign policy credentials of President Bush and his foreign policy team. As he agreed with Bush’s call for a new world order, he and his advisors thought better of attempting to explain the nuances of his foreign policy ideology when the Bush team had such a formidable body of work in international relations. Clinton provided vague sketches of his plans for his foreign policy as president but withheld his total enthusiasm for liberal internationalism until after the conclusion of the election. In August 1992, Clinton stated, “We will stand up for our interests, but we will share burdens, where possible, through multilateral efforts to secure the peace.”<sup>36</sup> This subdued comment was a far cry from the unabashed devotion to idealism prevalent in later remarks by Clinton.

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<sup>34</sup> George H.W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 1, 1992,” George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Texas A&M University. < [http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=3886&year=1992&month=01](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=3886&year=1992&month=01) > Accessed January 28, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> William C. Berman, *From the Center to the Edge: The Politics and Policies of the Clinton Presidency* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 16.

<sup>36</sup> William J. Clinton, “Address to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on August 13, 1992,” *New York Times*, August 14, 1992, as cited in William Hyland, *Clinton’s World: Remaking American Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 18.

After the election, President Clinton and his top foreign policy advisors heralded the optimism and idealism of Fukuyama, promoting a liberal internationalist agenda and offering humanitarianism, multilateralism, and democracy promotion as the new principles of American foreign relations. Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Anthony Lake, in a speech given at Johns Hopkins University in September of 1993, lauded the victory of the United States in the Cold War. He asserted, “America’s core concepts – democracy and market economics – are more broadly accepted than ever.” Lake found one of the distinguishing features of the post-Cold War era to be American preeminence and primacy in global affairs, stating, “The second feature of this era is that we are its dominant power.” Finally, after extolling the virtues of America’s victory in the practice of the containment of communism during the Cold War, he called for “the successor to a doctrine of containment” to be a “strategy of enlargement – enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies.”<sup>37</sup>

The Clinton administration carried these positive hopes and dreams into an already dire situation in Somalia. Armed with a new set of guiding principles and a vision of a new world order, President Clinton and his top foreign policy advisors decided to exact sweeping change in Somalia through peacemaking operations rather than humanitarian aid. However, the optimism of the second phase of the early 1990s identity crisis faced a daunting challenge in this small East African nation, one with far-reaching consequences yet unforeseen by the majority of officials in the Clinton administration.

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<sup>37</sup> Anthony Lake, “Speech of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Anthony Lake at Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, September 21, 1993,” in Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Albina Shayevich and Boris Zlotnikov, *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches with Commentary* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 20-22.

### Chapter 3: To Idealism and Back in Somalia

It was more than a helicopter crash. It cracked the task force's sense of righteous invulnerability. The Black Hawks and Little Birds were their trump card in this God-forsaken place. The choppers, more than their rifles and machine guns, were what kept the savage mobs at a distance. The Somalis *couldn't* shoot them down. But they had seen it, the chopper spinning, falling, one of the D-boys hanging on with one hand, both feet in the air, riding it down.<sup>38</sup>

When a Black Hawk helicopter with the call sign of Super Six One fell from the sky over Mogadishu, Somalia on October 3, 1993, the brief and fleeting certainty of the Clinton administration and the United States regarding liberal internationalism and idealism fell with it. Struck by a rocket propelled grenade and sent cascading toward the sandy streets below, the successful downing of Super Six One set in motion a chain of events that would cast the identity crisis of the 1990s back into full swing. In the short term, it was the first of several unfortunate mishaps on that October day in Somalia, transforming a coordinated military operation into a desperate rescue mission and a brutal gunfight in the streets of Mogadishu that left 18 American soldiers dead and many others wounded. In the long term, it resulted in the ultimate withdrawal of US and UN forces from Somalia and a retreat by the Clinton administration of its optimistic promulgation of humanitarianism, multilateralism, democracy promotion, and nation building as the new central principles of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. This retreat and the resurgence of doubt over the appropriate role of the United States in the international arena eventually caused the abstention of the United States from an intervention in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994.

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<sup>38</sup> Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), 80.

