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Editorial Note

This volume of the Journal is extremely behind schedule. But as the cliché goes, it is better late than never. In compliance with our tradition, we bring before you a potpourri of articles from seasoned researchers. We hope that the papers in this volume will advance the frontiers of historical knowledge. We thank you for your sustained interest in *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies* (IJOHIS).

Professor S.O. Aghalino
(*Editor*)

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“MUAMMAR GADDAFI, HERO OR VILLAIN”?; ISSUES IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Lemuel Ekedegwa Odeh*

Abstract

The view about Muammar Gaddafi has been a divergent issue, with some people seeing him as a Hero while others see him as a Villain. Muammar Gaddafi was the Libyan Head of State. He came to power in September 1969 through a Military coup that ousted the capitalist and pro-western monarchical government of King Idris. This change in government enabled Libya to articulate revolutionary domestic and foreign policies that had severe impact on American interests in particular and the ‘WEST’ in general. Consequently, this study adopted a historic-structural, analytical and systematic approach. Findings of this paper examined the American foreign policy posture as it affects the Middle East and critically analyzed if Gaddafi was as he had been painted

Introduction

Muammar Gaddafi was born in Qasr Abu Hadi, in a rural farming area located just outside Sirte.¹ He was raised in a Bedouin tent in the desert near Sirte. According to many biographies, his family belongs to a small tribe of Arabs, the Qadhadhfa. According to Gaddafi, his paternal grandfather, Abdessalam Bouminyar, fought against the Italian occupation of Libya and died as the "first martyr in Khams, in the first battle of 1911."² In 1948, when he was six years old, he witnessed the death of his playmates. An old mine left by soldiers of the colonial Italian Royal Army exploded as he was playing with his cousins on a dusty patch of earth near his native city of Sirte.³ Two of Gaddafi's cousins died and Gaddafi was also wounded on the

arm. This incident is said to have influenced his later views of Anti-Imperialism and hostility towards the former colonial powers in general and towards Italy in particular.⁴

Gaddafi attended a Muslim elementary school far from home in Sabha, during which time he was profoundly influenced by major events in the Arab world. He admired Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and considered him a hero during his rise to power in 1952. In 1956 Gaddafi took part in anti-Israeli protests during the Suez Crisis.⁵ In Sabha, he was briefly a member of Scouting.⁶ He finished his secondary school studies under a private tutor in Misrata, concentrating on the study of history.

Gaddafi entered the Royal Libyan Military Academy at Benghazi in 1961, and graduated in 1966. Towards the end of his course and after graduation, Gaddafi pursued further studies in Europe. False rumours have been propagated with regard to this part of his life, for example, that he attended the United Kingdom's Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.⁷ He did in fact receive four months further military training in the United Kingdom, and spent four months in London.⁸ After this, as a commissioned officer, he joined the Engineers Corps.⁹ Although often referred to as "Colonel Gaddafi", he was in fact only a Lieutenant when he seized power in 1969.¹⁰ He was, nonetheless, a holder of the honorary rank of Major General, conferred upon him in 1976 by his own Arab Socialist Union's National Congress. Gaddafi accepted the honorary rank, but stated that he would continue to be known as "Colonel" and to wear the rank insignia of a Colonel when in uniform.¹¹

On gaining power, he immediately ordered the shutdown of American and British military bases, including Wheeler Air Base. He told Western officials that he would expel their companies from Libya's oil fields unless they shared more revenue. In his warning, he alluded to consultation with Nasser. The oil companies complied with the demand, increasing Libya's share from 50 to 79%.¹²

In December 1969, Egyptian intelligence thwarted a planned coup against Gaddafi from high-ranking members of his leadership. Many of the dissenters had become dissatisfied with his growing relationship with Egypt.¹³ Gaddafi expelled Italian settlers in Libya in 1970.¹⁴ despising the Christian calendar, he abolished and replaced it

