"A Problem From Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide Study Guide

"A Problem From Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide by Samantha Power

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

"A Problem from Hell:" American and the Age of Genocide focuses on the instances of twentieth century genocide and examines how the United States reacted to these situations. Power discusses the genocides that occurred in Turkey, Germany, Cambodia, Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda, Srebrenica, and Kosovo. She also discusses the development of international laws against genocide and the dedication of activists, such as Lemkin, Proxmire, Dole, and others, who attempted to compel the United States to ratify the Genocide Convention which would have compelled them to intervene when genocides occurred.

Power makes several claims in the book. First, she argues that the United States has been very slow to act in the face of genocidal situations. Although violence in some regions was a distinct possibility, both policymakers and the public assumed that such violence could not occur. The policymakers doubted accounts from survivors and refugees and dismissed them as too sensational to be true. Policymakers trusted the reassurances of the very governments committing acts of atrocity. For example, Power demonstrates that the United States continued to believe and accept the promises of Milosevic even after he had already orchestrated two genocides in the former Yugoslavia. The UN and Western powers have continually relied on traditional diplomacy and attempts to broker cease-fires as means to settle international incidents.

Power argues that U.S. officials altered the language of accounts of genocide in order to produce doubts about the nature of the violence. Often, U.S. officials labeled the violence which occurred as civil war, rather than genocide, as they did in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq. The U.S officials also, at times, argued that the conflicts were inevitable. For example, when the three sets of genocide occurred in the former Yugoslavia, officials contended that the violence stemmed from ancient conflicts and was bound to erupt at some point. These alternate versions of events hindered concerned policymakers and activists in their efforts to get support for action to stop the genocide.

Finally, Power suggests throughout the book that the United States and other Western powers have not done enough to prevent or stop genocides. Illustrating that these nations had enough information to know that genocide was indeed happening and that they had options for action, she argues that policymakers and civilians chose ineffective negotiations and inaction in situations of genocide. Rather than sending troops to create safe areas for victims and enforce cease-fires, the United States has time and time again, done little to help victims. Indeed, the United States took roughly forty years to ratify the international law making genocide a crime because policymakers were afraid that the move might either implicate the United States or commit them to action in cases of genocide.

Although international laws were created to ban the destruction of nations, races, and ethnicities, prosecution of perpetrators has had its own sets of issues. It was not until the 1990s that any person guilty of genocide was brought before an international

tribunal or court and tried for their actions. In fact, many perpetrators remain free within their respective countries. The United States and the UN have given UN peacekeepers orders in some cases not to apprehend perpetrators, even when their location is well known.

Preface

Preface Summary

In the preface Power describes a young nine-year old Sarajevan who was killed in a bombing by Serb nationalists. Power was a journalist in Bosnia during this time and witnessed the Serbs' takeover of Sarajevo. When she returned to the United States, Power was unable to forget what she had seen there. She began to examine other twentieth century genocides and how the United States reacted to them. Although people have often argued that the United States didn't know what was happening in countries where genocide was occurring, Power suggests that US policymakers did know in all instances and chose not to intervene in effective ways.

In her book, Power suggests several things. First, she suggests that Americans have often chosen to believe in rational actors and trusted in diplomacy which has made the United States slow to recognize and act when genocide occurred. Second, in America, the struggle to stop genocide is often determined by domestic politics; when American society is silent about genocide, policymakers keep the U.S. uninvolved. Third, the U.S. government generally does not take actions to prevent or stop genocide. Finally, policymakers and other government officials often discuss the bloodshed and loss of culture as a two-sided conflict or as an inevitable conflict that U.S. intervention would not solve.

Power focuses on the America's response to genocide for several reasons. First, the United States' response may have a greater impact on the victims than the reactions of other major powers. Second, the United States has had the resources to curb and/or stop genocide in many instances. Third, American society has made a pronounced commitment to remembering the Holocaust and policymakers have repeatedly committed themselves to preventing another Holocaust.

Preface Analysis

In the preface, Power tells us why she was drawn to working on a book like this. Her own experiences in Bosnia laid the foundation for her interest in genocide and about the inaction of world powers in dealing with instances of genocide. As she watched how the United States handled the genocide in Bosnia, she saw policymakers backing away from using the label genocide and arguing that the bloodshed among ethnic groups was inevitable. As other countries made it clear that they did not want to intervene, Milosevic and his Serbian forces were able to bomb Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns full of civilians. They were also able to violate a "safe area" executing over 7,000 Muslims in a football stadium. In this case, as with others over the century, the United States did not intervene to stop the genocide and barely even condemned the action.

In the preface we also get Power's argument for this book: that the United States has had information about all of the twentieth century genocides and has done little to prevent or stop them. In each of the book's chapters, which each deal with one particular atrocity, Powers discusses the events of the genocide and the U.S. (non)involvement in the situation. Although the United States has often been at the forefront of discussions on human rights, it has done little in actual situations of crimes against humanity to stop the problem.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1, "Race Murder" Summary

In 1915, the Turkish government killed nearly 1 million Armenians. The outside world was well aware of the risks to the Armenians in Turkey as Mehmed Talaat, the Turkish interior minister, had stated many times that he felt there was no room for Christians in Turkey and that the Turkish empire would target Christian subjects. Several months later, around 250 Armenian intellectuals were executed in Constantinople an act which was followed by similar actions in other Turkish provinces. Talaat and Turkish forces desecrated churches, closed Armenian schools, and forced Armenians to deportation camps in the deserts of Syria. More than half of the Armenians deported would die in transit. Turkey claimed that the actions were necessary to suppress Armenian revolt, although few of those killed were involved in anything other than survival.

Although the international community knew about the horrors happening in Turkey, little was done to prevent Turkish actions. Britain and France, who were at war with the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, published accounts of some of the atrocities but the public had trouble believing the accounts. On May 24, 1915, the Allied governments published a declaration condemning the Turkish government's "crimes against humanity" but they were more concerned with the overall war than with Armenian victims. The United States, who still maintaining its neutrality, refused to join the declaration and its policymakers chose not to pressure Turkey or Germany, Turkey's ally in the war.

Henry Morgenthau, the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, did contest America's lack of action from within Turkey. He condemned the actions of the Turkish government as "race murder," in a cable to Washington about the events and the victims. The Wilson administration was; however, set on staying out of World War I and diplomatic protocol demanded that ambassadors stay out of internal affairs within their host country. Morgenthau continued to send cables to Washington, asking the government to interfere on moral grounds and continued to bring up the matter with Talaat. In the United States, some newspapers gave steady coverage to the Armenian horrors and tried to find parallels in history to help explain the events to American audiences. Both reporters and the American public questioned the validity of the stories coming from Turkey; however, and Talaat begun to hide his actions from the outside world.

Within the United States, some groups, including churches and the Rockefeller foundation, gave money to set up the Committee on Armenian Atrocities but the group did not call for military intervention. Government officials told Morgenthau to continue to tell Turkey that the atrocities would jeopardize its relationship with the United States. The reaction of the United States to the Armenian genocide would be repeated over and over in the genocides to come in other countries.

When WWI ended in 1918, Britain, France and Russia wanted officials in Germany, Austria, and Turkey to be held responsible for their violations of law and crimes against humanity. The United States; however, rejected the idea that some "universal" set of laws should be used and argued that countries should have sovereignty over their own territories. Although it appeared that Britain would prevail in its attempts to charge Turkish leaders with their crimes, over time all these attempts failed. Talaat was living in Germany at the time and officials there refused to extradite him. Support waned for the cause of bringing Turkish officials to justice.

Chapter 1, "Race Murder" Analysis

Although atrocities, genocide, and brutality are hardly new phenomena, the atrocities of the twentieth century have occurred within the public eye in ways that past atrocities have not. Advances in communication technologies have greatly effected global knowledge of atrocities. Although later advances like television had yet to appear at the time of the Armenian genocide, telegraphs, photography, newspapers and so on created a situation whereby many countries and their citizens, including the United States, were aware of the situation in Turkey.

The United States' response to the Armenian genocide created the pattern that would be followed time and time again when genocide began to happen in other areas. Power shows that the United States remained so entrenched in its notion of neutrality that intervention was largely not even discussed. Government officials and citizens also had a difficult time believing that such violence was possible, further delaying any response by the government. Although in many instances of genocide the United States has eventually condemned the behavior, if often after the fact, it has not done so in the case of Turkey's genocide. The American government chose to officially ignore that the Armenian genocide even occurred (which Turkey officially denies).

Chapter 2

Chapter 2, "A Crime Without a Name" Summary

In 1921, a young Armenian survivor, Soghomon Tehlirian, assassinated Talaat. While he was awaiting trail, a young Polish Jew, Raphael Lemkin heard about his case and became intrigued with why Talaat had not been arrested for his crimes in the first place and why there were no international laws covering such atrocities. Lemkin had long been fascinated by atrocity, even before he heard of Talaat's assassination. He had read many of the histories detailing mass slaughter.

Later, as a lawyer, he made plans to speak at an international law conference, drafting a paper that discussed Hitler's rise to power and the Turkish slaughter of Armenians. He proposed a law that would prohibit the destruction of racial, ethnic, and religious groups. He believed that both the physical and cultural existence of groups needed to be preserved. However, Polish officials prevented Lemkin from going to Madrid to give his paper and it had to be read for him. His ideas found few allies although the conference did not reject his proposal outright.

When Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, Lemkin fled first to Lithuania and then to Sweden, before moving to the United States in 1941. When he tried to tell U.S. government officials that Hitler was killing European Jews, the officials reacted with disbelief or indifference. He lobbied members of congress and tried to approach President Roosevelt about the situation under Hitler. He also tried to bring his message to the general public because he hoped that they would pressure their leaders. Unfortunately, most of his efforts fell on deaf ears. As he continued his crusade to help European Jews, he also began searching for a new word to capture the crimes perpetuated against the Armenians and Jews.

Chapter 2, "A Crime Without a Name" Analysis

Lemkin plays an important role in the creation of international laws against genocide. It is also important that he envisioned this crime as being as much about the physical destruction of a people as about the cultural or symbolic destruction of a people. In each of the cases that Power examines, both physical and cultural destruction were used to demolish and eradicate racial, ethnic, religious, and political groups.

This chapter allows us to understand that Lemkin's background and experiences lead him toward fighting for an international law on genocide. As this chapter and subsequent ones shows, Lemkin's crusade on this issue was not an easy one. Government officials and the general public ignored him, tried to discredit him, and paid lip service while doing nothing.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3, The Crime With a Name Summary

In other places, individuals were making many of the same arguments as Lemkin. Szmul Zygielbojm, in London, released a report prepared by an underground Jewish society in Poland. The report discussed the tactics that Nazis were using to kill Jews. Jan Karski, a Polish diplomat and Roman Catholic, disguised himself and entered the Warsaw ghetto. At a later time he infiltrated one of the death camps. In 1942, he escaped German territory with hundreds of documents. His findings, detailing Jewish suffering in both places, were cabled to New York. The men talked to officials in the United States and in Britain and made attempts to publish accounts of what was happening. In 1943, Zygielbojm learned that his wife and child had died in the Warsaw ghetto. He also watched the Allies reject most of the modest proposals to expand the refugee quotas and admissions in the United States and unoccupied Europe. He wrote a suicide note pleading for help for the Jews and took an overdose of sleeping pills.

Although the Nazis issued denials, the Allies had a great deal of intelligence on Hitler's extermination of European Jews. The U.S. maintained embassies in Berlin until 1941 and the British had decryption technologies that allowed them to intercept German communications. By 1942, a Jewish Rabbi stated in a Washington press conference that he had reliable information that 2 million Jews had already been killed. Both government officials in the Allied countries and journalists played down the intelligence, arguing that information was unsubstantiated and untrustworthy. One of the reasons for this may have been the threat that Hitler posed to the rest of the world. This threat helped to overshadow what he was doing to the Jews. The public didn't spend much time thinking about the reports because they thought the Allies were doing all they could. The majority of people just couldn't believe what they were hearing and seeing.