The failure of the intervention in Somalia spawned numerous historical studies seeking to answer the questions of why the intervention failed and which nations, figures, forces and organizations were to blame. Mohamed Sahnoun, author of *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities*, pointed to an inexperienced and poorly prepared United Nations blundering through the crisis in Somalia as the principle cause of the intervention's failure. He stated, "The legacy of the Cold War is being felt both in the ineptitude of the UN's structures and in the waste of its human resources." In the post-Cold War world, Sahnoun argued, the UN operated in a way "not at all adapted to the requirements of the new era," deferring to national sovereignty rather than asserting its own authority and not focusing on the prevention of crises.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Sahnoun condemned the United States and other nations for not taking greater and more decisive unilateral action to address the violence in Somalia. According to Sahnoun, Somalia, as a member of the UN, a member of the League of Arab States and an ally of the United States and several major European powers, should have had "no shortage of actors who could have intervened to mediate the conflicts that engulfed" it.<sup>40</sup>

Conversely, Kenneth Rutherford, in *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia*, ascribed blame to the circumstances of the post-Cold War era and the complexity of the situation in Somalia. He stated,

Somalia was the first international action in an imploded state after the Cold War, and also the first time the UN negotiated with nonstate actors on humanitarian and security issues. Nonconsensual intervention by the United States and UN in Somalia, therefore, had little in the way of precedent to guide its operations.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Mohamed Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1994), 54.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008), xviii.

Thus, in Rutherford's estimation, both the United States and the UN conducted a reactive rather than proactive intervention in Somalia because their understanding of the nature of post-Cold War interventions and failed states was insufficient and still undeveloped. However, both he and Sahnoun failed to address the ongoing identity crisis in the United States. While their arguments were sound and their positions were well founded, these two scholars included no examination of the domestic ideological forces at play in the United States during the 1990s. The removal of United States and UN forces in 1993 and 1994 from Somalia and the ultimate failure of the intervention occurred not only because of the inefficacy of the UN, the unpredictable nature of Somalia and the novelty of "nonconsensual intervention," but also because of the ambiguity and uncertainty in America's role in the post-Cold War world. President Clinton's premature withdrawal of American troops from Somalia was as much a realization of the shortcomings of liberal internationalism as a practical response to a calamitous and deadly ordeal in the Battle of Mogadishu.

Although President Clinton held the reins of American power at the time of what became known as either the Battle of Mogadishu or, more commonly, Black Hawk Down, he did not initiate the United States' presence in Somalia during the early 1990s. His predecessor, George H.W. Bush and his administration, saw fit to send 25,000 American troops to the small nation on the Horn of Africa in December of 1992. This commitment of military force held the monikers of the US United Task Force (UNITAF) and Operation Restore Hope and sought to create a safe and secure environment in Somalia for the distribution of food, water, and supplies by multiple international humanitarian aid organizations. Under UN Resolutions 733 and 746, which called "all States and international organizations to contribute to the efforts of the humanitarian assistance to the population in Somalia" in the creation of UNOSOM I (United Nations

Operation in Somalia), there was little provision for the protection of charitable workers and donated necessities by the UN.<sup>42</sup> Emboldened by the success of the United States military in ousting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the Bush administration committed American troops to this humanitarian cause.<sup>43</sup>

Many contemporary observers commended this move by President Bush and his foreign policy team due to the increasingly destabilized and violent condition of Somalia. Culminating in the 1980s, during the rule of Mohammed Said Barre, Somalia became consumed by internal strife and factionalism. Clan-based rivalry between the five principle clans in Somalia, the Hawiye, the Isaq, the Rahanweyn, the Darog, and the Dir, pulled the nation apart and cast it into lawlessness and civil war, eventually leading to the removal of Said Barre from authority in 1991. Said Barre, in response to the uptick in violence and disregard for central governmental control in the late 1980s in northern Somalia, fought to reestablish authority and “won most of the fighting.... [He] carried out reprisals against civilians, massacring some 50,000 people, largely of the main northwestern Isaq clan, and forcing another 500,000 into exile.”<sup>44</sup> Such demonstrations of force had the opposite effect of galvanizing Said Barre’s central authority, instead causing the spread of rebellion into the whole of Somalia under the banner of the United Somali Congress. After Said Barre fled to exile in Nigeria in late 1991, the United Somali

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<sup>42</sup> UN Resolution 733, January 23, 1992

[http://daccess-dds-](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/010/92/IMG/NR001092.pdf?OpenElement)

[ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/010/92/IMG/NR001092.pdf?OpenElement](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/010/92/IMG/NR001092.pdf?OpenElement)

<sup>43</sup> Gary T. Dempsey and Roger W. Fontaine, *Fool’s Errands: America’s Recent Encounters with Nation Building* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2001).

<sup>44</sup> Nina J. Fitzgerald, Ed. *Somalia: Issues, History and Bibliography* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 2.