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as the country's official with an Islamic calendar.¹⁵ He renamed the months of the calendar with the Islamic calendar. For instance August which was named for Augustus Caesar in the Christian calendar, was renamed Hannibal, and July, after Julius Caesar, was renamed Nasser, for Gamal Abdel Nasser. From 1971 to 1977, Gaddafi approved the Arab Socialist Union, modeled on Egypt's Arab Socialist Union (Egypt), to function as a political party in Libya.¹⁶

Gaddafi increasingly devoted himself to "contemplative exile" over the next months.¹⁷ He wrote a manifesto titled The Green Book (an allusion to Mao Zedong's Little Red Book), in which he denounced capitalism and communism as variations of "slavery" and spurned all political parties as forms of "dictatorship." In the manifesto, he advocated direct rule by People's Committees according to Islamic law. At this time, routine administrative tasks fell to Major Abdessalam Jalloud, who became prime minister in place of Gaddafi in 1972. Two years later, Jalloud assumed Gaddafi's remaining administrative and protocol duties, to allow Gaddafi to devote his time to revolutionary theorizing. Gaddafi remained the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the effective head of state. The foreign press speculated about an eclipse of his authority within the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), but Gaddafi soon dispelled such theories by imposing measures to restructure Libyan society.¹⁸

Gaddafi's Foreign Posture

From 1977 onward, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya officially declared itself to be a direct democracy state in which the people ruled themselves through local popular councils and communes, named Basic People's Congresses, where all adult Libyans were allowed to participate and vote on national decisions.¹⁹ These people's congresses were, in principle, the country's highest authority, with major decisions proposed by government officials or Gaddafi himself requiring the consent of the people's congresses.²⁰ With this arrangement, Gaddafi decided to step down from power which had some political effect on the people because they were left with no leader. Despite officially stepping down from power in 1977 and no longer holding any governmental position, Gaddafi continued to exert considerable influence over the country's affairs, with many of his critics insisting

that the structure of Libya's direct democracy which was championed by the Libyan Arab movement, gave him "the freedom to manipulate outcomes",²¹ comparing him to a demagogue.²² The other surviving members of the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council remained with positions in office by virtue of leading the revolution and were thus not subject to election.²³

Libya enjoys large natural resources,²⁴ which Gaddafi utilized to help develop the country. Under Gaddafi's Jamahiriya "direct democracy" state,²⁵ the country's literacy rate rose from 10% to 90%, life expectancy improved from 57 to 77 years, equal rights were established for women and black people, employment opportunities were created for migrant workers, and welfare systems were introduced that allowed access to free education, free healthcare, and financial assistance for housing.²⁶ In addition, financial support was provided for university scholarships and employment programmes.²⁷ Gaddafi also initiated development of the Great Manmade River, in order to allow free access to fresh water across large parts of the country.²⁸ The country was developed without taking any foreign loans, and as a result, Libya was debt-free.²⁹

Despite his role in developing the country,³⁰ critics have accused Gaddafi of concentrating a large part of the country's high gross domestic product on his family and his elites, who allegedly amassed vast fortunes.³¹ Many of the business enterprises were allegedly controlled by Gaddafi and his family.³² Despite the regime providing financial assistance for housing,³³ segments of the population continued to live in poverty, particularly in the eastern parts of the country.³⁴ This was because Gaddafi concentrated the developmental projects in the region he came from, leaving out the eastern region. When the rising international oil prices began to raise Gaddafi's revenues in the 1970s, Gaddafi spent much of the revenues on arms purchases and on sponsoring his political projects abroad.³⁵ Gaddafi's relatives adopted lavish lifestyles, including luxurious homes, Hollywood film investments and private parties with American pop stars.³⁶

Gaddafi's Economic and Foreign Policies

The Economy of Libya was centrally planned and followed Gaddafi's socialist ideals. It benefited greatly from revenues from the petroleum sector, which contributed most export earnings and 30% of its GDP. These oil revenues, combined with a small population and by far Africa's highest Education Index gave Libya the highest nominal GDP per capita in Africa. Between 2000 and 2011, Libya recorded favourable growth rates with an estimated 10.6 percent growth of GDP in 2010, the highest of any state in Africa. Gaddafi had promised "a home for all Libyans" and during his rule, new residential areas rose in empty Saharan regions. Entire populations living in mud-brick caravan towns were moved into modern homes with running water, electricity, and satellite TV.³⁷

