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**NARRATION AND EXCULPATION: FRANCE AND
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY IN THE
RWANDAN GENOCIDE**

BY

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Abstract

This paper examines how several years after the Rwandan conflict, France attempts to provide a narrative of the events from an angle which tries to exonerate France. The paper delves into the “genesis” of that horrendous conflict which has been recognized as genocide and the various dimensions, the major moments and acts that characterize the Rwandan genocide and also the memory and trauma associated with it.

Key words: Genocide, Algerian FLN, Hutu, Tutsi, RPF, RGF

1. Introduction

This paper analyzes memories of the Rwandan genocide, from both the Rwandan and the French perspectives. When Rwandans remember 1994, they recall the killing of millions of people with machetes, clubs and guns, while the international community stood aside and watched passively. They also often remember France and her soldiers in particular. The French who were involved in supplying arms to the Rwandan Government Forces (RGF) and in a so-called humanitarian mission baptized “Opération Turquoise”, however seem to have a very different memory, one that largely exculpates their actions in Rwanda. In this paper I will argue

out four ways the French media and politicians have manipulated the memory of Rwanda. First, by remembering the genocide as merely an ethnic conflict; second, by representing the Rwandan genocide as the inevitable result of Anglo-Saxon cultural and economic intrusion into Francophone territory, third by portraying the war as a double genocide with both sides being equally at fault, and forth, by falsely comparing Rwanda with Cambodia and the Algerian FLN. This discrepancy between Rwandan and French memories of the genocide is confronted in a statement made by Rwandan president Paul Kagame in *IRIN news* on April 8, 2004:

The persistent role of the French is self-evident. They knowingly trained armed government soldiers and militias who were going to commit genocide. For them, killing the relatives of those in RPF was a strategy in stopping us from fighting—we were fighting for our rights, to liberate our country. It was criminal on the part of France to use such a strategy. I am not going to hide behind diplomacy not to reveal their role in the killings here in Rwanda (1-2).

2. Bourgeois of the French Involvement in the Rwandan Genocide

Although its roots are complex, the Rwandan genocide as analyzed in this paper started on April 6, 1994, when the then President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane was shot down. Half an hour after the incident, the massacres started and, for three months, the Tutsis and the moderate Hutus were systematically killed by radical Hutus and violence spread throughout the whole country, and also over its borders. The two major camps involved in the conflict were the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the organization around which the Tutsis and the moderate Hutus gathered, and the Rwandan Government Forces (RGF), the hardline Hutu Power camp mentioned above. The French armed and trained the RGF troops and interhamwe militias, the civilian combatants of the hardline Hutu power camp, before and during the genocide, particularly through

“Opération Turquoise” which was launched in July 1994.

In order to understand the Rwandan genocide, one needs to be familiar with the roles played by the German and the Belgian colonial powers. The Berlin Conference made Rwanda a German territory in 1885, and at that time, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa belonged to a vast ensemble called the *Bwoko*. There was no word in Kinyarwanda for the concept of “ethnic group”. As Dominique Franche argues in “Rwanda: généalogie d'un génocide”, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were not rigid notions, since one could easily cross from one group to the other, by becoming a cattle breeder (a Tutsi) or a farmer (a Hutu). In 1863, John Speeke's *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* presented the Tutsis as a group with traits close to the European type, and thus “natural” rulers over the Hutus and Twa. It was only after independence that the Hutu portion of the population acquired power, forcing numerous Tutsis into exile in Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and the DRC. This group of exiles created the Tutsi diaspora which opposed both the first president of Rwanda, Hutu Gr?goire Kayibanda, and Juvenal Habyarimana who overthrew him in a *coup d'état* in 1973.

The diplomatic and military relations between Rwanda and France represent another significant factor in the analysis of the Rwandan genocide. For a long period, France had special relations with Rwanda based on the French determination to maintain ties with, influence, and support francophone nations. But beyond the official relations that existed between France and Rwanda, there were strong personal relations of friendship between the families of François Mitterrand, and Juvenal Habyarimana, the two heads of state. Thérèse Pujolle, the head of the French cooperation service, in Rwanda between 1981 and 1984 describes that friendship as:

“une complicité incroyable, un compagnonnage auquel on ne comprendra rien entre Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, fils du président français, et Jean-Pierre Habyarimana, fils du président rwandais(L'Inavouable: 218) / an

unbelievable complicity, a friendship in which one understands nothing, between Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, the son of the French president, and Jean-Pierre Habyarimana, the son of the Rwandan president". (my translation).