Congress diverged along a north-south axis, forming two new groups bent on control of Somalia led by Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Mohamed Farah Aidid.<sup>45</sup>

The seeds of malcontent and discord had much deeper roots in Somalia's colonial past. In 1960, Somalia earned independence after a century of French, British, and Italian rule. Previously separated under colonial authority, the various regions of modern Somalia brought their own systems of government and clan loyalties to the new nation, creating a volatile situation from the outset. The British controlled northern Somalia, informing its sense of nationhood and its practice of governmental authority, while the Italians held southern Somalia, influencing the region in distinct and disparate ways from the experience of those in the North. Northern Somalis, primarily of the Isaq clan, distrusted the government established in Mogadishu after independence due to its location in the South and the heterogeneous ethnic composition of the capital and the rest of southern Somalia.<sup>46</sup> This tension between the North and the South erupted on several occasions, both allowing for and contributing to the end of the rule of Mohammed Said Barre. In the absence of Said Barre and amid the division of Farah Aidid and Mahdi Mohammed, clan warlords clashed for dominance in Mogadishu and across the country.

When this powder keg of regional, ethnic and political divisions finally exploded in 1991 and 1992, resulting in widespread death and famine, it endangered the United Nations' efforts to provide relief to the victims. The Bush administration resolved to act to support the UN's energies. As Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell stated, the unraveling situation in Somalia "wrenched our hearts night after night, with images of people starving to death before our eyes... I was not eager to get involved in a Somalian (sic) civil war, but we

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<sup>45</sup> I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008), 3.

were apparently the only nation that could end the suffering.”<sup>47</sup> President Bush echoed Powell’s sentiments in an address to the nation, stating, “The people of Somalia, especially the children of Somalia, need our help. We’re able to ease their suffering. We must help them live. We must give them hope. America must act.” The Bush administration made it very clear, however, that this intervention was solely humanitarian in nature. As President Bush declared, “Our mission has a limited objective: To open the supply routes, to get the food moving, and to prepare the way for a U.N. peacekeeping force to keep it moving.”<sup>48</sup> The United States had no desire to “dictate political outcomes” in Somalia.

Upon his election, President Clinton espoused a much different approach to the situation in Somalia and foreign affairs, in general. Whereas President Bush spent the last days of his presidency calling for American action in Somalia, Clinton spent the first days of his calling for a reduction in military expenditures and the scaling down of the American military. In his February 1993 State of the Union address, he stated, “As we restructure American military forces to meet the new threats of the post-Cold War world, we can responsibly reduce our defense budget.”<sup>49</sup> By May of 1993, President Clinton began removing US troops from Somalia despite the continued violence and upheaval in Mogadishu and across the country. In a speech on the lawn of the White House, Clinton asserted, “You have demonstrated that the world is ready to mobilize its resources in new ways to face the challenges of a new age. And you have proved yet

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<sup>47</sup> Colin Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), 564, as cited in Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008), 68.

<sup>48</sup> George H.W. Bush, “Address to the Nation on the Situation in Somalia,” December 4, 1992, The George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Texas A&M University. <[http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=5100&year=1992&month=12](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=5100&year=1992&month=12) Accessed January 17, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> William J. Clinton, “State of the Union Address,” February 17, 1993 <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=47232>

again that American leadership can help to mobilize international action to create a better world.”<sup>50</sup> He proclaimed the US intervention in Somalia a success and immediately began withdrawing troops, calling for the UN to once again assume the mantle of the primary arbiter of the international involvement in Somalia. In his estimation, the responsibility for policing the world rested upon the UN rather than the United States.

By simultaneously deescalating the US presence in Somalia with the cessation of UNITAF while supporting the creation of UNOSOM II, the second UN task force assigned to Somalia, the Clinton administration advanced the principles of liberal internationalism and idealism. UNOSOM II, at the urging of President Clinton and US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright, changed the emphasis of the intervention in Somalia from solely guaranteeing humanitarian relief to restructuring and rebuilding Somalia’s civil and political institutions under UN Resolution 814. This momentous resolution held the stated aim of nation building and democracy promotion in Somalia by assisting “the people of Somalia to promote and advance political reconciliation, through broad participation by all sectors of Somali society and the reestablishment of national and regional institutions and civil administration in the entire country.”<sup>51</sup> In conjunction with supporting the creation of UNOSOM II, the United States recommitted troops to Somalia.