Lemkin had begun working to help the Jews in German territory. He presented documents authored by Hitler because he thought that this would make officials and the public believe the claims. He also published *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, which examined the laws and decrees of the Axis powers and their occupied territories. It was a dry, legalistic reference book but it did present the solution to the "crime with no name." Lemkin had been searching for a word that could be used to describe and stand for the atrocities in Nazi Germany and in Turkey. He settled on genocide: *geno* was the Greek derivative for "race" or "tribe" and *cide*, the Latin derivative for "killing." He wrote that those committing genocide would try to destroy the political and social institutions, culture, and the language of the groups targeted. He also argued that the group did not need to be wholly wiped out in order for genocide to be happening; their culture and cultural identity could also be destroyed. The term was controversial from the beginning. Some welcomed the word as a way of discussing realities that were so horrible and brutal that using the word would motivate any who used it. Others argued that a word was just a word, and using this word would not change official stances.

Chapter 3, The Crime With a Name Analysis

Genocide as a concept is a relatively new idea, with Lemkin coining the term during WWII. The Ottoman Empire's destruction of Armenians, then, happened before the term was coined. The coining of the term is important because it allowed for a concise and broad reference that described the host of actions that could be taken to wipe out a group. For Lemkin and others, while the means used were important, what was most important about an understanding of genocide was that it was an attempt to exterminate an entire group. While murders and rapes are vile, situations in which these actions are used to wipe out an entire group of people, not for what they have done but for who they are, are especially heinous.

We also see in this chapter a bit of the hidden side of the United State's reaction to the Holocaust. The Allied effort in WWII is often remembered as the Allies coming to the aid of victimized groups of people and stopping an evil power, in reality, the truth is a bit more muddied. The United States and their allies had information that genocide was occurring within Germany and yet did not, at least initially, chose actions that would have interfered with the death camps or that would have helped to save individuals. Many countries also did not try to help refugees; including refusing entry to refugees they knew would most likely be killed if they were forced to return to Germany.

There has been some public recognition of the allies' inaction with regard to the Holocaust. Perhaps because of the magnitude of the Holocaust, this discussion has received more attention than those questioning how the United States should have acted in other genocides. The United States Holocaust Museum presents some discussion on actions that the U.S. could have taken to help Jews, both within Germany and in other areas.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4, Lemkin's Law Summary

When WWII ended and the Nazi death camps were liberated, Lemkin believed that the world might be ready to listen to ideas about punishing the perpetrators and about preventing further abuses. He sought to create international law. The Allies set up an international military tribunal in Nuremberg to prosecute Nazi war criminals. The court; however, was only punishing individuals for the violation of another state's sovereignty or for those war crimes that were committed after Hitler crossed into other countries. This meant that individuals were still not punished for genocidal acts that they committed within their own borders. Lemkin lobbied hard to have the laws changed and he met with some success. In October 1945, the Nuremberg indictments all mentioned genocide in an international legal setting, although it would not be mentioned in the convictions.

Lemkin decided to lobby the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution on genocide. He wanted the UN to establish a law that would cover the acts of an official in his or her own country as well as cross-border aggression. He lobbied delegates and ambassadors insistently. As the resolution was discussed, some delegates advocated for using "extermination" instead of "genocide." But on Dec. 11, 1946, the General Assembly passed a resolution condemning genocide and the resolution set up a UN committee to write a full-fledged draft of a UN treaty banning genocide. If the measure passed the General Assembly and was ratified by two-thirds of the UN states, it would become law.

Lemkin helped write the first draft of the genocide convention. He realized that for the convention to be passed and ratified, he needed to appeal to the domestic political interests of the delegates. He wrote personally to many of the delegates and he helped organize telegrams from the members' countries in support of the measure. In 1948, he flew to Geneva to lobby the subcommittee that was preparing the actual text of the convention. This is the definition of genocide which was settled on: "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group:" killing members, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions that would bring about a group's destruction, preventing births, and forcibly transferring children to another group (pg. 57). If passed, the treaty would signal a new international reality in which states would no longer be able to use sovereignty to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. However, the enforcement mechanisms spelled out in the convention were more explicit about punishment than prevention of genocide. On Dec. 9, 1948, the General Assembly passed the law banning genocide.

Chapter 4, Lemkin's Law Analysis

Lemkin again proved to be vital to the effort to create and pass an international law banning genocide. His understanding of past world atrocities and his conviction that they must not happen again led him to voracious lobbying and other efforts to pass the resolution making genocide an international crime. Although there were others over the centuries who were concerned about the atrocities that took place, Lemkin had the advantage of a socio-political context that was receptive to the idea of international laws on crimes against humanity, including genocide. Governments, in the face of more violent technologies, began setting limits on what was acceptable behavior during times of war. Throughout the twentieth century, states would discuss issues such as the treatment of POW's, the use of chemical weapons, and so on. The time was ripe for discussion of not only how states could treat the civilians of other states, but also how they could treat their own citizens.

The issue of state sovereignty would continue to plague the genocide convention and discussions of whether states should interfere in situations of genocide. Although Nuremberg was an important milestone toward holding individuals responsible for their actions at an international level, it covered only the crimes that occurred across a border. Thus, the international community did not prosecute individuals for their roles in exterminating millions of German Jews.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5, "A Most Lethal Pair of Foes" Summary

While the law had been passed in the General Assembly of the UN, the law still needed to be ratified domestically by twenty of the UN's member states in order for it to become international law. Lemkin and others believed that the United States would need to take a leading role if the law was to be enforced. He again went on the offensive, sending letters to member nations, varying his pitch with each state and letter. On October, 16, 1950, the twentieth country ratified the genocide convention and it became international law.

The United States, however, had not yet ratified the convention. Although the convention had received U.S. support at the UN, many were opposed to its domestic ratification. Some policymakers feared that the ambiguous language of the treaty could be used to target the United States in future military actions. They also argued that defining genocide as causing physical or mental harm to a group could be used to target the United States for its treatment of Native Americans and African Americans. Some complained that the treaty was not only too broad (and could be used against the United States) but that it wasn't broad enough (and therefore couldn't be used to target the Soviet Union). Much of the American hostility toward the law was rooted in the idea that it could infringement on U.S. sovereignty.

Lemkin worked within the United States in many of the same ways that he had lobbied other countries to pass and ratify the convention. He wrote thousands of letters and lobbied endlessly, but he was at a disadvantage in America. Although Nazi atrocities are well known today, during the postwar period, they were rarely discussed in general society. American Jews were eager to assimilate into American society and didn't want to trigger further anti-Semitism. In the books and films of the time, the horrors of the Holocaust were largely glossed over or omitted. Lemkin ended up taking his frustration over the U.S.'s avoidance out on an unlikely target: human rights advocates. He was angered over the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a nonbinding declaration of civil, political, economic and social justice principles. When it was suggested that this become international law, Lemkin could not believe that people would rather pass low-level rights than a ban on genocide. Instead of seeking common ground, Lemkin tried to work against the UDHR but his health became poor. He died on August 28, 1959.

After Lemkin's death, William Proxmire, a senator from Wisconsin, took up the movement to have the genocide convention ratified in the U.S. He gave his first genocide speech on the Senate floor on Jan. 11, 1967. Every day, he gave a new speech on genocide and the importance of ratifying the convention, but the United States continued to resist ratification.

Chapter 5, "A Most Lethal Pair of Foes" Analysis

Even after the UN had passed the resolution banning genocide, Lemkin continued his quest. He now focused on its possible ratification in the United States. The U.S. was reluctant to ratify the convention because it feared that other countries would use it against the United States. This fear would continue to be the reason for the failure to ratify the resolution for years to come.

In part, this reluctance had was related to U.S. policies which had resulted in violence and death toward U.S. citizens. Included among these policies were the government's early policies toward Native Americans and slavery. The United States feared that issues such as slavery, Jim Crow, and Native American removals and massacres would be used against them. They also feared that if they signed the resolution it would restrict their future actions in other parts of the world because it would open the United States up to genocide charges. Whether these reasons were valid or simply a way to avoid the potential for military intervention in a genocidal situation is up for debate.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6, Cambodia: "Helpless Giant" Summary

Eight years after Proxmire began giving his speeches in the Senate, the Khmer Rouge began its genocidal campaign in Cambodia. The KR seized Phnom Penh, after a five year civil war and the defeat of the U.S. backed Lon Nol government. The KR emptied the city and began their genocidal reign.

Lemkin had noted earlier in the century that war and genocide are almost always connected. American reluctance to get involved in the Cambodian genocide was linked to its role in the region the previous decade. The United States had tried to prevent Vietnam from becoming communist and the war cost the United States in a number of ways, not the least of which was the loss of soldiers. In 1969, as part of the Vietnam War, the United States began bombing Cambodia in an attempt to drive out the North Vietnamese units who were taking refuge there. U.S. units also attacked North Vietnamese strongholds in Cambodia from the ground. The American government backed the Lon Nol government because they believed him to be more pro-American and malleable during the civil war in Cambodia which began with the U.S. invasion. As the U.S. withdrew from Vietnam, the Cambodian bombings became harder to justify and as they were ineffective in combating the Cambodian and Vietnamese communists, the government ended them.

By the time the KR took over Phnom Penh in 1975, the United States already had information that indicated the probability of extreme violence against many Cambodians. A U.S. Foreign Service officer, before leaving the country, witnessed some Cambodian villages being burned and he brought back accounts from Cambodian refugees. But, U.S. officials believed in a monolithic communism in Southeast Asia and dismissed accounts of infighting or more one-sided violence. Western journalists, including Elizabeth Becker, still in the country also described brutality and reported accounts from refugees. Pol Pot, the leader of the KR, and other leading officials; however, kept much of the brutality and inner workings of the KR secret.

The toll of the civil war on Cambodia was great. After the KR took over many outsiders assumed since the brutality was a result of the war, it would die down as peace returned to the region. Many Cambodians themselves looked forwarded to the promises of peace offered by the KR. As genocide began occurring, the U.S. government issued warnings that a bloodbath might happen in the region but many Americans believed that the warnings simply stemmed from anti-communist paranoia or from a desire for increased funding to the region.

The KR evacuated all foreigners from Cambodia. Even the nine friendly Communist countries that were able to retain embassies there were severely restricted. Life in Cambodia under the KR would continue in virtual isolation from the rest of the world. The U.S. and other countries had to piece together events in Cambodia. By waiting for

the full story; however, politicians, journalists and the American public would also not get emotionally or politically involved until it was too late. In the United States, a "Southeast Asia fatigue" permeated most newsrooms, as both journalists and the public were tired of hearing about events from that region after the disaster of Vietnam. As with other instances of genocide, victims' accounts were discarded as untrustworthy or inauthentic. The KR also conceded some killings, which gave them greater credibility than those who denied genocide. Many Cambodians died from starvation and malnutrition which could be blamed on "natural" factors.

Many finally began to care when they encountered Cambodian refugees. The refugees told policymakers, journalists, and the public about restricted; travel, religion, education, food rations, ownership of private property, and contact with anyone outside Cambodia. Pol Pot eliminated anyone deemed an enemy or a traitor. The KR was also eliminating anyone deemed a "class enemy," which often translated into intellectuals. Persons who wore glasses were especially targeted because the KR believed glasses meant the ability to read. The KR also turned on groups such as ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese, Muslim Chams, and Buddhists monks.