3. Strategic Orchestration of the Rwandan Genocide by France

The beginning of the French involvement in Rwanda can, therefore, be traced as far back to the 1970s, and culminated in the military and economic support provided to the regime of Habyarimana aimed at maintaining francophone Hutus in power and protecting them against internal threats as well as the attacks of the RPF, launched from Uganda. Patrick de Saint Exupéry reveals that on October 2, 1990, after an RPF attack from Uganda, the authorities of Paris sent the elite troops of the French Foreign Legion to put in place a program of military instruction and training, and tons of weapons were supplied daily from February 1992 onward. He adds that France supplied weapons that valued one million Euros to RGF in 1991; in 1992, weapons that valued three million Euros, and in 1993, weapons that valued more than a million Euros were supplied to the same group. Renowned French Military advisors Paul Barril and Pierre-Yves Gilleron were posted to Kigali in an airplane, a Falcon 50, worth ten million Euros. This was later given to Rwanda by Crédit Lyonnais. In 1992, the same bank supplied weapons worth 4.6 million Euros to Rwanda through Egypt, and the following year, another French company, DYL-Invest, signed a contract of more than twelve million US dollars for weapons to be shipped to Rwanda (*L'inavouable* 177-78). Saint Exupéry further notes a report published by the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) that accused France of helping prepare the genocide. The report documents that French military instructors had been training Rwandan death squads in the use of knives, gun assembly, and shooting, but the French government ignored that report.

A scene narrated in *L'inavouable* displays in a dramatic manner the general attitude of the French military in Rwanda during the genocide: On June 27th 1994, a French colonel of Opération Turquoise patrols with his men and they are led by a journalist and a Hutu teacher, named Jean Baptiste Twagirayezu who is also a militia man. They ran into a little boy and a conversation broke out between the boy and the French colonel:

- I know this man who is with you. His name is Jean Baptiste Twagirayezu, he is my teacher, and he is also the leader of the militia. I know him".
- Are you sure that you know him?
- He came here several times to attack us. He killed my sister and my brother.
- We will come back, in two or three days. Don't worry. For the meantime, just look for a place where you can hide and survive.
- but they are going to kill us. Stay here, don't go!
- We have to go, but I promise that we will be back.
- We are going to be killed if you leave us. Look around you, there are just some few men and children left. All the women have been killed.

The French officer drives away, with his men, and the teacher-killer well protected on the minibus. (67-69)

Despite this history of armament, training and participation, the French press and government officials have systematically minimized, denied, or attempted to justify their involvement in the Rwandan genocide. First, one of the main portrayals of the Rwandan genocide in the French press remains its trivialization into an ethnic conflict which opposed the Hutus to the Tutsis. Such a comparison is a trivialization because the Rwandan genocide could not be compared to an ethnic conflict in any way. The scope of the massacre was much wider than that of an ethnic conflict, and the weapons used in the genocide were modern and more destructive than those of an ethnic conflict. For a long time, the French press, like the international community refused to use the term genocide to qualify the high scale and massive killing which took place in Rwanda, or the

massacre that caused the decimation of more than one million people. For instance, in its publication of 8th October 2004, *Le Monde* refers to the Rwandan genocide as the “reification of ethnicism and eruption of tribal wars” (p.5). On April 8 2004, *Ouest France* ran an article which also does an ethnic reading of the conflict:

La mort du général Habyarimana a donné le signal d'un règlement de compte féroce entre Tutsis, l'ancienne race des seigneurs, qui est minoritaire, et les Hutus, qui sont les plus nombreux. Les réactions internationales sont de peu de poids face à cette flambée de terreur ethnique dans l'Afrique des Grands Lacs

(p.2)/General Habyarimana's death ignited a ferocious fight between the Tutsis, the former minority ruling ethnic group, and the Hutus who are the majority. International reactions are insignificant in this context of huge ethnic terror in the Great Lakes region. (my translation)