The summer of 1993 saw the continued deterioration of the Somali crisis. Mohamed Farah Aidid gained a significant foothold in Mogadishu and a sizeable advantage over the other sparring warlords in Somalia, using his power and influence to continue frustrating the efforts of the UN and other international organizations to provide humanitarian relief to the hungry, the

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<sup>50</sup> William J. Clinton, “Remarks on Operation Restore Hope,” May 5, 1993  
<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/4564>

<sup>51</sup> UN Resolution 814, March 26, 1993  
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/226/18/IMG/N9322618.pdf?OpenElement>

sick and the dying. Aidid possessed a strong distaste for the UN presence in Somalia, calling it “too meddling, too divisive and too secretive to produce any positive result for the betterment of Somalia.”<sup>52</sup> He and his men confounded efforts by UNOSOM II to restructure and rebuild Somalia, as well. On June 5, Aidid’s men carried out an attack on a group of Pakistani UN peacekeepers, killing 24 and injuring dozens more. Aidid’s men “viciously tore apart the bodies of the Pakistanis, some troops were disemboweled or had their eyes gouged out by Somali mobs.”<sup>53</sup> The UN and the United States took immediate action, calling for the “capture, detention and trial for Mr. Aidid,” because allowing such aggression and bloodshed to go unchecked and unpunished “would have signaled to other clan leaders that the UN is not serious” in its commitment to the security of Somalia.<sup>54</sup> The United States recommitted troops to the cause of capturing Aidid, sending fresh units of Army Rangers and Marines into Mogadishu.

On October 3, 1993, many of these troops undertook a mission to capture some of Aidid’s leading lieutenants in the heart of Mogadishu. With the downing of Black Hawk helicopters and the killing of 18 American soldiers, this mission quickly became a calamity for the United States and the Clinton administration. It brought into question the viability of the US and UN intervention in Somalia and shook the foundations of the Clinton administration’s belief in and hope for liberal internationalism and idealism in the post-Cold War world. Days after the deadly ordeal, President Clinton proclaimed, “It is not our job to rebuild Somalia’s society.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Paul Lewis, “Somali Faction Leader Criticizes UN Peace Effort,” *The New York Times*, January 6, 1993.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism Under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008), 131.

<sup>54</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, “Yes, There is a Reason to be in Somalia,” *The New York Times*, August 10, 1993.

<sup>55</sup> William J. Clinton, “Address to the Nation on Somalia,” *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 29, No. 40 (October 11, 1993): 2022-2025, as cited in Gary T. Dempsey and

This retreat from the devotion to democratic promotion and nation building in Somalia embodied the beginning of the end of Clinton's idealism and engendered a reinvigoration of the identity crisis within the United States.

Intellectuals immediately seized upon the turning away from liberal internationalism and the multilateral intervention in Somalia as an opportunity to once again debate the course of American foreign policy and the nature of America's role in the world, the vast majority of them condemning the intervention and the direction promoted by the Clinton administration. John R. Bolton, who later became US Ambassador to the UN under President George W. Bush, asserted, "The Clinton administration...set about pioneering 'assertive multilateralism' and efforts at nation-building that led to the violence and embarrassment that ultimately ensued."<sup>56</sup> In his challenge of Clinton's agenda in Somalia, Bolton also advocated for "leadership – whether through the United Nations or otherwise – only where clear American national interests are at stake."<sup>57</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, another future member of the George W. Bush administration, mirrored Bolton's claims, observing, "The administration has thus far failed to articulate an understanding of the national interest sufficiently compelling to engage major efforts by the country...in international affairs."<sup>58</sup> Believing the Clinton administration to have a fundamental misunderstanding of the necessary priorities of America's foreign policy, Wolfowitz contended,

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Roger W. Fontaine, *Fool's Errands: America's Recent Encounters with Nation Building* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2001), 25.

<sup>56</sup> John R. Bolton, "Wrong Turn in Somalia," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January-February, 1994), 56.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>58</sup> Paul D. Wolfowitz, "Clinton's First Year," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (January – February, 1994), 30.

“The dangers do not come from Somalia or Haiti, but rather, in the near to medium term, from what National Security Advisor Anthony Lake has called ‘backlash states’ like Iran and Iraq.”<sup>59</sup>

The contentions of Bolton and Wolfowitz represent the return of realism and realpolitik with a vengeance in the wake of the catastrophe in Mogadishu. The Clinton administration’s hopes for multilateralism and humanitarianism came crashing down along with the Black Hawk helicopters felled by Somali rockets. This retreat from idealism and liberal internationalism came to full fruition in the inaction of the United States during the genocide in Rwanda only a few months after the Battle of Mogadishu. Once again, a small country in East Africa called for international aid; however, the United States did not answer the call like it did in Somalia.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 40.