The historical context played a large role in determining U.S. reaction to the Cambodian genocide. Government officials were opposed to sending troops back to Southeast Asia after Vietnam, but the government also barely condemned the genocide and massacres at all. Policymakers had a number of different directions available to them. They could have; denounced Pol Pot's actions as genocide, urged their allies to file genocide charges, condemned the genocide the UN, or they could have pressured China to use its leverage to stop the brutality. Yet, U.S. policies toward Cambodia went largely uncontested and many government officials argued that nothing could be done. By 1976, despite estimates that nearly half a million Cambodians were dead, Congress had not even held a hearing on human rights abuses in Cambodia. In 1977, a hearing was finally held on the atrocities because knowledge of them was finally permeating American society. Nongovernmental actors and organizations advocated that any action would be better than none. President Carter made the first public condemnation of the KR in April 1978.

At that time, there was really only one person arguing publicly for military intervention in Cambodia. George McGovern, a Democratic Senator from South Dakota, believed that genocide was occurring in Cambodia and that the United States had to contribute militarily forces to stop it. He argued that this was the responsibility of the United States not only on moral grounds but also as an outgrowth of the war in Vietnam.

The KR opened its borders to outside visitors in 1978, although the visitors were intensely watched and restricted. In 1979, the Vietnamese ousted the KR from power in response to the KR's excursions into Vietnam. The United States actually backed the KR since they perceived the Vietnamese as the aggressors. When the Vietnamese seized power, they found evidence of mass murder everywhere. In its three and a half year rule, the KR killed approximately two million Cambodians (out of a population of 7 million). The Vietnamese found documents, as well as skeletons and other remains, which proved that a genocide had occurred. Even after the evidence came to light, the

United States continued to back the dislodged KR at the UN and to condemn the Vietnamese actions.

Chapter 6, Cambodia: "Helpless Giant" Analysis

Cambodia was the first genocide to occur after the genocide convention. Given this, it is surprising how little attention was paid to the events in Cambodia and how little was actually done to stop the genocide. In fact, the United States and other UN countries continued to support the KR at the UN, even after they had solid knowledge that the KR had committed genocide. As with the previous examples of genocide, the situation in Cambodia illustrates how national interests and other political factors influence the (non)involvement of the United States.

When the genocide began, it could be argued that the information was incomplete. The KR did shut down diplomatic channels and removed foreign journalists and others possible witnesses. Pol Pot and his government operated largely in secret, hiding their activities from the rest of the world. Later genocides, including those in the former Yugoslavia, would operate much more in the open. Yet, even after refugee accounts overwhelmingly told of genocide, U.S. policy towards the country remained the same. After Vietnam invaded Cambodia, ending the genocide, the U.S. condemned the actions of Vietnam and continued to back the KR at the UN.

The Cambodian genocide illustrates how internal politics in the United States also effected U.S. actions. The U.S. had just ended a disastrous war in Vietnam. Many soldiers had been killed, the war had cost more than expected, and anti-war campaigns and protests had split the country. Policymakers and the public did not want to become involved in other situation in Southeast Asia. In many ways, this attitude kept policymakers and the public from seeing what was happening and from acting to stop the genocide.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7, Speaking Loudly and Looking for a Stick Summary

In the United States, Senator Proxmire continued to give a speech a day to the Senate on genocide, hoping to convince others that the United States should ratify the UN genocide convention. Human rights advocates hoped that the election of President Jimmy Carter would bring about the ratification. Although he did support the issue, he used his leverage to ratify several other treaties, including the Panama Canal Treaty, instead.

By the early 1980s, though, the tide seemed to be changing and more people seemed to be open to the idea of ratifying the treaty. The Holocaust was being discussed and debated more openly. Policymakers in favor of ratification argued not only for the moral imperatives but also that non-ratification was damaging American interests and status. They argued that by not signing the treaty, the United States was undermining its own Cold War diplomacy. The Soviet Union frequently cut down U.S. criticisms of other countries by saying, "a county that had not even contracted to the genocide convention had no right to lecture the Soviet Union on human rights" (pg. 159). In 1984, on the eve of the election, President Reagan stated that he would endorse the genocide convention, but neither he nor his administration seemed willing to bring about full Senate ratification, the necessary first step.

However, events in 1985 would influence this non-action. The White House announced that during a trip to West Germany, President Reagan would lay a wreath at the Bitburg Cemetery, which also held the graves of 49 Nazi SS officials. He had also declined requests to visit several Holocaust memorials on the trip, which was to commemorate the end of WWII. When this choice met with criticism, Reagan defended his actions, stating that he hoped to further German-American friendship, but he did add a visit to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to his itinerary. As the fury over his trip grew, Reagan decided to push for the ratification of the genocide convention.

Although the measure now had Reagan's support, criticism of the treaty did not die. Some Republicans tried to stall the Senate vote and others began to demand new conditions to its ratification. Advocates argued that ratification would mean that the U.S. would now be able to do what it had not been able to do with Cambodia: file genocide charges against a country in the International Court of Justice. Those opposed to ratification wanted to impose a restriction that the United States would have to consent to the court's jurisdiction in any case where the U.S. could be called as a party; a restriction that would essentially block the U.S from filing charges because the other country would be able to do the same. The U.S. version of the genocide treaty went up for a full Senate vote on Feb. 11, 1986. One week later, the Senate finally adopted the ratification resolution. The resolution's critics continued to stall. Full ratification was required to make genocide a crime under U.S. law. It wasn't until 1988 that the Senate

passed the Genocide Convention Implementation Act and Reagan signed the legislation. Some European countries took exception to the sovereignty restrictions within the U.S.'s ratification resolution. Yet, although the resolution had passed, its ratification only seemed to make the U.S. more cautious in its reactions to genocide.

Chapter 7, Speaking Loudly and Looking for a Stick Analysis

Events during the 1980s finally propelled the United States to sign the ratification of the Genocide Convention. Yet, the impetus was not a moral incentive, but rather a political crisis and its backlash. The uproar over President Reagan's visit to Germany led him to support the ratification to silence the critics who were attacking him.

Some policymakers still wanted to pass the ratification in a form that would have made it only symbolic. If the restriction on the jurisdiction of the resolution in cases where the U.S. might be called had been added, the U.S. essentially would not have been able to file charges against any other country. Yet, others understood that the U.S. had to be able to file charges when genocide occurred, as it had not been able to do in Cambodia.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8, Iraq: "Human Rights and Chemical Weapons Use Aside" Summary

One year after the U.S. ratified the genocide convention, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein made Ali Hassan al-Majid, his cousin, the secretary-general of the Northern Bureau. The new appointee set out to solve the "Kurdish problem." At the time, there were around 4 million Kurds out of an overall population of 18 million in Iraq and officials in Baghdad found it difficult to keep a watch on the rural areas where many Kurds lived. Armed Kurds used the rural areas and mountains to rebel against Iraqi forces and some rebels aligned themselves with Iran. Al-Majid wanted to stamp out Kurdish life and he began by ordering Kurds to move into collective centers. Any Kurd who remained in a prohibited area was considered a traitor and executed. From 1987-1988, Hussein's military destroyed thousands of Kurdish villages and killed nearly 100,000 Iraqi Kurds, many of whom were women and children. Although news of the brutality against Kurds reached U.S. policymakers and journalists almost immediately, it was treated as an understandable means of suppressing rebellion or as a result of the Iraq-Iran war. As the United States was backing Iraq in that war little was said about the brutality and policymakers often denied that they had conclusive proof of chemical weapons use. From 1983 to 1988, the United States gave Iraq more than $500 million per year in credit so that Iraq could purchase American products. In 1989, a year after Hussein's horrific gas attacks on Kurds had been documented; the United States doubled its monetary aid to Iraq.

The Kurds are without a state of their own and the 25 million Kurds are spread out over Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Iraq. "The Kurds are divided by two forms of Islam, five borders, and three Kurdish languages and alphabets" (pg. 173-4). The major powers had promised them their own state in 1922, but the idea was dropped soon afterward and the Kurds have demanded autonomy for themselves since then. Hussein, in 1975, had seized 4,000 square miles of Kurdish territory to which he imported large numbers of Arab communities, requiring Kurds to leave certain areas. Thousands of Kurds were deported to southern Iraq. The war with Iran in the early 1980s worsened the Kurds' conditions even farther.

The reactions of the U.S. to the brutality against the Kurds were due in part to the U.S.'s aversion to Iran. Not wanting Iraqi oil reserves to fall into the hands of Iran, the U.S. backed Iraq, offering agricultural credits. But a clear Iraqi victory wasn't necessarily in the interests of the U.S. either as Hussein would then control the Gulf region. As the war continued, Hussein began deporting Kurds again. Kurdish leaders decided to side with Iran in the conflict. Iraqi forces gathered around 8,000 Kurdish men, including 315 children, and drove them south. They were never seen again. The United States largely wrote off the region and didn't even complain when Iraq began using chemical weapons

against the Iranians. Instead, policymakers would demand further investigation into chemical weapons allegations.

In the United States, Peter Galbraith, a staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, kept watch on the situation in Iraq. He made several trips to the region and watched as one Kurdish village after village disappeared into rubble. Although the government had good knowledge of the destruction of Kurdish villages, neither the government nor journalists said much about the matter.

Halabja, a Kurdish town, swelled from 40,000 to 80,000 as displaced Kurds fled to the town. In March 1988, a joint Iranian-Kurdish operation took the town from Iraqi control. Iraqi forces countered with chemical weapons. The town became known as the Kurdish Hiroshima. In three days, Kurds were exposed to mustard gas (which burns, mutates DNA, and causes cancer) and the nerve gases sarin and tabun (which can kill, paralyze or cause neuropsychiatric damage). The Iraqi forces may have also used the VX gas and aflatoxin. Around 5,000 Kurds died immediately and thousands more were injured. While most of the Iranian and Kurdish soldiers had gas masks, the civilians did not and they represented the majority of those killed. At least forty other chemical attacks took place throughout Iraq.

Skepticism over the reports reigned in the United States. Western journalists were able to reach the town of Halabja since it was located only fifteen miles from the Iranian border, but U.S. officials argued that they couldn't be sure that the Iraqis had used chemical weapons there or that the Iraqis were responsible for the attacks. Hussein argued that his country was at war, and while he denied the atrocities, he also suggested that war was dirty. The United States did not condemn the attacks or issue any sort of chastisement to Iraq.

While the gas attacks received most of the international attention, Iraqi forces killed most of the Kurds who died in mass executions. Kurds were often rounded up from prohibited areas and taken to detention centers. Men were taken from the detention centers to remote areas where soldiers executed them. At times, women and children were also targeted. With evidence of both the gas attacks and the disappearances and probable murders of thousands of Kurds, the United States and European policymakers finally met with Kurdish leaders in 1988. Jalal Talbani met with a State Department official at the State Department's fortress. The meeting caused an uproar from the Turkish president, who feared that any alliance might cause Turkey's Kurds to revolt. On August 20, 1988, Iran and Iraq signed an armistice, which ended the war between them. In the days which followed, Iraq mounted a new campaign against the Kurds. They used tanks, soldiers, and aircraft to attach them. Kurdish refugees began pouring into Turkey and pouring out stories of their suffering to anyone who would listen.

With the news of the new attacks and knowledge of the past attacks, the U.S. government had a number of options that it could have used. It could have condemned the new gas attacks or demanded that Iraq stop destroying the Kurds. It also could have threatened to stop the aid that it had been giving Iraq. Galbraith wrote a draft law that would sanction Iraq for its actions and which included eliminating the agriculture credits

and mandated votes against Iraq at the World Bank. Instead of forcing the president to prove that genocide had occurred, the bill reversed this situation and made it necessary for President Reagan to prove that Iraq had not used chemical weapons against the Kurds and did not committing genocide. The bill, which carried the name "Prevention of Genocide Act," passed the Senate but the Reagan administration did not want the bill be passed, as they did not want to punish an ally. The State Department continued to deny that they had reliable information about any of the allegations. Iraq invited journalists to visit northern Iraq but often denied them access once they arrived. Human rights organizations began appealing to the UN Security Council to stop the violence against the Kurds. Policymakers continued to tell themselves and others that action against Iraq was futile and that sanctions would only make Hussein more likely to punish the Kurds. "The United States was no more likely to try to curb a strategic partner's human rights abuses, especially if doing so could harm U.S. economic interests" (pg. 226). When the bill reached the House, it was changed to omit any reference to genocide and to limit the sanctions to the ban on export-import credits used to purchase U.S. goods and the sale of chemicals. The economic sanctions bill would never make it out of Congress. The United States did call a special meeting of the UN Security Council but it simply called for a team of experts to be sent to Iraq to investigate.