Muammar Gaddafi was the Libyan Head of State. He came to power in September 1969 through a Military coup that ousted the capitalist and pro-western monarchical government of King Idris. This change in government let Libya into articulating revolutionary and domestic Foreign Policies that had severe impact on American interests in particular and the 'WEST' in general. This is because the Libyan domestic policy ousted Americans from Libya, while its foreign policy had continued to confront America in the Middle East and some progressive part of the 'Third World'. Such an affront on super power by 'nonentity nation' like Libya was least expected by America, which came all out to crush her. But conscientised by the Principles of the revolution coupled with unwavering support of Libyan Masses and Progressive Arabs in general, Gaddafi remained resolute and more determined to castigate America for her Pro-Zionist support in the Middle-East. This led to a sore relationship between the two nations, especially in the 1980s when Ronald Regan was the President of the United States. At this point, Gaddafi had begun to wear the double face of a hero and villain, depending on which side of the divide his Foreign Policy favours or otherwise.

Conceptual Clarification

It may be pertinent at this point to define the words 'hero' and 'villain.' This is because they are relative terms, which may mean different things to different people. For instance, Mr. A that is assessed

as being kind by Mr B, may be described as wicked by Mrs C, all depending on the encounter each has with Mr A. If the dictionary definition of villain is wicked person or wrongdoer, then such description cannot be general view of Gaddafi all over the World. In the same vein, the dictionary definition of hero as a man respected for bravery, courage or noble qualities may be the last credit others would ever give Gaddafi. Therefore, to arrive at an apt description of Gaddafi in this circumstance, it is important to examine the American Foreign Policy in the Middle East before the advent of Gaddafi and the role Libya played in the policy to contemplate the description of hero or villain on the Libyan leader.

United States of America's Strategic Interest in the Middle East

America has been in the Middle East long before September 1, 1969 when Gaddafi took over the mantle of leadership in Libya. However, the end of the Second World War saw America intensifying effort at controlling the Middle East for political, economic and strategic reasons. It equally became interested in the Zionist movement and its quest for Jewish homeland in Palestine which at this point had become Palestinian land for over 2000 years. These areas of interests formed the Foreign Policy thrust of the United States in the Middle East.³⁸

Politically, the United States of America was in the Middle East for allies against her rival super power, the Soviet Union, and also to facilitate her economic and strategic interests. America needed friendly governments that would resist expansion of international communism. Coincidentally, most governments in the Middle East were monarchical and averse to communism. These governments perceived communism to portend revolutionary ingredients, which were threats to their continuous political control. This was unlike capitalism, which they saw as being in tune with the exploitative monarchical system in practice. As such most monarchs in the Middle East cleave to America and other western powers for protection against liberal revolutionary movements being sponsored by the Soviet Union. Libya under King Idris was not an exception. The King became a Western stooge with Libya a mere imperial outpost where America and Britain were the actual rulers. It was in this prevailing political

climate that Gaddafi took over governance and real power shifted to the Libyans.³⁹

The discovery and drilling of oil in the Middle East made the region more attractive to the United States. Industrial revolution made oil an important source of energy for America, who was formerly an exporter of oil. It suddenly became a number one World importer due to increase in consumption between 1970 and early 1980s. In fact, the Western economies depended so much on oil that it became an effective diplomatic tool for the Arabs in the 1970s, since much of the oil was and is still being sourced from the Middle East. The region became an important economic zone to America's interests. From Persian Gulf to Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, America was drilling oil from the Arab lands. The protection given to the monarchs was seen as sufficient enough to drill the oil with little or nothing ploughed back into the system where the oil was exploited. The oil companies were wholly owned by Western investors some of which included ESSO oil, ELF Aquitaine, Agip oil, B.P Atlantic Richfield and several others. The financial institutions such as the banks and insurance companies were equally foreign. The Libyan economy was practically managed by expatriate labour. Taxes were evaded and wages paid to Libyans were insignificant for appreciable purchasing power. Majority of Libyans were left uneducated, unemployed and poor. Since the capitalist 'West' dominated the economy, Libyan resources were exploited with impunity. It was in this economic mess that Gaddafi took over power and Libyans took control of the resources of their nation.⁴⁰