#### **Chapter 4: *Realpolitik in Rwanda***

By the spring of 1994, the Clinton administration's hopes for humanitarianism and multilateralism as the new key tenets of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era had all but disappeared. The quandary presented to the administration in the form of the genocide in Rwanda proved fatal for such aspirations. The neo-Wilsonian idealism promulgated by President Clinton during the 1992 election, expounded upon by his close advisors in the early months of his presidency, and unsuccessfully launched into action in the calamitous intervention in Somalia, quickly faded, resulting in inaction by the United States in Rwanda during one of the worst tragedies in human history. After exhausting its political and ideological capital on nation building and peacemaking in Somalia, the Clinton administration found another commitment of forces and resources in East Africa practically impossible. In the return to realpolitik, advisors, intellectuals, and policymakers at the highest levels advocated only for foreign involvements that directly addressed the national security interests of the United States, signaling the end of what many believed would be a new dawn for American foreign affairs. The third and final phase of the identity crisis during the early 1990s constituted a reemergence of pragmatic realism and a rejection of liberal internationalism. It was this ultimate pivot by the Clinton administration that engineered the lack of an American response in Rwanda. After the doubt and uncertainty immediately following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the ideological debate in the months surrounding the 1992 election, and the early optimism for liberal internationalism's success by

Clinton and his top aides, the inaction in Rwanda represented the culmination of a meandering path through the unprecedented identity crisis of the early 1990s.

On April 15, 1994, United States Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright received a cable from the US State Department bearing a “confidential” label. Upon opening the message, Ambassador Albright found instructions for her upcoming discussion in the UN Security Council regarding the escalating crisis in Rwanda. The authors of the cable stated that officials in the State Department found “insufficient justification” for the continued commitment of UN peacekeeping forces in Rwanda and directed Ambassador Albright to lobby for the “full, orderly withdrawal of all UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda) personnel as soon as possible.”<sup>60</sup> Over the next two days, she carried out these instructions with considerable success. Due in no small part to the urgings of Ambassador Albright and the United States, the UN immediately began preparations for a full withdrawal from Rwanda.

Seven thousand miles away in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, the Rwandan military and bands of armed militias, most notably the *Interahamwe* and the *Impuzamugambi*, continued to commit mass murder in an alarmingly rapid, effective, and widespread manner. As officials at the UN’s headquarters in New York and in government offices in nations around the world debated the necessity of action in Rwanda, these groups slaughtered hundreds of thousands of innocent Rwandans. By the end of a 100-day period that began on April 7, 1994 with the assassination of Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana, approximately 800,000 men, women,

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<sup>60</sup> US Department of State, cable number 099440, to US Mission to the United Nations, New York, “Talking Points for UNAMIR Withdrawal,” April 15, 1994. Confidential. <<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Eensarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB53/index.html#4>> Accessed Nov. 2, 2012.



and children lay dead in the streets and fields.<sup>61</sup> Approximately 175,000 women and children contracted HIV as a result of pervasive and systematic raping.<sup>62</sup> Millions of Rwandans lost their homes and fled to refugee camps in the neighboring countries. Stories of horrific atrocities surfaced in news media outlets across the globe. Reports of brutal murders and dismemberments with crude machetes, the smashing of children's skulls against walls, dams clogged by rivers filled with corpses, and the violent rape of both women and young children were commonplace. In the face of such intolerable terror, the United States continued to place on pressure on the UN to withdraw from Rwanda and abstained from committing any forces to intervene.

The origins of this unspeakable bloodshed lay in Africa's colonial past. Although German colonists entered Rwanda in 1884, it was the arrival of the Belgians in 1916 that radically transformed Rwandan culture, society, and politics and laid the foundation for genocide. In 1935, Belgian colonists issued ethnic identity cards separating the vast majority of Rwandans into two distinct yet almost virtually indiscernible groups: the Hutu and the Tutsi. These groups were rigidly enforced with mobility between the two nearly impossible. The Belgians installed Tutsi leaders into positions of power, using them to govern the country and oversee its rich wealth of coffee and tea exports. Discontent between the Hutu and the Tutsi continued to fester until, in 1959, the two came to open violence in the Rwandan Revolution. The Tutsi, fighting for independence from Belgium, suffered devastating losses at the hands of the Hutu, struggling for increased representation and rights. Nearly 100,000 Tutsi perished in the

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<sup>61</sup> Though 800,000 people is the generally accepted number for victims of the Rwandan genocide, estimates range from 500,000 to well over 1 million murdered. In one of the most comprehensive studies of this tragedy, *100 Days of Silence: America and the Rwandan Genocide*, Jared Cohen claimed that 800,000 is the most plausible estimate given the evidence of mass graves and eyewitness accounts.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Landesman, "Minister of Rape," *New York Times Magazine*, September 15, 2002, as cited in Jared Cohen, *100 Days of Silence: America and the Rwandan Genocide* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

Rwandan Revolution, which ultimately culminated in Rwanda's independence from Belgium in 1962.<sup>63</sup>