By 1989, over 4,000 Kurdish villages had been destroyed. During that year, President George Bush signed a directive, which stated that normal relations between the United States and Iraq were in the best interests of the Middle East. He also authorized an export-import line of credit worth almost 200 million dollars. Finally in 1990, the Senate passed an amendment that prohibited the United States from giving Iraq any more financial assistance or credits. A week later, Iraq invaded Kuwait, a U.S. ally who supplied large amounts of oil to the United States. U.S. forces began bombing Baghdad in 1991. Iraqi forces again threatened Kurds and around 400,000 Kurds escaped to Turkey. The United States offered refugee aid but did little else.

Today, the evidence is overwhelming that Iraq acted just as the Kurds said they did. Some Kurds were able to obtain over fourteen tons of documents about the Iraqi atrocities. Human Rights Watch carried out an eighteen-month investigation in the early nineties that found between 50,000 and 100,000 Kurds were executed between February and September of 1988 alone. The total number of Kurds killed will probably never be established as most of them were killed in mass executions and buried in unexhumed and unmarked graves. Despite initially opposing any action, the State Department finally admitted that Iraq had committed genocide and endorsed Human Rights Watch's desire to file a case against Iraq in the International Court of Justice; however no solider or official has yet been punished.

Chapter 8, Iraq: "Human Rights and Chemical Weapons Use Aside" Analysis

The situation in Iraq again followed the U.S. responses to genocides in the past. Policymakers and the public allowed political interests and denial to decide their actions,

or lack of actions, with regard to Iraq. The genocide convention had been ratified in the U.S. making it possible for the U.S. to file charges against Iraq. Yet, the administrations seemed not to care. A year after Hussein's gas attacks and genocide had been documented; the U.S. actually doubled the agricultural credits it was giving to the Iraqi government. Until Iraq invaded Kuwait and threatened U.S. interests, any attempts to cut off aid or impose sanctions were shot down,

Although it is always easier to see the big picture in hindsight and present possible solutions, the U.S. did have a number of actions that it could have taken and did not. This is a similar pattern to its reaction to the genocides that happened before Iraq and for the majority of those that happened afterward. The U.S. failed to even criticize the Hussein regime for its actions, despite knowing that it had killed at least 100,000 Kurds. Until U.S. interests were threatened, the government did nothing to help those suffering genocide.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9, Bosnia: "No More than Witnesses at a Funeral" Summary

In 1991, Yugoslavia began to break up into smaller countries. Bosnia was caught in a tough situation: if they stayed a part of Yugoslavia, their Muslims and Croats citizens would be subject to discrimination, and if they left, their Muslim citizens would have no protector within that part of Europe. Western diplomats suggested that Bosnia offer human rights protections to its minorities. Some Bosnian Serbs; however, declared an independent Serb state, backed by the Serb dominated Yugoslav Army. Western countries recognized the state, hoping that it would stabilize the area. Bosnian Serb soldiers; however, were already compiling lists of Muslim and Croat professionals and intellectuals. They began taking non-Serbs into custody, beating them, and sometimes executing them. The Serbs' actions were euphemistically referred to as "ethnic cleansing." Which "was defined as the elimination of an ethnic groups from territory controlled by another ethnic group" (pg. 250). Bosnian Serbs believed that in order to achieve lasting ethnic purity, they had to cut the ties between citizen and land. They sought to make sure that non-Serbs had no homes to return to, often accomplishing this task with the additions of rape, castration, and humiliation.

Senior officials in the U.S. government were aware of the dire situation in Bosnia and the real consequences of Serb aggression. Western journalists supplied coverage of the events in Bosnia and there was an unprecedented outcry from the public about the brutality taking place. Yet, Serbs killed at least 200,000 Bosnians, displaced another 2 million, and split the area into three ethnically pure areas. The United States, Europe, and the United Nations watched. This time they did point fingers at the aggressors, impose economic sanctions, deploy peacekeepers, and deliver humanitarian aid. But they did not intervene with military support until it was too late.

There had been early warning signs of potential trouble in the area. Brief wars had taken place in Slovenia and Croatia in the early 1990s and senior U.S. officials warned that Bosnia's ethnic diversity and the defenselessness of its Muslims could make any war there extremely deadly for Bosnia's minorities. Capitol Hill sounded some of the early warning signs. Republican senator, Bob Dole, began denouncing Yugoslavia's human rights issues in the 1980s. But, as with earlier instances of genocide, American policymakers fell to wishful thinking. Many Bosnians also believed that bloodshed could not happen there.

Human rights groups, however, were quick to point out and document the atrocities. Helsinki Watch, the European arm of what would be become Human Rights Watch, had been keeping a close eye on the situation since the early 1990s. Just four months after the war started in Bosnia, they released a report detailing systematic executions, expulsions and attacks that at the very least suggested genocide was occurring. Helsinki Watch criticized both the perpetrator state and aggressors but also Western

powers for doing so little to curb the violence. They then called on the UN to set up an international war crimes tribunal.

When Yugoslavia disintegrated in 1991, European leaders claimed that they had the authority and strength to manage this collapse. Yet, as nationalist Serbs in Bosnia and Serbia began trying to eliminate differences the U.S. and other European countries continued to try to resolve the situation through diplomatic channels. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic continued to keep communication channels open by promising that peace was right around the corner. Top U.S. officials saw the situation as a civil war and argued that any human rights abuses committed within a country were not the U.S.'s business. The former Yugoslavia also presented no obvious threat to U.S. interests. U.S. policymakers had a number of options that they could have taken. The could have: demanded the arms embargo be lifted for the Bosnian Muslims, helped arm and train them Bosnian Muslims, deployed U.S. troops, or they could have bombed Serb military and industrial targets. Instead, the U.S. withdrew their ambassador from Belgrade and aided in the enforcement of the arms embargo and UN economic sanctions.

The Bosnian genocide was perhaps the most well-known and understood genocide of the twentieth century. U.S. analysts gave detailed reports on Serbian war aims and brutality. Military intelligence and refugee reports on the situation were clear-cut. In Aug. 1992, Western journalists also gained access to Serb concentration camps. The camps in Bosnia were not extermination camps as those in Nazi Germany had been, although killing was prevalent. The U.S. had been aware of the camps for several months but Western journalists were still somewhat skeptical of the refugee reports on them. Film crews and journalists began publishing reports from the camps but U.S. officials claimed that Bosnians and Croatians were also using concentration centers. British Independent Television gained footage of Trnopolje, one of the Serbian camps. They broadcast the pictures showing gaunt Muslims behind barbed wire. With these pictures, so similar to those from the Holocaust, American support for military action increased. In the 1992 presidential election campaign, then President George Bush promised that America would not rest until they had access to the camps which left the administration room to maneuver. Although, some officials worried that focusing attention on the camps would overshadow that Serbs were killing and expelling non-Serbs from any territory they controlled, Bush's statement did require that U.S. officials gather all available data on the camps.

While Bush promised to gain access to the camps, neither he nor other senior officials promised to try to end Serb aggression or had a plan to stop it. On Aug. 13, 1992, the U.S. and its allies passed a UN resolution to authorize the facilitation of humanitarian aid. The Bush administration also developed a spin on the events in Bosnia that helped hold in check the calls for military intervention. First, they called the situation an insoluble "tragedy," fed by ancient ethnic conflicts and hatred. They also labeled the situation a "civil war," arguing that it couldn't be settled from outside. Administrators argued that there would be tragic consequences to intervention for the Serbs, for other Bosnians, for any UN troops, and for U.S. soldiers. U.S. generals estimated high casualties and the need for many troops in order to enforce a cease-fire. With U.S. reticence to get involved already high, Bosnian Serbs decreased the likelihood of

involvement even further by promising high casualties for any country who became involved. One way that the administration sought to deflect attention and public pressure away from Bosnia was through another humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Bush himself never paid much attention to Bosnia or the events occurring there. He did; however, pledge himself and American planes to a limited intervention into Somalia. In this way the administration believed it could show the world that it had heart without committing itself to further intervention in Bosnia.

As with other genocides, questions raged about whether the situation in Bosnia constituted genocide. Helsinki Watched used the term because of what they saw as a destruction of the Bosnian Muslim population. The Bush administration avoided using the word because they believed that its use would generate a moral imperative to act. "The Bosnia debate over 'genocide' was notable because it was the most wide-ranging, most vocal, and most divisive debate ever held on whether Lemkin's term should apply" (pg. 289). The administration knew, because of polling, that when the term "genocide" was used, the American public vastly approved of military intervention. In October 1992, the allies created an impartial commission to study the atrocity reports. The five member War Crimes Commission met first in December. 1992. Although the commission named names and it was suggested that ten war crime suspects be brought to trial, the U.S. did not follow up on its recommendations. Before leaving office, Bush sent 28,000 troops to Somalia which was a decision that would hamper the Clinton administration.

The new Clinton administration performed a review of the government's Bosnia policy and it seemed prepared to offer a candid assessment of the situation. In February 1993, the new administration issued a sterner statement than any offered under the Bush administration, vividly describing the ethnic cleansing, but the prescriptions remained weak and ineffective. No ultimatums were delivered and no military intervention was threatened. Some officials and other activists spoke out; however, trying to encourage or provoke a reaction. A few State Department officials tried to openly challenge the administration's passivity about Bosnia. In May 1993, Clinton agreed to a new policy, known as "lift and strike," but it received little support. The UN Security Council finally agreed to create "safe areas" in some locations but when the U.S. refused to contribute troops only a fraction of the forces needed for this action were deployed. Senator Dole again argued that the U.S. needed to act more aggressively . A number of factors discouraged the Clinton administration from acting: the U.S. military advised against action, foreign policy designers were committed to multilateral missions, and the administration did not believe that the American public would support action, particularly if it involved heavy casualties. Thus, the Clinton administration adopted a policy of non-confrontation. Officials drifted into a "blame the victim" approach, arguing that the Muslim army had also carried out abuses and that all sides in the conflict were guilty. They also continued to argue that the situation was simply a civil war. In protest of the government's of the inaction, some State Department officials resigned. The situation in Somalia also began to spiral out of control. The UN had expanded the peacekeeping mission there and U.S. soldiers were killed. The Pentagon and other U.S. officials believed that even a small intervention in Bosnia could get large and messy, as happened in Somalia.

The Clinton administration was more forceful than the Bush administration about condemning Serb aggressors. In April 1994, the allies began occasional "pinprick" air strikes against the Serbs. The UN passed resolutions which condemned the actions and conduct of the Serbs and deployed peacekeepers; although no American troops were among them. The Security Council also invoked the Genocide Convention and created an international criminal tribunal. It was not until 1995 that Clinton would authorize any action in this region.

Chapter 9, Bosnia: "No More than Witnesses at a Funeral" Analysis

The events in Bosnia follow a familiar path. The United States was aware of the potential for Serbian aggression in the former Yugoslavia and human rights groups were already keeping a close eye on the region when the Bosnian genocide began. As with past genocides, there were individuals who lobbied for something to be done. In this case, it was Senator Bob Dole, a Republican from Kansas, who tried to get the policymakers and the administration to act. In each genocide, there have been activists, on Capitol Hill and in the general public, who have sought some sort of action from the United States government but, for the most part, the government has ignored these individuals.