This is an inaccurate picture of the Rwandan conflict. In *The Rwandan Crisis*, Gerard Prunier discards all the possibilities of describing the Rwandan conflict as an ethnic conflict in his portrayal of the relationship between these groups by showing that the Hutus and the Tutsis were linguistically and culturally homogenous to such an extent that they could not be referred to as different tribes:

The first explorers who reached Rwanda and Burundi were immediately struck by the fact that the population, though linguistically and culturally homogenous, was divided into three groups, the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa. These are the people who have often and inappropriately been called the “tribes” of Rwanda. They had none of the characteristics of tribes. They shared the same

Bantu language, lived side by side with each other, without any “Hutuland” or “Tutsi land” and often intermarried (5).

From the very first days of the massacre, the French press simply decided to reduce the scope of this ferocious human butchery into a mere ethnic clash between two tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis. Secondly, the French press often camouflaged and displaced the seriousness of the genocide into another terrain, that of the legendary enmity between French speaking and Anglo-Saxon nations. The French saw in the Rwandan genocide an attack on their “pré-carré” [backyard], an intrusion of the Anglo-Saxon agents into the French “famille”. The French often accused the English speaking nations like Uganda and the USA of using the Rwandan conflict to increase their hold on Rwanda through the Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, who was the leader of the RPF during the genocide. The Rwandan genocide then became interpreted as an Anglo-Saxon incursion, with Anglophone Uganda and the USA backing up Kagame to destabilize the largely francophone Kigali regime. Prunier writes that the French version of the genocide was that “les *Anglichés*” (the Brits) and “les *Ricains*” (the yanks) were acting through their buddy Museveli, the Ugandan president. Although there is no doubt that Uganda provided support to the RPF—since the first group of exiled Tutsis were welcomed in Uganda and many of those who joined the RPF grew up there, to reduce the Rwandan genocide to a team action of the Anglo-Saxon world is a distortion of the reality. Saint-Exupéry recalls that the French pointed out an alliance between the Rwandan Patriotic Front and the enemies of the French, the Americans. On July 7, 1994, *Le Monde* ran an article which analyses the genocide in these terms:

The main explanation of the Rwandan crisis is very simple, and it remains the same: Francophone Rwanda is a victim of a conflict orchestrated by neighboring Anglophone Uganda who found accomplices in the RPF and uses them to impose its rule to another ethnic majority (pages 1 and 4).

In their attempt to paint the Rwandan genocide as a manifestation of the rivalry between the Francophone and Anglo-Saxon poles, or as another manifestation of the Fachoda syndrome, the French military made frequent reference to the background of RPF leader, Paul Kagame, as evidence. For example, General Christian Quesnot, Chief of Defense Staff of the French army, emphasized in an interview that:

Paul Kagame received a very complete training first of all in Tanzania, then in Cuba, in guerilla warfare, and finally-and this is very exceptional-he attended military courses on three occasions in the USA, and Americans saw in him a shining star. His first military training in the USA was in 1989 in Fort-Leavenworth which is, among other things, a war school. In 1990, Kagame attended Fort-Bragg in North Carolina where the command of the special American forces is based (My translation, Quesnot in *L'Inavouable*, pp.274-275).

A further illustration of the French presentation of the Rwandan genocide as the work of Anglo-Saxon nations transpires through the colloquium organized by the French senate on April 4, 2002. *Liaison Rwanda*, a Rwandan newspaper reports on that colloquium in its May 2002 edition. The paper laments the poor attendance at the colloquium and specifies that two thirds (2/3) of the seats were empty. Madame Bidard-Reydet, the chair of the colloquium was absent, and the speakers were all from Africa as if the intention of the senate was to show that the Rwandan genocide is a purely internal African crisis far removed from all foreign implications. The third speaker, Antoine Nyetera, introduced as a philosopher and specialist of Rwandan culture, introduced himself as a proud Tutsi whose relatives had been killed by RPF and stresses the African responsibility in the Rwandan genocide. The first speaker, Honore NGBanda, a close collaborator of Mobutu, the dictator of

Zaire (today's DRC) accused Rwanda of being a nation of troublemakers whose leaders were tirelessly working to plunge the DRC into a deeper crisis. He concluded by stressing the fact that Rwanda should solve its own problems. The second speaker was a former ambassador of Rwanda to Uganda, who blamed Belgium and the USA as the initiators of the conflict, and glorified the French for initiating Opération Turquoise.