Following independence on September 25, 1961, the Hutu wrested power from the Tutsi. After two decades of continued ethnic violence, Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu, took power in a military coup in 1973. Habyarimana instituted a program, referred to by Josias Semujanga as “intellectual genocide,” by which all Rwandan schools no longer accepted Tutsi students and bands of armed militia hunted down Tutsi intellectuals.<sup>64</sup> After this initial period of violence, Habyarimana governed more moderately; however, he consolidated Hutu power and successfully marginalized the Tutsi to the point that, in 1987, Tutsi refugees in Uganda formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) with the sole goal of bringing an end to ethnic violence and political, economic and social segregation. In 1990, the RPF invaded northern Rwanda, thus beginning the Rwandan Civil War that begat the genocide in 1994.<sup>65</sup>

Because the RPF demanded an end to the violence and discrimination between Hutu and Tutsi and called for reforms in the Rwandan government to limit the power of Habyarimana, it garnered favor with leaders in the United Nations who viewed it as a group of freedom fighters.<sup>66</sup> After three years of sporadic and heated conflict, the RPF and the Rwandan government signed the United Nations-brokered peace agreement called the Arusha Accords, named after the city in Tanzania where the signing took place, in August 1993. The RPF and the Rwandan government each gained control of an equal number of government posts as well as equal representation in the nation's military. They agreed to a transitional period to be overseen by the United Nations

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<sup>63</sup> Josias, Semujanga. *Origins of Rwandan Genocide* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003), 171-72.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>65</sup> Colin M. Waugh. *Paul Kagame and Rwanda: Power, Genocide and the Rwandan Patriotic Front* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co. Publishers, 2004), 27.

<sup>66</sup> Linda Melvern. *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (New York: Verso, 2004), 49.

leading to free, democratic elections no less than twenty-two months after the signing of the Accords.<sup>67</sup> As a result, the United Nations established UNAMIR under Resolution 872 in October 1993 to assist with the transitional period and to maintain the peace, placing 2,548 peacekeeping personnel throughout the country.<sup>68</sup> The mission was successful until April 6, 1994 when President Habyarimana's plane fell from the sky in a coordinated assassination.

The Hutu-led Rwandan military blamed the Tutsi for the assassination and declared martial law throughout Rwanda. With forces already present in every neighborhood in Kigali and a strong presence in other population centers, military control of the country occurred rapidly. The Hutu militias, the *Interahamwe* and the *Impuzamugambi*, quickly organized and began carrying out acts of terror and violence within twenty-four hours of the assassination. On April 7, Hutu members of the Rwandan army murdered and dismembered ten Belgian peacekeeping soldiers during their attempt to secure the home of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana.<sup>69</sup> The prime minister also lost her life in the fighting. With both the president and the prime minister out of the way, the Rwandan army and the Hutu militias faced little opposition as they brutalized thousands of Tutsi each day. UNAMIR forces and their commander, Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire, had little authority to act. United Nations peacekeeping troops had to stand by and watch as Rwanda descended into chaos.

The United States was immediately aware of the mounting violence following the assassination of President Habyarimana. On April 6, 1994, the same day as the assassination,

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<sup>67</sup> "Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front."

[https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site\\_media/media/accords/Rwanda\\_Peace\\_Accord.pdf](https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site_media/media/accords/Rwanda_Peace_Accord.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 872 (1993) Adopted by the Security Council at its 3288th meeting, on 5 October 1993*, 5 October 1993, S/RES/872 (1993)

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f16a8.html>

<sup>69</sup> Romeo Dallaire. *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003), 62.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Prudence Bushnell sent a cable to Secretary of State Warren Christopher warning him of the “strong likelihood” of “widespread violence.”<sup>70</sup> By April 11, the United States fully understood the dangers in not intervening in Rwanda. In a State Department memo to the Defense Department five days after the assassination, officials noted, “a massive bloodbath (hundreds of thousands of deaths) will ensue.”<sup>71</sup> The same memo expressed the belief that the United Nations should withdraw all forces and that the United States should not commit troops or resources until after the restoration of peace in Rwanda.

Even before the death of President Habyarimana, the United States knew of the potential for an increase in violence in Rwanda despite the recent signing of the Arusha Accords. President Habyarimana expressed the need for economic assistance from the United States in October 1993 in order to maintain the peace laid out in the Accords. He received a response from Secretary Christopher that cited “financial constraints” as impediments to such support.<sup>72</sup> In February 1994, the United States Embassy in Kigali warned officials at the State Department that a military coup “either by those in support of the president” or “those frustrated with the political impasse” may occur.<sup>73</sup> Just days before the genocide began, on April 1, 1994, the Kigali

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<sup>70</sup> Memorandum from Prudence Bushnell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, through Peter Tarnoff, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, “Death of Rwandan and Burundian Presidents in Plane Crash Outside Kigali”, April 6, 1994.