One of the actions that the U.S. could have taken in situation of Bosnia was to lift or stop enforcing the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims. Such a measure would have allowed the Muslims to fight back with more force against the Serbian attackers. The U.S.; however, refused to do so. One of the only reactions the Bush administration had was to push for access to the concentration camps, an act that did nothing to stop the extermination of the Bosnian Muslims.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10, Rwanda: "Mostly in a Listening Mode" Summary

On April 6, 1994 Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana's jet was shot down with both President Habyarimana and Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira onboard. Major General Romeo Dallaire, commander of the UN mission, saw the news on television and went to the Rwandan army headquarters. There he found Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, a Hutu, in command of the Rwandan army, arguing that the army needed to take charge of the country. Within hours of the president's death, armed Hutus took command and began targeting supporters of the Hutu-Tutsi peace process. Hutu gunmen and soldiers executed virtually all of Rwanda's moderate politicians. The gunmen also killed ten Belgian soldiers, part of the UN mission. Lists of victims had been prepared ahead of time and executions were carried out with efficiency.

In response to the killings, Tutsi rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front resumed their civil war against the Hutu regime. From April 7 onward, the Hutu government sought to eliminate Rwanda's Tutsi. Tens of thousands tried to flee but were captured and killed at checkpoints. "The Rwandan genocide would prove to be the fastest, more efficient killing spree of the twentieth century. In 100 days, some 800,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu were murdered" (pg. 334). Although the U.S. had received ample warning that mass violence was imminent, government officials did almost nothing to stop it.

Dallaire, a French-Canadian, had been sent to command the UN force in Rwanda to try to keep the peace there. Before gaining independence from Belgium, the Tutsi had enjoyed a privileged position in Rwanda. After independence, three decades of Hutu rule saw Tutsi subjected to systematic discrimination and waves of ethnic cleansing. In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) gained ground on Hutu forces and in 1993, peace talks resulted in a power-sharing agreement called the Arusha accords. The Rwandan government agreed to govern with Hutu opposition parties and the Tutsi minority. UN peacekeepers would enforce the cease-fire and assist in demilitarization. Hutu extremists disliked the Arusha agreement because they felt that they had lost too much power and they feared that the Tutsi would respond with similar discrimination. These extremists sought to terrorize the Tutsi and anyone else seen as supporting the agreement.

Although some U.S. officials were concerned with the Rwandan situation, diplomacy suffered from several weaknesses. The U.S. was biased toward states and negotiations, as they trusted in the assurances given to them by government officials. Within Rwanda, some Hutu officials were simultaneously offering assurances of peaceful settlements and plotting genocide. As usual American criticisms were also leveled at both groups and the U.S government officials were reluctant to confront the situation. Even after the Hutu government began eliminating the Tutsi, the U.S. focused

on reestablishing the cease-fire and in an attempt to restore the Arusha agreement. The U.S. and UN officials threatened to withdraw UN peacekeepers from Rwanda. This was an extremely ineffective threat, as the Hutu government wanted nothing more than a withdrawal.

The first wave of genocide recognition came quickly. Two days after the plane crash, Dallaire sent word to New York that the killings were ethnically motivated. He described a well-organized and well-executed "campaign of terror." By April 10, he was convinced that the Hutu government was targeting anyone carrying a Tutsi identification card, butchering politicians as well as civilians. He asked that reinforcements be sent and that his troops be able to intervene to stop the killings. At the same time, the U.S. began evacuating 250 Americans in Rwanda in five different convoys. Had these convoys joined the existing UN peacekeepers, a sizable deterrent force would have been present in Rwanda. Rwandans began grouping under the protection of UN soldiers, but the soldiers were ordered to help with foreign evacuations. "In the three days during which some 4,000 foreigners were evacuated, about 20,000 Rwandans were killed" (pg. 353).

As the world was well aware that thousands of Rwandans were being killed, the genocide question rested on the intent of the killings. Dallaire tried to help journalists reach Rwanda and gain information, but their reports did not clarify the situation. Some journalists treated the violence as typical for the region and the groups. Journalists did report on the targeting of the Tutsi, the corpses piling up in city streets, and stories from missionaries and embassy officials unable to save Rwandan friends and neighbors. On April 16, the *New York Times* reported on the deaths of 1,200 men, women, and children in a church building. Human Rights Watch estimated the death toll at 100,000 (a gross understatement, as it turns out). American officials continued to avoid using the term "genocide." A UN Security Council statement on the events excluded the term on American insistence.

Once the Americans had been evacuated from Rwanda, the massacres tended to be ignored by senior officials. In the three months during which the genocide occurred, Clinton never gathered his top policy advisors to discuss the massacres in Rwanda. At the UN, the United States called for the withdrawal of Dallaire's forces and refused to support any missions that would challenge the killings. Yet, Dallaire's forces, meager as they were, were having an effect in Rwanda. They began rescued some Tutsi and established defensive positions in Kigali. The Hutu proved reluctant to kill large groups of Tutsi if foreigners were present. On April 19, the Belgians pulled their forces from the UN peacekeeping mission, leaving 2,100 UN soldiers in Rwanda. On April 21, with strong U.S. support, the Security Council voted to reduce the peacekeeping size to 270 (although 503 ultimately remained). Although Rwanda held one of the rotating seats on the Security Council, no one suggested that their representative should be expelled nor did any country offer safe haven for Rwanda refugees.

Dallaire pleaded with the UN and the United States to "neutralize" Hutu radio, but although the U.S. was best prepared to do so, it did nothing. "The Clinton administration did not actively consider U.S. military intervention, it blocked the deployment of UN

peacekeepers, and it refrained from undertaking softer forms of intervention" (pg. 373). American newspapers and media were relatively silent about the need for intervention. Some Congress members tamely tried to get the U.S. to help end the violence, but they achieved little. Several UN member states called for something to be done. Dallaire asked that 5,000 soldiers be added to his force so that they could create safe havens for Rwandans. The U.S. countered by proposing that protected zones be set up at Rwanda's borders. By May 17, when most of the Tutsi victims were already dead, the U.S. accepted a version of Dallaire's plan. The U.S. agreed to send fifty armored personnel carriers to the region, but they were stripped down versions that did not arrive for over two months.

In June, France intervened in the situation as it announced its plans to send 2,500 troops to help set up "safe zones." Although they had some success, it was ultimately the RPF Tutsi rebels that ended the genocide. Hutu perpetrators, along with over a million refugees, fled into neighboring countries. It was not until after the RPF had gained control over most of Rwanda that President Clinton closed the Rwandan embassy in Washington and seized its assets. He sent troops and aid to Hutu refugees in Zaire, who were dying of starvation and cholera. But the Clinton administration also made it clear that American troops were not there to keep the peace. Although military intervention would have probably cost around $30 million, the United States ended up spending $237 million on humanitarian aid alone.

The United States could have chosen a number of other paths; it could have agreed to Belgian pleas for UN reinforcements before the April killings, troops could have been deployed, they could have joined Dallaire's forces, they could have acted with or without UN approval, senior officials could have taken control of the communication process with Rwandans, the government could have branded the massacres "genocide." , they could have threatened to prosecute those guilty of violating the genocide convention, or they could have jammed the deadly radio broadcasts. Instead, U.S. officials tried to present themselves as moral and good but not able to intervene. They argued that the war was "tragic" but created no moral or national imperative and that it was inevitable.

Chapter 10, Rwanda: "Mostly in a Listening Mode" Analysis

The 1990s proved to be a brutal decade with at least four genocides, including the one in Rwanda. Although a UN force was in place in Rwanda and could have been reinforced to help stop the genocide once it began, neither the UN nor the U.S. did this. As the situation did not directly affect U.S. interests, there was much reluctance on the part of the United States government to get involved. Rwanda was low on the priority list for the United States.

The tactics that the U.S. and the UN used most often was to threaten to remove UN peacekeepers which was exactly what the extremists wanted to happen. The extremists had proved reluctant to kill Tutsis in the presence of foreigners so the very presence of the peacekeepers kept some Tutsi alive. Had the soldiers who were employed for the

evacuation been put into a peacekeeping role, the situation may have improved much faster.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11, Srebrenica: "Getting Creamed" Summary

In July 1995, three years after the start of the Bosnian war, Serb forces invaded the safe area of Srebrenica, overrunning UN forces. The safe area was home to over 40,000 Muslim men, women, and children. Over the next week, Ratko Mladic, the commander of the Bosnian Serb army, separated the Muslim men and boys from the women. His forces pursued anyone who tried to escape. In the end, he had slaughtered 7,000 Muslims. This was the largest massacre in Europe in over fifty years.

In the days before the invasion and massacre, no one in the West, besides the UN peacekeepers and the Muslims in Srebrenica, took the threat seriously. U.S. intelligence agents believed that the Serbs would not try to take the town, as they would then have to deal with the inhabitants of the safe area. Rather, agents believed that the Serbs would try to "neutralize" the area. Evidence gathered later indicates that this was indeed the Serb's plan, but when they found that the Western powers were not resisting, they decided to go ahead and take the town.

When Mladic had the town in hand, he began the separation of males and females while UN peacekeepers looked on. UN officials were concerned the impact of Srebrenica's fall on the UN's reputation, even while the peacekeepers were finding evidence that Mladic was massacring the Muslim men and boys. The women, children, and elderly were forced on to buses, where they were transported to another Muslim held town, also a "safe area." As the buses passed bodies strewn across the roadside, soldiers would stop the bus so they could chose women for roadside rape.

In the United States, citizens and policymakers followed the events through the western media. Journalists reported on the fall of the safe area, the "screening" of Muslim men for alleged war crimes, and the horror of the bus journey. The State Department threatened only that Serbian soldiers would be held accountable at a UN war crimes tribunal. A cable from the U.S. embassy in London stated that the Serbs were committing many atrocities including the singling out of women between fifteen and thirty-five for rape and the transportation of boys and men to unknown destinations. Senior U.S. and UN officials; however, continued to treat the situation as nothing out of the ordinary. Even as news reached them that over 4,000 draft aged Muslim men had disappeared and as were reports of a massacre in a football stadium were heard, officials did nothing.

Power argues that the United States could have tried to intervene in the situation in a variety of ways. They could have used the events and the terrifying television images to try to convince their European allies to help. The U.S. could have threatened to bomb Serbs around the safe area if they did not leave the area or if they did not turn over the male prisoners. They might have warned Serbs that if they attacked other safe areas they would be met with retaliation. U.S. officials might have made the fate of the

disappeared Muslim men one of their top priorities or tracked the location of prisoners. They might have enacted economic sanctions. Instead U.S. officials chose not to take an active role in the crisis. The United States had satellites in space, taking around 5,000 images per day. The satellite cameras; however, were not even trained on the area or used to track prisoners or look for burial pits. By the time of the crisis, Western policymakers were expecting to see brutality in the region. Officials concentrated on trying to get access to the camps

By the middle of July, journalists began reporting refugee accounts of mass executions of Muslims. They described the rapes and scores of men and boys killed by having their throats slit. The most detailed evidence of the atrocities came from three Muslim men who had survived a massacre, with bullet wounds to prove what Mladic was doing. Their accounts were extremely similar, even though they had been involved in different massacres.

On July 20, 1995, allied leaders met in London to try to find a new policy for Bosnia. Another enclave, Zepa, was in danger of falling. The allies; however, issued a declaration that they would react with air power only in response to Serb attacks on the safe area of Gorazde. This was one of the few safe areas that were not currently under fire. On July 24, the UN special reporter for human rights for the former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, released a report from a weeklong investigation in the area. The report found that 7,000 Srebrenica residents had "disappeared." He tried to convince Western officials that something needed to be done to prevent the same thing from happening to the other threatened safe areas. He resigned on July 27 over the UN's refusal help the Muslims in those safe areas. Zepa fell that same day and most of its men were also murdered. Only then did the U.S. did begin a serious review of its intelligence for evidence of mass killings.