The American strategic interest in the Middle East is imperative in view of her political and economic assets in the region. Imperial political outposts that served the vehicle of exploitation were being protected against upsurge of socialist inclined liberal movements, especially in the area of Nasserism, which brought renewed impetus to Arab nationalism. It was equally necessary to protect the oil installation scattered all over the Middle East. Thus, America was seen building bases in places such as Turkey, Libya and Saudi Arabia. These bases were equipped with missiles and other deadly nuclear warheads. In addition, warships and submarines patrolled the Mediterranean Sea, Persian Gulf and the East Oceans.

Such heavy concentration of military outfits equally attracted large contingents of military personnel to administer over them.⁴¹

In such circumstance, the security and indeed the sovereignty of Libya in particular and the Middle East in general were in the hands of Western Powers. This was why liberal Arab leaders like Gamal Abdul al-Nasser of Egypt saw the situation as Neo-colonialism. The attempt to resist its continuation in Libya influenced Gaddafi's rise to power as it was performed in Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Yemen. His coming made every Libyan a defender of his/her nation.

American Foreign Policy in the Middle East

Another foreign policy of America in the Middle East was its support for the Zionist movement. Zionism aimed at establishing Jewish homeland in Palestine. America since after the Balfour declaration in 1917 by the British government, continued to promote and support Jewish resettlement in Palestine. So many Jewish immigrants from Europe were encouraged to move to Palestine under this conducive atmosphere influenced by America. Even Arab's independence was swapped for the state of Israel in 1948. When the Arabs reacted with violence, America took supported the Israelis. This turned out to be a situation of robbing Peter to pay Paul. While the Arabs were subjugated and exploited, the Israelis were protected and provided for using Arabs resources. The liberal Arabs could not understand the reasons for America's unqualified support for the Zionist state when it was the Arabs that served as shields against Soviet expansion in the Middle East and equally providing the badly needed oil for her economy. The most likely reason is that the Zionist state is an imperial outpost being used by America and the Western powers in general to disunite, subjugate and exploit the Arabs.⁴² Palestinians are made refugees all over the Middle East, a situation most Arabs detest, particularly Gaddafi who was prepared to fight against it.

The foregoing merely identifies and explains the American Foreign Policy in the Middle East prior to the era of Gaddafi as Libyan Head of State. What was the Libyan reaction to the policy during the rule of Gaddafi is the focus of the succeeding paragraphs and in sequence of the American policies identified. But even before Gaddafi

came into power he had fashioned a political theory of Libya to take care of the socio-economic and political needs of the people. This is contained in his writing The Green Book or Third Universal Theory, which is an alternative to CAPITALISM and MARXISM.⁴³

The Military putsch that ousted King Idris brought in a revolutionary political set-up referred to as the basis of the third universal theory. It appeared socialist at the on-set, which gave America a nightmare, that the Soviet Union was able to penetrate strategic location in North Africa. However as time went on, the political setting was one that transferred power from few elitists class to the hands of the masses themselves. It was no longer the usual change of power but the same oligarchy. This time around, every Libyan felt a stake in the government of his country. The masses were organized into various unions with the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) as the highest ruling body and headed by Gaddafi. These unions that are made up of several bodies such as professionals, farmers, and labour forces elected their officials who oversaw their interests at the Basic People's Congress. It is at the congress that decisions on people's welfare and state policies are taken such as on the construction of schools, hospitals, local commerce, agricultural policy, nuclear energy, and foreign policies. The involvement of Libyans at the Basic People's Congress attest to the fact that Libyans are for once in control of their political life and destiny, just as remarked by Gaddafi in the early hours of September 1, 1969 when he proclaimed that “from now on, Libya is deemed a free sovereign republic...”.⁴⁴

