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Steven Livingston: Thank you very much. I will be giving my presentation in English. I first of all come to this with a deep sense of gratitude. This is an excellent conference. I can only echo that again and again. It's also heartening to know that this isn't the only conference that I'm aware of that's going on in North America. I just returned from the far reaches of Pocatello, Idaho. Idaho State University as well has devoted a major conference to this issue, so there is an awareness, a consciousness that continues.

Through some odd sense of good fortune, I happened to find myself in Africa in April-May of 1994. I was in the Sudan trying to understand why the American news media did not pay more attention to that particular humanitarian crisis. At the time, I was spending a lot of time with Donatella Lorch of the New York Times, at that time in the New York Times, Bill Prest (?) of the Christian Science Monitor, and other mostly American correspondents trying to get a sense of how they go about doing what they do. And what I came away from that experience with is a tremendous respect at an individual level for the kinds of hardships and things that correspondents do in the name of bringing us a story. So my remarks if they are to be understood as critical are not directed at individual journalists, but instead it's at, if there's criticism to be given, it's at the nature of the institutions in which they find themselves working.

So with that said, I also encourage all of you, I'm a professor, and I like talking with students and interested members of the community, if there's anything of my talk that you're interested in following up with me on, this is my email address, and I welcome you to contact me if you are so interested.

There are two points, I think, are important for us to keep in mind when talking about media and the international affairs if it's Rwanda, or Bosnia or wherever, and that is that there is a political context, and a media context, and they interact. I'm a political scientist, but I teach something called "Political Communication," which is a direct recognition of the fact that to understand media you have to understand politics, and to understand politics you have to understand the news media. For the political context of Rwanda, I think that one of the places we can turn to most immediately is with the recollection that at this point in time, we were, the United States was in the immediate post-Cold War era, and not quite sure what it's foreign policy objectives were after nearly 50 years of containment theory.

The second point that I'm going to focus on, if nothing else in the background, is the idea that to understand also the media is to understand that institutional basis that I referred to a moment ago. I think among the things that we need to keep in mind is, is that by 1994, you had a handful of corporations owning most of the western news media, and bringing to that enterprise then a set of criteria as to what constituted good journalism, that didn't always necessarily translate into spending the resources and time to cover some distant crisis in Africa. So those are the two things I want to have as the background. I'm going to have to speak quickly here.

I think for us to understand Rwanda, and the American response to Rwanda, the place to begin is in Somalia. I've written several articles about this. I think it's a good idea for us to quickly refresh our memories as to what was going on in Somalia. The United States began an airlift operation in the summer of 1992 that transmogrified, translated itself into a security mission that involved the use of troops by 1992, and then by 1993, with the Clinton administration in power, we have the battle of Mogadishu, the young American Delta operators, special operation forces, whose bodies were put on public display, and this part of the media environment that Americans found themselves awash in by October, 1993. These events in Somalia lead American scholar and statesman, George Kennan, among others, to simply call into question whether the United States was involved in the proper course of foreign policy after the Cold War. I hope that without reading this in English in some sense, the translators can read what I have here on my PowerPoint slide overhead. What Kennan is saying in this slide is essentially writing in the New York Times, that he believes that American intervention in Somalia would have been unthinkable if it had not been for television coverage that he thinks prepared the American public and Congress or agree to or acquiesce to, an intervention, that in his view, offered no rationale beyond the idea that there was an emotional component to it.

He says that if that's true, then the traditional role of the diplomat and the policy maker is threatened. It's threatened in the sense that foreign policy in the United States or any other country will be directed by the impulsive, emotional content of a rather fickle attention that's paid to some crises and not others by media. That's something that really should be given some thought. At the time that Rwanda was going on, at the time that Somalia was going on, there was the Sudan, there was Afghanistan, there was Angola, there was a long, long list beyond Bosnia of crises that deserved, in their own right, to be paid attention to by all of us. So only some crises at any given point in time are paid attention to. And Kennan's response to that was, "that's dangerous, because it leads to an erratic foreign policy." I'm not saying I agree with that, but I am saying it's the view of the realists, such as Kennan, at the time.

Well, does the CNN effect, understood as this ability to reposition the agenda priorities of the United States government, or any government, does it exist? Through some studies and investigations that I don't have the time to go into, I have concluded as have other scholars and observers that actually it was overstated. Kennan misunderstood and others misunderstood the power of media. First of all, there wasn't that much media attention to Somalia until the Bush administration drew attention to Somalia. And if you're talking about media as a causal agent to policy, you can't have policy makers drawing attention to something, and then blame it on the media. They had it completely backwards. That's my assessment of it. Instead, Somalia must be understood as a result of advocacy that was done by members of Congress in the U.S. aid community, Andrew Natsios among others.