Senator Bob Dole had been trying to get a more active foreign policy in the Balkans since the early 1990s. With the 1995 developments in that area, he again pushed for intervention. He introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate, which called for the lifting of the arms embargo in order to arm Muslims in the Balkans. Using his presidential campaign, Dole criticized Clinton for his inaction. European governments; however, argued that if the U.S. embargo was lifted, they would withdrawal their peacekeepers. Under a secret NATO plan, operation 40-104, the United States was committed to deploying some 25,000 troops to help with the extraction of forces. Like Lemkin before him, Dole became a one-man lobby in an attempt to either have the arms embargo lifted or something else done to help the Muslims. In their presidential campaigns, Dole and Clinton argued about the situation and what could be done in the Balkans. On July 26, the Senate voted to stop enforcing the arms embargo. It authorized this action only after UN troops had left Bosnia or after the Muslim-led Bosnian government asked for their withdrawal.

As the safe areas began falling, the media began pressuring the Western allies to do something. Some argued for the use of military intervention while others criticized the United States for its inaction. A number of human rights organizations also called for action, including in some case, military intervention to stop the genocide. Twenty-seven

organizations, most which had not supported the use of force anywhere, demanded military intervention. Some European governments also called on the U.S. to contribute forces or other aid for the UN mission.

With a second term up in the air and an administration that had been disparaged for its inaction, Clinton had to act to stop the Bosnian war. The House of Representatives followed the Senate by passing the Dole-Lieberman bill to end U.S. compliance in the arms embargo. U.S. officials pressed to extend the threat of bombing for Serb attacks on three more safe areas. UN peacekeepers, who were largely ineffective, were withdrawn. Beginning on August 30, 1995, NATO began bombing Serb forces. Muslim and Croat soldiers were able to regain around 20 percent of the land that had been seized by Serb forces. With these new developments, the United States convinced Serbs to quit attacking civilians in the safe areas and in November, a new peace accord was brokered. The three ethnic groups would remain as a single country, but under a weak central government.

Chapter 11, Srebrenica: "Getting Creamed" Analysis

Like the situation in Rwanda, the UN was also present as the genocide began in Srebrenica. Peacekeepers had been brought in after the Bosnian genocide to set up safe areas for the Bosnian Muslims. Evidence has shown that the Serbian soldiers were not even trying to take the safe area but rather were only planning to seize the southern section of the area. But, when the West put up no resistance to their advances, they kept going. Although we will never know, it is possible that even some resistance on the part of the UN peacekeepers or the West would have prevented the genocide that happened.

Even after the Western powers knew what was happening to the Muslim boys and men, they still left other safe areas with no extra protection. Their threats of force against Serbian soldiers were only for some of the safe areas which left others vulnerable to the whims of the Serbian forces. The Clinton administration finally began bombing with NATO in 1995, in part due to a presidential threat from Senator Bob Dole who supported action in Bosnia.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12, Kosovo: A Dog and a Fight Summary

After NATO's bombing and peace accord, Bosnia remained relatively peaceful but NATO hadn't followed through on the long list of war crimes suspects. No arrests had been made and the leaders responsible for two genocides remained in power. Through the wars, Serbia had become disillusioned with its leader, Milosevic, in 1996 and 1997, many staged protests and demonstrations to demand an end to his rule. He responded by tightening control and by brutalizing the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, a southern Serbian province.

When NATO began bombing Serbs in 1995, Kosovo's Albanians hoped that the Western allies would pressure Serbia to restore autonomy for the province. When this didn't happen, a band of Albanian fighters, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), rose up against the government. The KLA wanted not only to protect Albanians but also to win independence. After they gunned down several Serbian policemen, Milosevic struck back. Serb soldiers set fire to whole villages. 3,000 Albanians were killed, and over 300,000 others were expelled from their homes. As Serbs committed more and more atrocities, journalists and human rights groups went to the region in increasing numbers. Clinton's administration came under fire as more people now realized that the U.S. could not pursue both an end to genocide and a policy of nonintervention.

In negotiations, Milosevic agreed to remove some of his forces from Kosovo and to allow international verifiers in. In exchange NATO would refrain from air strikes against him. Several months later, Serb soldiers executed forty-five civilians and left their bodies in an icy ravine. In February, 1999, Western allies presented Milosevic with a "take-it-or-leave-it" proposal. He was required to remove most of his troops from Kosovo, grant significant autonomy to the province, and allow 25,000 peacekeepers into Serbia. If Serbia refused the proposal, NATO would begin bombing. The Serbs; however, were used to hollow NATO threats with little or no real consequences and they refused to even consider the proposal. On March 24, 1999, NATO jets began bombing Serbia. "It was the first time in history that the United States or its European allies had intervened to head off a potential genocide" (pg. 448).

While Serbian atrocities had provoked the bombings, the intervention may not have happened if U.S. interests weren't threatened. The ongoing Serb-Albanian conflicts had the potential to destabilize the region, including Macedonia and the Serb crackdown was endangering a fragile peace in Bosnia on which the U.S. had already spent more than $10 billion.

When the bombings began, Milosevic and Serbian forces began expelling Albanians. Army units surrounded towns and villages and tried to frighten the inhabitants into fleeing. In many areas, the men and boys were again separated from the women and children. Some of these men were executed. The Serbs also destroyed all of the

Albanian's identification papers and property deeds. They forced villagers to walk out of their homes which were then looted and torched. Over 1.3 million Kosovars were expelled from their homes and over 700,000 of these individuals fled to neighboring Macedonia and Albania. "It was the largest single act of ethnic cleansing of the decade, and it occurred *while* the United States and its allies were intervening to prevent further atrocity" (pg. 450). NATO bombings did little to stop the ethnic cleansing.

Initially, the NATO operation was executed casually, as though they had the advantage over Serbia. They believed that if they simply sent some warnings, Milosevic would back down and given in to Allied demands. Officials failed to predict that Milosevic would simply respond violently against the Albanian population. They had hoped that the bombing would induce Milosevic to grant Kosovo autonomy, but when it didn't, they were faced with a problem. General Clark, who was head of the NATO operation, wanted to plan for a ground invasion and deploy Apace helicopters, which would fly closer to the ground. His efforts were rebuffed. U.S. officials were determined to avoid causalities. Only as NATO allies began to realize that defeat was a very real possibility did they intensify bombings. On April 23, NATO officials targeted the personal property and businesses of Milosevic and his associates. They went on to target transportation, water, and electricity. NATO was; however, interested in avoiding violations of international humanitarian law in their actions.

On May 24, 1999, the UN war crimes tribunal indicted Milosevic for crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo. It was the first time that a head of state, in the middle of a conflict, had been charged with international law violations. In Serbia, dissent was growing and some units began to mutiny and desert. On June 3, 1999, Milosevic surrendered and signed an agreement that forced Serbian forces to leave Kosovo and permitted 50,000 NATO peacekeepers to enter. Kosovo would remain a part of Serbia, but they would be able to govern themselves.

Whether or not the NATO operation was a success and whether something like it should be repeated in a similar situation is controversial. Some have argued that the mission actually yielded more negative results than positive ones as it damaged NATO and put Albanians in greater danger. Human Rights Watch found that around 500 Serbian and Albanian civilians had been killed in the bombings, many in questionable targets. A second criticism was that the violence committed by Albanians after NATO's victory showed there was no innocent side in the conflict. In the year after the war, Albanians killed around 1,500 Serbs and expelled from their homes another 100,000. Others argued that interested governments and refugees inflated the violence, exaggerating the atrocities.

In March 2001, Milosevic was arrested and in return for $40 million in aid, he was delivered to The Hague.

Chapter 12, Kosovo: A Dog and a Fight Analysis

Even after Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic had engineered two genocides, the Western leaders allowed him to stay in power. As his own people began turning against him, Milosevic cracked down on his country and in particular the ethnic Albanians. With the Albanian genocide, the U.S. finally acted to try to stop genocide, largely because there was a perceived threat to U.S. interests.

In the aftermath of the genocide and the intervention to stop it, some argued that preventing genocide is a futile action because the victimized group will turn around and victimize those who hurt them. While there have not been many instances of a group taking power after a genocide, some countries have turned to other processes for dealing with historical atrocities. Strengthening the international court system and punishing perpetrators, something that has happened, but only in a limited scope, may also help those who survive avenues other than committing atrocities themselves.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13, Lemkin's Courtroom Legacy Summary

When Milosevic arrived at the War Crimes Tribunal, he became the 39th Yugoslav war crimes suspect behind UN bars. Although he was initially indicted only for crimes against humanity, the indictment was broadened to include genocide in Bosnia. Bosnian Serb general Radislav Krstic was also in custody for carrying out the Srebrenica atrocities. He was the highest-ranking military officer to be tried since 1945 in an international setting. At issue was not only his individual responsibility but whether Serb forces had committed genocide.

Although the term genocide was created over fifty years ago, it was not until the creation of the UN criminal tribunal that anyone to be punished for committing it. The creation of the 1993 International War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia helped to form the 1994 UN court responsible for trying the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide.

The first wave of calls for an international war crimes tribunal in the 1990s came after Sadam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Margaret Thatcher first broached the idea of trying Hussein for war crimes because he had taken Western hostages. Although international lawyers recommended either creating an international criminal court or filing genocide charges, enthusiasm waned and neither the UN nor individual states followed up. It took the crimes in the former Yugoslavia for a war crimes tribunal to be formed. In that conflict, Western leaders frequently warned the perpetrators that they would be held responsible. In October 1992, enthusiasm for such a court grew and the allies called for an international commission to assess the evidence. The effort lacked financial and political backing but still gathered many refugee accounts and other evidence of atrocities. The commission found that Serbia had carried out ethnic cleansing and that these crimes might be considered genocide. They recommended that a UN tribunal be set up to try the crimes and the Security Council voted to set up a UN court at The Hague. Officials used the Nuremberg Trials as a foundation for the court.

One year after the court was set up, the Rwandan genocide began. The Security Council passed a resolution which set up a tribunal to prosecute the perpetrators of that genocide. Rwanda actually voted against setting up the tribunal, as the UN rules prohibited the death penalty for those convicted. In 1998, the first genocide case was tried before an international court. The lead prosecutor tried to convince the court that rape and other sexual violence against women could constitute genocide. The court accepted this argument and issued its first verdict. It included the argument that the systematic rape of Tutsi women was genocide. By November 2001, fifty-three Rwandan defendants were in UN custody and eight had been convicted of genocide.

As trials began for the Rwandan and former Yugoslavia genocides, discussion turned toward other countries that had undergone atrocities. Some organizations and

individuals began pushing for a tribunal to be set up to investigate the Cambodian genocide and to try the aging Khmer Rouge leaders. In 1994, the United States set aside half a million dollars to collect information and evidence on the KR atrocities. It also called for the support of a national or international tribunal. The Documentation Center identified mass graves throughout Cambodia and gathered party propaganda and official documents of the KR. None of the KR leaders has ever admitted responsibility for any of the crimes against humanity that took place. Pol Pot, before he died in 1998, claimed that the deaths were the responsibility of the Vietnamese. The Prime Minister of Cambodia called for a tribunal in June 1997 but he was reluctant to work with the UN. He eventually decided against an international court.

The Iraqi case has also been challenging. The British House of Commons launched a campaign, called INDICT, which endeavored to convince the Security Council to set up another court. President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act in 1998, which called for the establishment of an international tribunal. To date no concrete steps have been taken to try the perpetrators of this genocide.

As the discussion swirled about tribunals for these cases, another campaign took place. The UN member states began setting up a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). This court would try future perpetrators of crimes against humanity and genocide. By November 2001, 43 of the needed 60 countries had ratified the treaty. The United States, perhaps not surprisingly, opposed the creation of the ICC.