Thirdly, some members of the French press like *Le Monde* present the Rwandan genocide as a "double genocide" in order to push responsibility for the conflict onto both the RPF and the RGF, and share it equally between them. The concept of "double genocide" stems from the belief that the RPF, which ultimately succeeded in defeating the RGF government forces, was in its turn, conducting genocide by avenging itself on the RGF and its Hutu partisans. In the August 17, 1994 edition of *Le Monde*, Jean Hélène took this view, focusing on the cruelties committed by the RPF troops. It described the massacres of the Hutus as the collective action of Tutsi refugees who eventually acquired power. The idea of a double genocide was further suggested through Jean Hélène's emphasis on the similarity between Tutsi and Hutu methods of killing. For example, in this narration of an instance where Tutsis killed Hutus, Jean Hélène explicitly draws that comparison:

On July 14, armed men locked up about ten families (forty seven persons all in all) in a chapel in Mpara mirundi and killed them with grenades. Three days later, fifty men were driven away in a truck and the following day, their bodies were found. Finally, on August 13, about fifty men were shot in Kiri and their bodies were dumped in a mass grave. This is reminiscent of the Hutu way of killing. (*Le monde et le génocide rwandais*: 30).

Finally, the French have resorted to false analogies in their construction of the memory of Rwandan genocide by comparing it

with other events that did not involve genocide. For example, the French press drew analogies with Cambodia, Vietnam, and Algeria in their analyses of the Rwandan situation, which not only gave them an opportunity to recall French imperial conquests, but falsely represented the genocide. Unlike Rwanda, the Algerian war of independence (which lasted from 1954 to 1962) was a period of guerilla strikes and maquis fighting that opposed the French army and *colons* to the Front de Liberation National (FLN) and other pro-independence Algerians. This is completely different from the Rwandan genocide because independence was not the issue in Rwanda, and Rwanda was not occupied by a foreign power during the genocide. The other difference is that while the Algerians were fighting to gain their independence, the Rwandan RPF was fighting for the end of the marginalization and the extermination of the Tutsi population. By 1956, France had committed more than 400,000 troops to Algeria, as compared to the 200 troops sent to Rwanda during Opération Turquoise. During the Algerian war of independence, The French ruthlessly used torture, bombardment and forced displacement of populations which cost 1.5 million deaths among Algerians, and in July 1962, a referendum forced France to grant independence to Algeria. By drawing analogy between the Algerians war of liberation--the violence and brutality meted out to the Algerian FLN combatants-- and the Rwandan genocide, the French press intends to justify the French use of violence in Rwanda. The analogy with the Algeria war of independence is false for several reasons: First, France was directly involved in the Algerian war as a party which was fighting to maintain its domination over Algeria, whereas in the Rwandan genocide, France came in as a parasite and allied itself to one of the parties in the conflict, the RGF. Third, the RPF and the FLN had different agendas: the FLN was fighting for the independence of Algeria, while the RPF was fighting for the Tutsis to be acknowledged as Rwandan citizens who share the same rights as Hutus. The use of the Algerian revolutionary war in order to justify the role that France played in the Rwandan genocide suggests that the RPF was as illegitimate enemy as the FLN's suicide bombers and

guerilla forces who traumatized the French in Algeria.

Le Monde also compared the RPF to the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia in an effort both to recall the glorious past of France's colonial empire and accuse the RPF of being the perpetrator of the genocide. The Khmer Rouge, in power from 1975 to 1979 is remembered not only for its massacres of civilians who opposed the regime, but for its impunity, since no member of the Khmer Rouge was ever tried in a court of law, after the regime was toppled. By assimilating the memory of the Rwandan genocide to Cambodia, the French are implicitly calling for the incrimination of the RPF. The analogy aims at painting the RPF as a group of murderers who must be brought to justice, and that justified the French intervention in Rwanda. In its editorial of July 23 1994, *Le Monde* openly draws this comparison between the RPF and the Khmer Rouge: 'The RPF makes emptiness around themselves, forces people into exile, and allows only farmers to come back home to harvest their crops and by doing that, they prevent the intellectual Hutus from returning. This is definitely reminiscent of Cambodia (*Le Monde*: 1)'.⁵