Whether it existed or not, it was assumed to exist. It became almost doctrinaire that something like that exists. I'm halfway through. I have to speak quickly. And this actually had political expression. The General this morning in his talks referred to Presidential Decision Directive 25, which doesn't require, if my civics education still

holds, doesn't require Congressional approval, it applies to the executive branch. And so the Clinton administration put into rules the idea that before the United States, on the heels of its experience in Somalia, before the United States would respond to a humanitarian crisis, somewhere among other things, there needed to be a clear demonstration of national interest.

This even extended to the United States actually blocking UN effort to address the growing crisis in Rwanda. Madeline Albright in this particular slide refers to the idea as "folly." It's interesting she would reverse her sentiment a couple of years of later as Secretary of State having to do with Kosovo, but that's another discussion.

There was also beyond this institutional disinclination, there was policy confusion. I had a conference of my own in May, of 1995, where an American general, General Zinni and other generals were in talking about their experience, and I had one general say, "that at the time of the massacres were unfolding, we didn't know, we in the Pentagon didn't know the difference," and I'm quoting, "between the Hutus and the Tutus." That was General Wes Clark, now he was joking, he was joking I assure you, but nonetheless his point was we weren't clear as to who were the good guys, bad guys to put it in that sort of American frontier terminology.

There was also the military identity protection that was at stake. I had General Shali Kashvili, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff say pointedly to me, "we are the Army, not the Salvation Army, and if you're paying \$1 billion a day for an army, you have certain scenarios that you see them being used in." There were verbal gymnastics going on in the State Department, where spokespersons were going through all kinds of difficulties. "Do not use the word 'genocide.'" There were "acts of genocide," but not "genocide." So this is the political context. Quickly, too quickly perhaps. Media context: all OJ all the time in the corporate media. Fewer international news stories. If my pointer here is working properly, we can just go right down the line.

Here we have percentage of international news in total media; ABC, CBS and NBC from 1972-1995. You can see in 1974 during Watergate, there were relatively few international news stories, and then there's this continual increase in attention during a difficult period of the Cold War. By 1990, '91, you have the war in Iraq, and then there's this continual diminishment and attention on the part of the American media to international news stories, including in 1994, practically half the attention that had been paid previous years.

Now let's walk through the spaghetti that you're looking at right now. General Dallaire actually referred to this. I like to think in my more egotistical moments, I introduced this particular graph back in 1995, and I see it pop up from time to time. What you have, if it will stay, is the shaded area is the attention paid to Rwanda, and then you have a number of others. The diamonds, that's Haiti. South Africa is at the dark square. You've got Bosnia, the cross hatch, and you've got OJ Simpson, the American football player. And you can see that in June-July time period, OJ Simpson received more attention that at any point in time did Rwanda or Bosnia. That, along the bottom, you can see some

interesting phenomenon here. Let me just point. In May, you can see an increase in amount of attention being paid by the American networks to Rwanda, but the reason for that isn't directly Rwanda, but rather Nelson Mandela was being elected to the presidency of South Africa. ABC sent two satellite uplink crews there. They diverted one of them to Nairobi to the area, and so for awhile you've got ABC driving additional attention. As soon as that satellite uplink left Africa, look what happens to the coverage. Both Mandela's inauguration, as well as Rwanda, drop from the television screens. One more minute? Thank you sir.

Even if we continue on and look very specifically at the coverage of Rwanda itself, this, what this slide tells us clearly is, is that at least for American television Rwanda wasn't a story of genocide, Rwanda was a medical story. The lion's share of coverage comes in July-August, not April, May. What's July-August, the refugee camps in Zaire. How's that measured? Look at the datelines. The datelines through Zaire and refugee camps skyrocket. They exceed anything that even came close to being covered during the actual genocide itself. That's even more true of the presumably omnipotent CNN. Actually CNN, my colleagues, professional journalist friends here, can correct me if I'm wrong, but CNN in Africa at this time, Gary Streiker, one person. That's CNN.

?: (Inaudible question from unknown speaker)

Steven Livingston: She was flown in. She's a parachuter, right?

Unknown speaker: No she lived in Nairobi.

Steven Livingston: Good, well good journalism. There are, I've got to go, but there are a number of sources that you can turn to if you're interested in this question, and I look forward to talking with you in questions and answers afterwards. Thank you very much for your attention.