<<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Ensarchiv/NSAE/NSAE53/rw040694.pdf>> Accessed Nov. 1, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Memorandum from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Middle East/Africa, through Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, “Talking Points On Rwanda/Burundi”, April 11, 1994. Confidential.

<<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Ensarchiv/NSAE/NSAE53/rw041194.pdf>> Accessed Nov. 1, 2012.

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Department of State Briefing on Meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and President Habyarimana

<<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Ensarchiv/NSAE/NSAE117/Rw27.pdf>> Accessed Nov. 2, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Cable from U.S. Embassy in Kigali to U.S. Department of State, Feb. 17, 1994.

Embassy delivered another cable to the State Department, stating, “the relative calm which has characterized Kigali the last couple of weeks will not hold.”<sup>74</sup> As evidenced by all of these documents, the United States possessed ample intelligence on the precarious situation in Rwanda. Despite such knowledge, the United States government still decided against intervention.

On April 22, 1994, White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers issued the only definitive statement ever publicly released by the United States government regarding its desire for the cessation of hostilities in Rwanda, stating, “We call on the Rwandan army and the RPF to agree on an immediate ceasefire and return to negotiations.”<sup>75</sup> Far from promising action, her words did little to intimidate the perpetrators of the genocide. The continued support by Ambassador Albright in the United Nations Security Council for the withdrawal of all UNAMIR troops from Rwanda made the position of the United States quite clear. In fact, many officials willfully and purposefully took measures to ensure the lack of intervention of any kind by the United States, most notably in the decision to not refer to events in Rwanda as genocide. In one document from the Defense Department dated May 1, 1994, officials warned against the use of the term “genocide” for fear that a “genocide finding could commit United States government to actually ‘do something.’”<sup>76</sup> U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda David Rawson refused to refer to the

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<<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Ensarchiv/NSAE/NSAE117/Rw03.pdf>> Accessed Oct. 31, 2012.

<sup>74</sup> Cable from U.S. Embassy in Kigali to U.S. Department of State, April 1, 1994.

<<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Ensarchiv/NSAE/NSAE117/Rw02.pdf>> Accessed Oct. 31, 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Press Release, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, “Statement by the Press Secretary”, April 22, 1994.

<<http://www.gwu.edu/%7Ensarchiv/NSAE/NSAE53/rw042294.pdf>> Accessed Nov. 2, 2012.

<sup>76</sup> “Discussion Paper, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Middle East/Africa Region, Department of Defense, May 1, 1994. Secret.” Cited in Cohen, 136.

violence in Rwanda as genocide, instead viewing the conflict as “just another episode of bilateral civil war.”<sup>77</sup> Despite organizations such as OXFAM, Human Rights Watch, and even the Vatican declaring the situation in Rwanda to be genocide, the United States refused to do so for months.

Why, then, did the Clinton administration remain inactive during the genocide despite overwhelming international attention and clear evidence? As demonstrated by the debates amongst foreign policy intellectuals and the mutable actions and ideology of Clinton and his top foreign policy advisors, the early 1990s constituted the greatest identity crisis faced by the United States in generations. The lack of consensus amongst intellectuals and policymakers alike regarding the very nature of the United States and its relationship to other nations made clear, decisive foreign policy decisions extremely difficult, especially when those decisions did not relate to the express needs of the United States’ physical, military or economic security.

By the time of the genocide in Rwanda, President Clinton adopted an entirely new strategy in foreign affairs, abandoning the idealistic principles of humanitarianism and democracy promotion. Instead, he asserted, “First, and foremost, our national interests will dictate the pace and extent of our engagement.” President Clinton deviated from the practice of democratic enlargement, stating, “Our engagements must meet reasonable cost and feasibility thresholds.”<sup>78</sup> These new tenets of policy derived directly from the end of Cold War anti-communism and the failure of post-Cold War idealism to succeed in the face of new, unexpected and unpredictable international developments. In a speech to the UN General Assembly in

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<sup>77</sup> Gregory H. Stanton, “The Rwandan Genocide: Why Early Warning Failed,” *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (September, 2009), 12.

<sup>78</sup> William J. Clinton, “Advancing Our Interests Through Engagement and Enlargement: A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, The White House, July 1994,” in Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Albina Shayevich and Boris Zlotnikov, *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches with Commentary* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 29.