Hubert Vedrine, the French minister of Foreign Affairs during the Rwandan genocide, goes deeper into the Cambodian analogy and attempts to alleviate the French conscience by recalling Nixon and Kissinger, neither of whom were prosecuted for their role in Cambodia: "Our responsibly in Rwanda--if there is one--is exactly like that of Nixon and Kissinger who initiated the process that led to the Cambodian genocide" (Qtd. Saint-Exupéry, 167). Vedrine thus seems to suggest that since Nixon and Kissinger have not been held accountable in Cambodia, French can equally not be held responsible for the Rwandan conflict. Also, the French analogy to the role of the US in Cambodia further presents the Rwandan genocide as a game of national interests.

The inaccuracy of the analogies used by the French in their reconstruction of the

Rwandan genocide has been exposed by the confessions and statements of French soldiers returning from Rwanda. The truth gushed out through the returnee-soldiers who experienced trauma or

simply broke down during the genocide. In *Cols Bleus*, the weekly publication of the French National Marine, French soldiers denounce the “paradoxical and disgustingly warm welcome” with which Opération Turquoise was greeted by the Hutu forces of extermination. The soldiers also expressed shock at the fact that, although well armed and equipped, they had to stand still and stare at what a soldier put in these terms: “that unbearable butchery carried out with an unfathomable determination and commitment” (*L’Inavouable*, 18).

Saint Exupéry records a vivid illustration of the trauma suffered by the French troops, recalling a soldier of the Groupe d’Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN), one of the elite corps of the French army, at the moment when he realizes that he had trained the soldiers of the Rwandan Presidential Guard, who were now orchestrating the genocide:

I saw the soldier collapse, slowly. His shoulders stooped, his legs folded, his muscles gave up. He landed on the grass and started sobbing. He had just perceived the reality, he had just understood, he had just added things up, and he had a shock. He turned towards us and said: “I trained the Rwandan Presidential Guard last year”. His eyes were blurred, he was lost. The past had just telescoped the present. He had trained the killers of genocide. That was scarring (91-92).

4. Conclusion and the Way Forward

From 1996, a “policy of remembering” emerged in Rwanda, and one of the main characteristics of that memory is the indictment of France. Pasteur Bizimungu, Rwandan president from July 1994 to March 2000, made this accusation metaphorically, describing France as an overconfident elephant who tried to kill an ant and failed. The Rwandans commemorate the anniversary of the genocide in a different locality every year; in 1997, it was held in Gikongoro, where

the French troops of Opération Turquoise built a volley ball court on an immense common grave in order to dissimulate it.

Rwanda is now fighting the amnesia which worked to destroy its collective memory, and the memory of the genocide. In “Rwanda’s Collective Amnesia,” Benjamin Sehene stresses the need for a common symbol which unites the Rwandans around their lost memory. That task is being carried out through organizations like the *Ntarama* Foundation and *Ibuka* which work to preserve the memory of the genocide by organizing conferences, seminars and other activities, but the main symbol of the Rwandan memory of the genocide remains The Garden of Memory, a monument started in June 2000, which consists of a plot of land on which each willing person places a heavy stone marked with the name of a victim of the genocide. The Garden of Memory is expanding in Kigali and other cities, with the intention of creating a collective memory and beginning the process of healing.

Writing is also one of the main factors involved in the reconstruction and preservation of the memory of the Rwandan genocide. Venuste Kayimahe calls it *le syndrome du survivant* (the survivor’s syndrome) in his work *Au Coeur du Genocide*. For him, writing is one of the ways in which the memory of the victims of the genocide can be perpetuated, and some of the analysts go beyond the importance of writing in this task: they raise the importance of the accessibility of the work of the writer to the survivors/readers. In its edition of November 16, 2004, *Afrik.com le quotidien de toute l’Afrique* points out that writing is the responsibility of the survivor vis à vis Rwanda:

What does the survivor do? What does one do after the loss of one’s daughter, mother, and all relatives and neighbors, to the barbarism of a racist fury? Writing maybe. Writing in order to distance oneself from the revisionists and “negationists”, and fight against forgetfulness. Writing because it is impossible to turn the page of a mutilated life, or to

sweep off the memory of humiliated and tortured victims. Writing because many people are still trying to shelve the Rwandan genocide among the details of History (p.1).