Both the Rwandan and Yugoslav tribunals have been criticized as being band-aids for international apathy and inaction. Most states have also seemed uninterested in the outcomes of the trials. In addition, the Western allies gave little backing to the court proceedings when they took place. NATO forces were instructed not to arrest or detain known perpetrators. Finally, in July 1997, NATO made its first arrest when they captured two Serb concentration camp guards. The Rwandan court was more successful at rounding up suspects but that court has also struggled.

Although the UN court at The Hague often seemed in danger of shutting down, when it was needed, it received an "injection of cash, criminals, or credibility" (pg. 494). In 1994, it had a budget of $11 million. This grew to over $96 million in 2000. In 2001, the detention center held forty-eight inmates. The United States has provided the court with more financial support than any other country and it has also turned over technical and photographic intelligence to aide in the trials. Although the court had done little to reach out to victims in the beginning, by late 1999, the Hague tribunal was trying to help the trials reach the citizens of the former Yugoslavia.

Prosecutors at the Rwandan and Yugoslav trials had the opportunity to dismantle the leaders' claims that they had not been involved in the atrocities. The trials also proved that the ethnic violence and genocide was planned and not spontaneous. They prosecutors confirmed the accounts of refugees, survivors, and journalists.

Chapter 13, Lemkin's Courtroom Legacy Analysis

This chapter shows some of the legacy of Lemkin's crusade to make genocide a crime. Although it took over fifty years to accomplish, and many perpetrators still remain free, some perpetrators were tried and convicted of genocide in an international court setting. Without Lemkin and the individuals who followed in his footsteps, this may not have happened. Their tireless efforts on the behalf of victims who they didn't know eventually led to the creation of an international court and to the international trial of genocide perpetrators.

The court is not without its problems; however. There are still political interests and alliances that influence the UN and the court. Many perpetrators continue to walk free, not because of a lack of evidence but because of a lack of incentive to arrest and try these individuals. The proceedings, when they do take place, are not always held in the victimized country. This creates a situation whereby victims may either not hear about the trials or they may be more concerned with reconstructing their lives to go through the extra effort of finding out what at a distant trial held in another country. The UN and the court have been slowly working to address some of these deficiencies and time will tell if they are successful or not.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14, Conclusion Summary

Over the last century, the United States has made some improvements in its responses to genocide. Their progress is greatly overshadowed by the U.S. toleration of atrocities and violence when they had full knowledge of what was happening. Although both policymakers and the American public have promised that genocides will "never again," take place, they have continued to happen and the U.S. has continued to fail to intervene in a meaningful way. Power argues that what is most surprising is that the U.S. has failed to give the genocides the moral attention they warranted. She asks why the U.S. stands idly by while genocide happens.

A common response to this is that "we didn't know." Power argues that this isn't true. Although the information has at times been imperfect and incomplete, U.S. officials knew much about the violence that was happening in each of the cases; nevertheless, officials and the American public have reacted with disbelief to survivor and refugee accounts.

A second response is that the United States couldn't have made much of a difference in preventing or stopping the genocides. The perpetrators, however, often keep a close eye on Washington and other Western countries' responses. In all cases, the U.S. chose to, at least initially, look the other way which allowed the genocides to continue. The United States and its allies often missed critical periods of time where actions might have made a difference. Although we can not know what might have happened had the allies tried to act sooner, when they did act it made a difference.

Power argues that the real reason the United States did not act was that it lacked the will to stop the aggressors. The United States had knowledge of and the ability to act, and yet, it often did nothing. Policymakers wanted to avoid involvement in situations that did not directly threaten U.S. interests and they wanted to contain the costs of allowing genocide. In doing so, they often denied that genocide was taking place. "In order to contain the political fallout, U.S. officials overemphasized the ambiguity of the facts. They played up the likely futility, perversity, and jeopardy of any proposed intervention" (pg. 508). Policymakers often felt little pressure from the American public.

Power suggests that one way to alter the U.S.'s response to genocide is to make policymakers responsible for inaction. Some countries, like France and Belgium, have investigated their roles in the Rwandan genocide but the United States has been resistant to this idea.

"At the same time, the United States should do certain things in every case. It must respond to genocide with a sense of urgency, publicly identifying and threatening the perpetrators with prosecutions, demanding the expulsion of representatives of genocidal regimes from international institutions such as the United Nations, closing the

perpetrators' embassies in the United States, and calling upon countries aligned with the perpetrators to ask them to use their influence. When the dynamics on the ground warrant it, the United States should establish economic sanctions, freeze foreign assets, and use U.S. technical resources to deprive the killers of their means of propagating hate. With its allies, it should set up safe areas to house refugees and civilians, and protect them with well-armed and robustly mandated peacekeepers, airpower, or both" (pg. 514).

Chapter 14, Conclusion Analysis

Throughout the twentieth century, the United States has reacted similarly to instances of genocide. Policymakers have been reluctant to intervene in the situations despite knowledge that atrocities are happening. Many administrations have shied away from even labeling a situation genocide for fear that it would create a moral imperative to act. This fear illustrates that for the most part, most policymakers and the majority of the public do believe that as humans, we have a moral imperative to try to stop these crimes from happening. Yet, this sense of morality and what we "should" do gets wrapped up with political interests, self-preservation, and individual concerns. Very often, political and economic interests dominate this decision-making process.

Power argues that the United States must act when genocide occurs. Policymakers and the public must push for something to be done to stop it. The United States should make a commitment, she argues, to preventing and stopping genocide. In part, one of the solutions must be that the U.S. has to be willing to act decisively rather than threaten vaguely, as this has not deterred governments from trying to exterminate their own people.

Characters

Raphael Lemkin

Lemkin was the activist who coined the term "genocide." Born in 1911, Lemkin was from a Jewish family living in Poland. As a child, he was fascinated by accounts of atrocity. After the Armenian genocide, Lemkin, who became a lawyer, became interested in trying to pass an international ban prohibiting the destruction of nations, races and religious groups. In 1939, he escaped from Nazi occupied Poland and wound up in the United States in 1941.

He began campaigning tirelessly within the United States for help for the European Jews and for an international law to be created banning such atrocities. He decided that a word need to be created that would cover the range of activities that was part of the destruction of a group. He settled on "genocide" from the Greek *geno*, meaning race or tribe, and the Latin *cide*, meaning killing. In 1946, he began lobbying at the UN headquarters for an international law on the issue. The General Assembly would pass a resolution condemning genocide on Dec. 11, 1946. After this, Lemkin helped prepare the first draft of the UN genocide convention. On Dec. 9, 1948, the Genocide Convention was passed.

In order for it to become law, twenty states had to ratify the convention domestically. Lemkin spent the last years of his life lobbying for states to do just that. He wrote thousands of letters to individuals who he felt would have an influence in their countries. After twenty states had ratified the genocide convention, Lemkin turned to lobbying in the United States to ratify the convention. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his action in 1950, 1951, 1952, 1958, and 1959. He died on Aug. 28, 1959 from a heart attack.

Major General Romeo Dallaire

Dallaire was the commander of the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda when the Tutsi genocide began. A French Canadian with sky blue eyes and broad shoulders, Dallaire believed wholeheartedly in humanitarian action. He had been on several peacekeeping missions to Cambodia and Bosnia before being asked to take over as the head of the mission in Rwanda. In Rwanda, he lacked intelligence data, manpower, and institutional support. Many of his soldiers lacked gear and training when they arrived.

When word began to spread about the possibility of mass executions, Dallaire immediately sent word to the UN, but he was blocked from acting on the information. In the days after the massacres began, he again wired the UN with word that the massacres were ethnic in nature and that Hutus were committing crimes against humanity. He asked for reinforcements and for permission to intervene to stop the killings. Instead, the United States and the Western powers chose to evacuate their

personnel. Dallaire persisted in his efforts to try to do something. He turned to the media to try to get the word out about what was happening.

He labeled the situation genocide in a report the last week in April. Some of his soldiers were withdrawn, leaving Dallaire with 2,100 peacekeepers. Later, more were withdrawn, leaving him with 503, all while he was trying to deal with a "bloody frenzy." He continued to try to protect Rwandans under UN supervision. He submitted requests for more troops. Finally, in June, France sent 2,500 troops to intervene in the situation. After Dallaire had returned to Canada and the genocide had ended, he testified in 1998 at the UN tribunal of Rwanda war crimes. There he testified to the great amount of guilt he had over not being able to do more for the Rwandans. He participated in a thirty-minute video to help Canadians deal with the stress of their military experiences. After he refused to give up the "Rwanda business," he was given a medical discharge from the Canadian armed services in April 2000.

Bob Dole

Dole was a Republican Senator from Kansas at the time of the Bosnian and Srebrenica genocides. As the Senate majority leader, he was committed to a more activist policy in the Balkan region. He introduced several bills to the Senate calling for the lifting of the arms embargo so that Bosnian Muslims could be armed to fight back.

As a presidential candidate, he also pushed the Bosnian situation to the forefront of political debate. He argued that the presence of UN peacekeepers was not enough to save Bosnian Muslims. He spoke several times on the Senate floor and made countless television appearances in an effort to get something done about the situation. On July 26, 1995, the bill to stop enforcing the arms embargo passed in the Senate due largely to Dole's efforts.

William Proxmire

Proxmire was a Democratic Senator from Wisconsin who took up the lobbying the U.S. to ratify the genocide convention after Lemkin. He graduated from Yale and received two master's degrees from Harvard. He ran for Wisconsin governor in 1952, 1954, and 1956, but lost each time. In 1957, he ran for the Senate and won.

On Jan. 11, 1967, Proxmire delivered his first genocide speech to on the Senate floor. He announced that he would not cease his speeches until the U.S. ratified the pact. Each day the Senate was in session, he delivered an original speech on the issue of genocide. On Feb. 11, 1986, the Senate finally passed a ratification resolution. Over the nineteen years that he gave speeches on the issue, he tallied up 3,211 speeches. Even afterwards, he continued to rally against those who tried to stall the resolution. In October 1988, the Senate finally passed the Genocide Convention Implementation Act which was named the "Proxmire Act."

Slobodan Milosevic

Milosevic was the leader of Serbia during the 1990s. He orchestrated three genocides in the Balkan region: two targeting Bosnian Muslims and one targeting Serbian Albanians. He was arrested and tried for genocide and crimes against humanity.

Pol Pot

Pot was the leader of the Khmer Rouge during the Cambodian genocide in the 1970s. Under his leadership, over two million Cambodians died before the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia.

Saddam Hussein

Hussein was the leader of Iraq during the Kurdish genocide. He ordered chemical weapon attacks on Kurdish villages, killing many civilians within them.

Adolph Hitler

Hitler killed over six million European Jews and over five million others in the Nazi concentration camps. The Holocaust was the worst example of genocidal violence during the twentieth century.

Mehmed Talaat

Talaat orchestrated the first genocide in the twentieth century against the Turkish Armenians. He would be killed in 1921 by an Armenian trying to avenge the death of his family.

Objects/Places

Turkey

Turkey was the site of the first twentieth century genocide. The Turkish government killed nearly one million Armenians in 1915.

United Nations

The UN is an international organization with member countries that include the United States. On December 9, 1948, the General Assembly passed the Genocide Convention, making genocide an international crime. UN peacekeepers were also present in the areas of some genocides, although the troops were often prohibited by member states from intervening.

Germany

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Nazis killed 6 million European Jews and 5 million Poles, Romanians, homosexuals, political opponents, and others in the Holocaust. At the Nuremberg trials some Nazis were prosecuted for crimes against humanity which occurred after Hitler crossed an internationally recognized border. They were not prosecuted for the genocide that occurred within Germany itself.

Cambodia

Located in Southeast Asia, Pol Pot and other leaders in Cambodia orchestrated the genocide there. Beginning in 1975, more than two million Cambodians were killed..