September of 1994, only months after the genocide in Rwanda, President Clinton expressly denied his interest in promoting liberal internationalist ideals, explicitly declaring, “We have no desire to be the world’s policeman.”<sup>79</sup>

President Clinton was not alone in his rejection of liberal internationalism and idealism in the months surrounding the genocide in Rwanda and beyond. David Hendrickson, a historian specializing in the new world order of the 1990s, stated in a 1994 *Foreign Affairs* article that the “basic dilemma” facing the President Clinton was the “foreign policy agenda he embraced in his campaign for the presidency and the impossible demands it has imposed upon him.”<sup>80</sup> He pointed to the tension between the idealism of the Clinton administration and the ever-increasing focus of the American public on domestic issues as the primary impediment to activism and humanitarianism abroad. Hendrickson asserted, “Faced with a growing public mood psychological disengagement from the world and confronted with resistance from both allies and the UN Security Council to some of its favored projects, the administration retreated from its stated aims in area after area of policy.”<sup>81</sup>

Members of the Republican Party echoed this new call for reservation and thrift in the application of American power abroad. Newt Gingrich, in a statement at the Center for Security Policy on September 18, 1996, called for “military thinking” to replace “diplomatic thinking” as the primary vehicle of American foreign policy. Gingrich insisted that the United States should be “ruthlessly engaged in looking at capabilities, not intentions” when dealing with other nations

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<sup>79</sup> William J. Clinton, “Reaffirming Multilateralism: Address to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, New York, September 26, 1994,” in Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Albina Shayevich and Boris Zlotnikov, *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches with Commentary* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 152.

<sup>80</sup> David C. Hendrickson, “The Recovery of Internationalism,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 5 (September-October, 1994), 26.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

and organizations.<sup>82</sup> He, along with his Republican cohorts, demanded a return to *realpolitik* and to disengage from high-minded humanitarian endeavors.

Of course, there were those who recognized the identity crisis but still felt the United States held an obligation to intervene in Rwanda. Alain Destexhe condemned the inaction of the Clinton administration while still acknowledging the course of events leading to such idleness. In a 1994 article published in *Foreign Policy*, he stated that the “optimistic determination to forge a new world order” was replaced by a commitment to pragmatic expediency that “enabled the world to turn a blind eye to the systematic genocide of Rwandan Tutsis.”<sup>83</sup> Destexhe contended that the “trend” of the 1990s was “bound to result in abandoning populations of little strategic interest to the major world powers.” Finally, he concluded, “the window of opportunity that seemed to be opening with the end of the Cold War is rapidly closing,” evidenced primarily by the lack of an international or American response to genocide in Rwanda.<sup>84</sup> Holly Burkhalter reiterated Destexhe’s deductions, condemning the “lack of leadership” by the Clinton administration to resist the “general US withdrawal from engagement in countries for which there is no strong domestic constituency” or security concern.<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, the Clinton administration’s practical application of ideologies promulgated by foreign policy intellectuals and officials on either end of the philosophical realist-idealist spectrum at different points during the early 1990s clearly demonstrated the identity crisis. The movement from liberal internationalism to *realpolitik* stemmed from the end of Cold War anti-communism and the foreign policy solidarity this anti-communism engendered. The inaction of

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<sup>82</sup> Newt Gingrich, “Clinton Administration has Mismanaged, Mised and Misconstrued US Security and Foreign Policy,” *Human Events*, Vol. 52, No. 39 (10/18/1996), 12-15.

<sup>83</sup> Alain Destexhe, “The Third Genocide,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 97 (Winter, 1994-95), 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Holly Burkhalter, “The Question of Genocide: The Clinton Administration and Rwanda,” *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Winter, 1994-95), 44.



the Clinton administration during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 arose from this identity crisis, as well. Critics who condemn President Clinton on moral and political grounds without acknowledging the ideological milieu in which he found his presidency failed to capture his motivations and considerations. Ultimately, the inability of the White House, intellectuals, and the nation to answer of “who are we?” resulted in their incapacity to answer the question of “what do we do?” Lamentable, horrifying, and senseless, the Rwandan genocide simply posed too little of a threat to direct national security interests to excite the wills and passions of American thinkers and politicians. No longer propelled to action and intervention in the Third World by anti-communist sentiment, the idealistic fervor faded away, leaving in its wake a recommitment to realism and *realpolitik* that would largely persist until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

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## **Vita**

David Tyson was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to parents Dr. Archie A. Tyson, Jr. and Pamela B. Tyson. The family moved to High Point, North Carolina where he attended high school at Westchester Academy. Mr. Tyson enrolled at North Carolina State University in the fall of 2007, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 2011. He then moved to Boone, North Carolina and enrolled in Appalachian State University to pursue a Master of Arts degree in History.

During his tenure at Appalachian State University, Mr. Tyson accepted a teaching assistantship and was elected as Secretary of the Graduate History Student Association, serving under Mr. Joshua Haddix. Mr. Tyson received his Master of Arts degree in History from Appalachian State University in May of 2014. He is a member Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society and Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in Social Sciences.