Nocky Djedanoum, a writer from Chad who initiated the project "*Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire*" stresses the need not only to write, but for the writer to personally give copies of his/her book to Rwandans, and to read it to those who are illiterate.

At the international level, the Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha is working to situate the responsibilities in the Rwandan genocide. However, the Arusha tribunal remains limited in its efficaciousness because the survivors see their tormentors returning to live peacefully among them because there is not enough evidence to bring charges against them. As a consequence, witnesses have become tight-lipped. The ragtag soldiers who carried out the 1994 massacres are still lurking in the forests of neighboring Congo. Although the Arusha courts are addressing the genocide, they remain unsatisfactory for the Rwandans. The Rwandans themselves are constructing memory projects which are more efficacious like the garden of memory, and the various writing projects which are being carried out.

The French on their side left no stone unturned in their attempt to provide a version of the Rwandan genocide which eradicates their responsibility, and incriminates the USA, the UK, Rwanda itself, and the African continent in general. The French press turned the Rwandan genocide into a mere ethnic conflict, a consequence of the Anglo Saxon world's attempt to install their influence in Rwanda, or a revolutionary war in which France was facing a militaro-political movement. The present is still barring the way to memory. Did we say "never again" after the Rwandan genocide? The current geo-political situation in the world in general and Africa in particular proves that we did not keep our promise: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and several other conflict-ridden countries sadly testify to that effect. Although the

Rwandan genocide is officially over, some Rwandans still lose their lives today--as it has been mentioned before-- because of their ethnic affiliation or the role they played when this genocide was at its peak. Beyond that, the Rwandan genocide generated some ramifications that created and maintained instability in certain countries in that sub-region (Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, etc). Several other horrendous conflicts shook and are still "crippling" Africa although the world claimed that Rwanda was and would be the last conflict or genocide in Africa. A voluminous literature demonstrates that After Rwanda, a similar tragedy took place in Sierra Leone. Ishmael Beah's seminal book *A Long Way Gone: the True Story of a Boy Soldier* provides a detailed and heart-wrenching narration of the civil war in his country. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's *Memoir* also shows how inhuman, traumatic and bloody that conflict was. The whole world is struggling today to put a halt to the secession wars and the politico- religious bloodsheds in Sudan, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire. Africans need to come to the realization that conflicts will only deepen the poverty and general hopelessness that is now perceived as the lot, or characteristic feature of the continent. Africans need to know that these numerous conflicts confirm the derogatory racist features that Western modernity associated Africa with. The "never again" uttered some years ago must really be adhered to and there should not be any room for the "blame game". Westerners should not be allowed to set one camp against another in Africa. If that happens, Africans must be held responsible, not the postmodern mercantile Westerners and their manipulative machinery.

Notes:

- i. The two camps involved in the genocide were: on one side we had the Hutus, the Rwandan Government Forces and the civilians trained as militias called the interhamwe. On the other side we had the Tutsis and the Rwandan Patriotic Front.
- ii. Bwoko is a Kinyarwanda word, most widely spoken language in Rwanda
- iii. Saint Exupéry goes further to mention that the French president at that time, François Mitterrand was “obsessed” with the Americans in *L'inavouable*.
- iv. Fachoda is the area where the British and the French had a clash in Sudan, in their colonial expansion adventures. Since then, the term has been used to refer to a situation where the French and the British have divergent views or positions.
- v. Incidentally, the French minister of interior during the Algerian war was François Mitterrand, who was also the French president during the Rwandan genocide.
- vi. President Nixon and his assistant for national security affairs, Henry Kissinger engineered the bombing of Cambodia between 1960 and 1970 during the Vietnam War. Kissinger and Nixon led the US to bomb Cambodia because Vietnamese communists were said to have strongholds in Cambodia. The Americans stroke an alliance with one side in Cambodia in order to smash the camp which was opposed to their interest, the communists, and no legal action was taken against the American authorities. In their use of the Khmer Rouge analogy, the French remind humanity that they simply backed up the RGF in order to weaken the RPF and wipe it out, just like what the Americans did in Cambodia.

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