Iraq

During the late 1980s, almost 100,000 Iraqi Kurds were killed in this Middle Eastern country. Iraqi troops also destroyed thousands of Kurdish villages. The government used chemical weapons on the Kurds to force them from their villages and ultimately to kill them.

Bosnia

Once a part of the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia is a multiethnic state in Eastern Europe. Bosnian Serb soldiers began executing Bosnian Muslims in 1992 and driving them from their homes. Concentration camps were set up in northern Bosnia for Muslim and Croat detainees.

Rwanda

Despite the presence of UN peacekeepers, Hutu extremists gained control of Rwanda in 1994 and began massacring Tutsi civilians and leaders. In 100 days, around 800,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu were killed.

Srebrenica

A city in Bosnia, Srebrenica had been set up as a safe area for Bosnian Muslims by UN peacekeepers. The UN and Western powers; however, allowed Serb forces to overtake the city in 1995, starting the second Bosnian genocide in less than five years. Serb forces separated the men and boys from the women, children and elderly in the city and executed over 7,000 males. By 1997, there were 40,000 missing individuals from the wars in the former Yugoslavia, including the 7,000 who disappeared from Srebrenica.

Kosovo

Kosovo is a southern province in Serbia, which is home to 1.7 million ethnic Albanians. In 1999, Serbian forces killed over 3,000 Albanians and expelled another 300,000 from their homes.

Themes

Atrocity/Genocide

The central topic for "*A Problem from Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide* is atrocity. Throughout the chapters, Power presents one instance of genocide after another. In each case, the common thread is a government trying to exterminate a group of people within its borders. As Lemkin argued, the victimized group can be targeted for a number of reasons: ethnicity, religion, politics, or race. The key factor is that the group is targeted not for what they have done, but for who they are. This means that the majority of the victims will be innocent bystanders and civilians. They were not soldiers fighting in battle or revolutionaries.

The instances that Power discusses are varied ; however, they all involve the loss of life, often in the form of mass executions and massacres. The genocide in Srebrenica is one example of this, where over 4,000 men and boys were taken to a football stadium and killed. The Hutu extremists also killed many Tutsi in massacres, some in churches and schools. Other genocides also involved the expulsion of a group from their homes. In the late 1980s, the Iraqi government used chemical weapons on Kurds to kill them and to drive those remaining from the country. Similarly, Serbian forces expelled over 300,000 Albanians from their homes in southern Serbia.

Victims of the genocide faced not only physical danger. Survivors found that their accounts were not believed by the outside world and their efforts to get something done to stop the genocides fell on deaf ears. Many survivors became refugees in neighboring countries with little money or other support. Families were disrupted and torn apart in all of the genocides. Communities were left decimated and without leaders.

Denial

One of the common responses by the United States and other countries to instances of genocide was denial. Although intelligence data often suggested that violence was a very real possibility in each of the areas, policymakers and journalists often believed that the worst would not occur. They continued to believe that negotiations would win out or that governments simply could not commit the brutal atrocities that had happened before. They believed the promises of governments already planning to exterminate a group that nothing was going to happen.

As each instance of genocide began, the United States continually denied that genocide was happening. In some instances, journalists, policymakers, and the public simply argued that the accounts were too incredible to be true, even though similar events had taken place in the past. They also argued that the information was incomplete or unreliable. As more and more survivor accounts came out, policymakers and the administrations often argued that the situations constituted civil war, rather than

admitting that the situation might constitute genocide. This was particularly true of the genocides in the Balkans in which media presence and refugee accounts made the genocide well documented. The United States also denied that genocide had happened in Cambodia, even after the Vietnamese presented thousands of documents and evidence of mass burials as proof.

Even when the United States had evidence that genocide was happening, the backpedaling often continued. In very few instances did the United States actually condemn the actions of the perpetrating government and even more rarely did they label the action genocide. The United States was aware, through polling and other sources, that in some of the cases the public would support action if the situation was labeled genocide. In order to prevent this from happening, government officials often tiptoed around defining the situations.

Inaction

Power argues that the United State's reaction to instances of genocide has repeatedly been one of inaction. Time and time again, the United States failed to prevent or to stop genocide from happening. In each case, the exact reasons for inaction were slightly different, but Power argues that there is a pattern in the U.S.'s justifications for inaction.

She argues that the main reason that the United States has failed to act has been a lack of will. In each case, the U.S. had a number of different potential responses that it could have taken to try to prevent or stop genocide. Yet, time and time again, the U.S. chose to do nothing. U.S. inaction was not due to a lack of financial or military resources, rather, policymakers, administrations, and the public did not make acting a priority. Unless the violence threatened U.S. interests, the U.S. tended not to action in a meaningful way. In the one case (Kosovo) where U.S. interests were threatened, the United States acted relatively quickly with military intervention to stop the Albanian genocide.

Another reason why the United States often failed to act was fear over American causalities. With Cambodia, policymakers feared another Vietnam, with high costs and many soldiers lost. Similarly, they often resisted joining in UN peacekeeping missions, even when it might have saved lives, for fear of another Somalia where U.S. soldiers died on a mission.

Style

Points of View

"A Problem from Hell:' American and the Age of Genocide is written in a third person narration. The narrator relates the events within the United States and in other countries, offering interpretation for the reader the importance and meaning of these events.

The book focuses on situations of genocide during the twentieth century and relies on narrative to take the reader into the countries where genocide occurred. This technique allows the reader to simultaneously see the events and see what is going on in the United States during that particular time. The reader is able to see what the U.S. policymakers knew about genocidal situations as they developed and how they reacted to these situations.

The narrator also helps the reader interpret the events and situations. In doing so, the narration comes from the perspective that the United States did not do enough to prevent or stop genocide in any of the genocides during the twentieth century. Possible actions and alternatives are suggested in place of the inaction that the U.S. pursued.

Setting

Power transverses the globe with her book. Genocide has taken place at least eight times in the twentieth century alone and Power takes the reader into countries such as Turkey, Germany, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. She also tracks events and debates within the United States.

In the chapters discussing each genocide, Power focuses on the events in that country and the events within the United States in response to the genocide. The books setting, thus, shifts back and forth between countries within the chapters and within the book as a whole.

Language and Meaning

Power uses a relatively simple language throughout the book. Given the nature of the topic, there are descriptions of violence and atrocity that some readers might find difficult to read. She does not use any vulgar or strong language.

While Power uses simple language, the book is very complex and detailed. Each chapter covers situations which entire books have been written about. A lot of information is packed into every chapter. Part of this complexity comes from the dual descriptions of what is happening in the country were genocide is occurring and in the

United States. The numbers of other actors, which influence global affairs, including the UN and human rights organizations, further complicate the book.

Structure

The book contains fourteen chapters, a preface, notes, bibliography, and an index. The book also provides a brief discussion of the author.

Power follows a chronological organization, beginning with the earliest twentieth century genocide in Turkey and ending with the trials of Serbian officials in the late 1990s and early twenty-first century. The chapters describing genocides are interspersed with chapters discussing the legal developments through the century, including the Genocide Convention and the U.S. ratification of this convention.

Power uses a variety of sources for the book, including archival sources, refugee accounts, official government documents, and UN documents. She also uses journalists' accounts and stories as well as academic sources on related topics.

Quotes

"The United States had never in its history intervened to stop genocide and had in fact rarely even made a point of condemning it as it occurred." Preface, xv

"America's lack of response to the Turkish horrors established patterns that would be repeated. Time and again the U.S. government would be reluctant to cast aside its neutrality and formally denounce a fellow state for its atrocities. Time and again though U.S. officials would learn that huge numbers of civilians were being slaughtered, the impact of this knowledge would be blunted by their uncertainty about the facts and their rationalization that a firmer U.S. stand would make little difference. Time and again American assumptions and policies would be contested by Americans in the field closest to the slaughter, who would try to stir the imaginations of their political superiors. And time and again these advocates would fail to sway Washington." Chapter 1, pg. 13-14

"The word that Lemkin settled upon was a hybrid that combined the Greek derivative *geno*, meaning 'race' or 'tribe,' together with the Latin derivative *cide*, from *caedere*, meaning 'killing.'" Chapter 3, pg. 42

"The convention's enforcements mechanisms were more explicit about punishment than prevention." Chapter 4, pg. 58

"'Genocide,' as defined in the UN treaty, suffered then (as it suffers now) from several inherent definitional problems. One is what might be called a numbers problem. On the question of how many individuals have to be killed and/or expelled from their homes in order for mass murder or ethnic cleansing to amount to genocide, there is□and can be□no consensus." Chapter 5, pg. 65

"American reticence in the face of the Cambodian horrors between 1975 and 1979 is tightly intertwined with the U.S. role in the region in the previous decade." Chapter 6, pg. 91

"All told, in the three-and-a-half-year rule of the Khmer Rouge, some 2 million Cambodians out of a populace of 7 million were either executed or starved to death." Chapter 6, pg. 143

"In 1987-1988 Saddam Hussein's forces destroyed several thousand Iraqi Kurdish villages and hamlets and killed close to 100,000 Iraqi Kurds, nearly all of whom were unarmed and many of whom were women and children." Chapter 8, pg. 172

"No other atrocity campaign in the twentieth century was better monitored and understood by the U.S. government. U.S. analysts fed their higher-ups detailed and devastating reports on Serbian war aims and tactics." Chapter 9, pg. 264

"The Bosnian debate over 'genocide' was notable because it was the most wide-ranging, most vocal, and most divisive debate ever held on whether Lemkin's term should apply." Chapter 9, pg. 289

"The Rwandan genocide would prove to be the fastest, most efficient killing spree of the twentieth century. In 100 days, some 800,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu were murdered. The United States did almost nothing to try to stop it." Chapter 10, pg. 334

"On July 29 President Clinton ordered 200 U.S. troops to occupy the Kigali airport so that relief could be flown directly into Rwanda. Ahead of their arrival, Dallaire says he got a phone call. A U.S. officer was wondering precisely how many Rwandans had died. Dallaire was puzzled and asked why he wanted to know. 'We are doing our calculations back here,' the U.S. officer said, 'and one American casualty is worth about 85,000 Rwandan dead.'" Chapter 10, pg. 381

"Over the course of the following week, Mladic separated the Muslim men and boys of Srebrenica from the women. He sent his forces in pursuit of those Muslims who attempted to flee into the hills. And all told, he slaughtered some 7,000 Muslims, the largest massacre in Europe in fifty years." Chapter 11, pg. 392

"Evidence gathered later indicates that the Serbs did in fact begin their offensive intending only to seize the southern section. But when they realized, to their amazement, that the Western powers would not resist, they opted to plow ahead and gobble the whole packet." Chapter 11, pg. 397

"In the following year, some 3,000 Albanians were killed and some 300,000 others were expelled from their homes, their property burned and their livelihoods extinguished." Chapter 12, pg. 445

"For the first six years of existence, the tribunals themselves did virtually nothing to reach out to the countries on whose behalf they were doing justice." Chapter 13, pg. 496

"The real reason the United States did not do what it could and should have done to stop genocide was not a lack of knowledge or influence but a lack of will. Simply put, American leaders did not act because they did not want to." Chapter 14, pg. 508

Topics for Discussion

Chose at least two of the examples of genocide discussed in this book and compare and contrast the response of the United States to them.

How has the United States typically reacted to genocide in other countries? Why?

What role(s) did Lemkin and his successors play in fighting against genocide during the twentieth century?

What is state sovereignty? How does this idea affect responses to genocide?

Why did it take the United States so long to ratify the genocide convention? What consequences might this delay have had?

Why haven't the United States or the UN responded with military action in more genocides? How do national and political interests affect their decisions?

Discuss the use of the term "genocide." How did it develop? Why has the United States been so reluctant to use the term?

Do the United States, the UN, and other countries have a moral imperative to prevent and stop genocide? Should this take precedence over political interests? Why or why not?