

Kabila's genocide in Zaire: Will the U.S. President act?

by Uwe Friescke

On July 2, the special rapporteur to UN High Commission on Refugees Roberto Garreton issued his report confirming the evidence of genocide in Zaire. Not only does the report document the massacres committed by the forces of Laurent Kabila against innocent Hutu refugees during his six-month march to power in Kinshasa, but the report also charges that "massacres and other grave human rights violations" have not stopped since Kabila took power. The Kabila regime in Kinshasa violently denounced the report, and through Minister of Reconstruction and Planning Etienne Richard MBaya, accused the French government of being behind the report, in order to destabilize the new government of Kabila's "Democratic Republic of Congo." The reaction from Kinshasa should not come as a surprise, because the Kabila regime is in the middle of destroying the incriminating evidence of genocide, and Garreton is one of the few officials who saw the evidence firsthand, and who has had the courage to report it.

Garreton visited the area that had been under the control of Kabila's so-called rebel forces during March, and issued a first warning about mass graves that he had seen, on April 2. Garreton's latest report details 134 massacres committed by Kabila's forces. Some 30 more he attributes to soldiers from the army of ousted President Mobutu Sese Seko, and he also cites some incidents attributed to Hutu militias. The Garreton report presents the truth about the systematic extermination campaign against Hutu refugees by Kabila's forces and describes the method used: "deliberate, premeditated massacres, the dispersal of refugees to inaccessible inhospitable areas, the systematic blockade of humanitarian assistance, and the stubborn opposition thus far to any attempt to conduct an impartial objective investigation into the very serious allegations."

As if to prove Garreton's point, Kabila refused to allow a new UN team access to the sites of reported massacres, even though a month ago, he had promised U.S. Ambassador to

the UN Bill Richardson that an investigation by UN experts could begin on July 7. Meanwhile, the UN team departed Kinshasa, and the investigation has been put off indefinitely. Kabila's action is a direct slap in the face of President Bill Clinton. Even back in May, when Richardson tried to mediate for a transition in Kinshasa, he was rudely sent away by Kabila.

This personal affront to Clinton can only be explained by the confidence Kabila has in the alliance that gives him the political backing for such acts. It is by now well known, that Kabila was chosen by Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni to be the figurehead for the combined Rwandan-Ugandan military forces that invaded Zaire in October 1996. Museveni and Rwanda's defense minister and strongman, Paul Kagame, had the backing of Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi and Eritrea's Isaias Afwerki; as well, they drew other African leaders into the alliance: the Zimbabwe government of Robert Mugabe, the Angolan regime of José dos Santos, and, most importantly, South Africa's Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. Knowing how close Uganda and South Africa are to the British establishment, Kabila must have thought he had the political support of the entire British Commonwealth, to so crudely embarrass the U.S. President.

The role of Rwanda's dictator Kagame

Rwanda's Defense Minister and Vice President Paul Kagame took the operational lead in designing the military campaign for Kabila's march to power, which he finally admitted in an interview with the *Washington Post* in Kigali. Kagame explained that, throughout the war to topple Mobutu, Rwandan officers commanded the "Zairean rebel" units and that the "rebel commandos" that started the war, were trained and equipped in Rwanda. These admissions only show Kagame's duplicity: In October 1996, when the first reports about Rwandan involvement began to filter out, Kagame protested, saying

that his government may be sympathetic to Kabila, but had absolutely nothing to do with an invasion. Kagame's present admission is only half the truth, the half he can freely divulge now, after his troops — together with troops from Uganda and Angola — took power and set up Kabila's regime, which is regarded by many in Congo as a foreign occupation government. Assured by the support of South Africa, Kagame incurs little, if any, political risk, and can tell part of the truth, while continuing to lie that he had to take action against the threat from Hutu militias in the refugee camps in eastern Zaire.

The full truth is, that Kagame and his inner circle of ruling Tutsis, hand in glove with Uganda's Museveni and Burundi's Pierre Buyoya, carried out a brutal plan for the ethnic cleansing of Hutu refugees, so that the basis for any political opposition among the Hutu refugees to his regime in Kigali would be broken and wiped out. Kagame not only sent forces to help Kabila to seize power, but he also deployed Tutsi death-squads into Zaire to hunt down Hutu refugees and then kill them, mercilessly.

Since the beginning of June, this truth has become well documented from the "killing fields of Kisangani" to the massacres of Mbandaka. Detailed accounts of the genocide have been published by the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *London Times*, and Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. One result of these revelations in the international press has been, that the Clinton administration and the German government have publicly expressed their reservations against the self-proclaimed government of Laurent Kabila. Spokesmen for the Clinton administration have repeatedly emphasized, that future support will depend on the Kinshasa government cleaning up its human rights record. The German government is only talking to Kabila on a low diplomatic level and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel has publicly demanded that Kabila stop the massacres.

The strategy of presenting Kabila as the liberator of Congo/Zaire has failed, which Kagame and Museveni now realize. They now run the risk, as does Kabila, that once the outrageous genocide is documented, the White House will begin to apply the same standards to them that Clinton is applying to the Bosnian-Serb war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. As happened in Bosnia, so in central Africa, all major Western intelligence services have been following the atrocities closely. The extent of this genocide is far better known to the U.S., French, British, and German intelligence services, than has been published. For example, the names of the commanding Rwandan officers, responsible for the massacres of Hutu refugees are known: One list that is circulating includes the following members of Paul Kagame's Tutsi group: Col. Stephen Ndungute, former assistant chief of staff of Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front during the 1990-94 war; Lt. Col. James Kabarebe; Lt. Colonel Musitu; Colonel Gashumba; Lt. Col. Jackson Mutabazi Rwahama, military police commander; Maj. Jack Nziza; and Maj. Dan Munyuza, among others. The investigation that was urged

by Ambassador Richardson could produce the hard evidence needed to bring them before an international war crimes tribunal, like the one established to try Serbian war criminals in The Hague. Once some individuals from the Rwandan Army are indicted, Kabila, Kagame, and Museveni could be next.

South Africa supports the genocide alliance

One of the tragedies of the African situation is that the government of President Nelson Mandela and Vice President Thabo Mbeki has seemingly thrown full support behind the Museveni-Kagame-Kabila alliance. So far, voices protesting the fact that the anti-apartheid government in South Africa is supporting a brutal regional alliance of dictators — who, like the Tutsi Kagame, practice apartheid against their African Hutu brothers and sisters — have been ignored, or, in the case of Mandela, angrily rejected. While Mandela was in London, to once more pay his respect to the Queen and the heirs of Cecil Rhodes, back in Pretoria, on July 10, Mbeki was receiving Rwanda's dictator Kagame on a state visit. The two signed a far-reaching memorandum of understanding for future collaboration, and discussed officially resuming South African arms deliveries to Rwanda. The South African government earlier had pledged its full support for Kabila's regime in reorganizing the Congo.

Thus, South Africa is more and more becoming the pivotal factor in the British Commonwealth's plan to expand its control over Central Africa and the Great Lakes region. In this, African governments are reduced to pawns on the British geopolitical chessboard, where African conflicts are manipulated to inflict maximum damage and to move structures into place for further brutal exploitation of Africa's strategic raw materials, such as the Congo's mineral wealth.

Needless to say, the strict adherence to the demands of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank is part of this design; so, it is not surprising that Kabila's new finance minister, Mawapanga Mwana, is holding talks with Harvard's Jeffrey Sachs, whose shock therapy reduced Bolivia and Poland to rubble. And no surprise that any African country and its leadership which could resist the Commonwealth, is being targeted for destruction, just as the *London Times* announced in January, that once Museveni and Kagame took over Zaire, Kenya will be their next target. Also, a renewed campaign against Nigeria is getting under way. The result of Kabila's success in Congo has already meant renewed fighting in Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, and the Central African Republic. In all these conflicts, Western geopolitical interests play their cynical games.

Fully cognizant of the deep involvement of some American networks, such as Roger Winter's U.S. Committee on Refugees, in supporting Kagame and Kabila, nonetheless, many African observers see the only hope to be President Clinton's taking the kind of resolute action for Africa, that he took in 1995 for Bosnia, when he employed the power of the U.S. government to enforce peace.