It shows that American surrogate and imperial outpost in Libya has been dismantled. No nation of America's standing will take it kindly and therefore it made all effort to destabilize Libya. This includes boycott of diplomatic ties, economic sanctions and punitive expedition as witnessed in the April 1986 raids on Tripoli and Benghazi. But since the political system in place carried Libyan people along and everyone as a defender of the nation, they have been able to withstand American Machinations. The Libyan political revolution was a resurgence of Nasserism, which America thought had died with the assassination of President Nasser of Egypt. In fact, the Libyan experience was the beginning of such radical political changes in the

Arab world as seen in Syria, Iran, and Yemen and in recent times Iraq. America has become a common enemy that exploits and subjugates Arabs and so must be dealt with accordingly.⁴⁵

Gaddafi's Economic Policy

On the economic front, Libya under Gaddafi adopted people oriented economic empowerment. The means of production and distributions were hitherto in the hands of foreigners and few of their indigenous collaborators. But upon assumption of office, Gaddafi began to stir Libyan economy in favour of the Libyan people. Oil companies, Insurance and Banks were nationalized with the majority shares in the hands of citizens. America and Britain that dominated the economy were forced to relinquish it to Libyans. This radical approach made oil a diplomatic tool.⁴⁶ Gaddafi instigated increase in oil price until the western powers were almost brought to their knees in the 1970s. In fact, ever since that feat which Gaddafi achieved, there has not been any repeat of that feat, until in recent months (between January to March 2000) when through the same effort, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela made oil to hit above US dollars 30.0 per barrel.

Strategically, Gaddafi requested for immediate enclosure of the foreign military bases in Libya. These bases belonged to America and Britain. The large contingents of military personnel were equally evacuated. Within four years of Gaddafi's rule, America had lost a strategic location in North Africa. This was the height of the Cold War and in the midst of the arms race. The socialist posture of Gaddafi added fear in the Western World that Libya had become a Soviet surrogate. The purchase of Soviet arms and the maintenance of military aids further aggravated the tense relationship between Libya and America.

While the foregoing Libyan domestic policies were unfavourable to America, its foreign policy was worse. The thrust of the Libyan foreign policy included the liberation of Palestine, restoration of Arab unity and African solidarity. In discharging this foreign policy, Libya was seen to be using her power, oil and financial resources in the support of the Palestinian cause and other liberation wars in Africa. This was why Libya opposed the American organized Camp David Accord of 1973 between Egypt and Israel. The accord

was seen as unfavourable to the Palestinian cause. And since all effort at resolving the Palestinian question equitably failed, Gaddafi was at hand to provide all needed support for the Palestinian Liberation Struggle. The help were provided for different groups such as the Arafat Palestinian liberation organization, Hezbollah, and Hamas suicide squads or the Abu Nibal terrorist outfit. Whatever dimension it took the Palestinian struggle for an independent homeland remained justifiable and received full Libyan support. The country provided haven, materials and financial aids to various Palestinian groups.⁴⁷

Another dimension to the Palestinian struggle was extensive media propaganda threatening arms attack, hit squads, terrorist attacks, and hijackings against the state of Israel and key western powers, particularly America and Britain. This was to cajole Israel and her western supporters into negotiation, hence all peace moves initiated at various regional and international forces including the U.N.O. failed. This military approach adopted by the Palestinians was blamed on Gaddafi who openly supported and justified them. These included the Munich kidnapping and killing of Israel athletes, Pan AM 103 Flight (Lockerbie) and Sydney bombings. Since the incidents, Gaddafi was labelled a terrorist while Libya became a terrorist state.⁴⁸

Hero or Villain; Whose Image?

Consequently, America and her western allies began systematic propaganda against Libya in an attempt to alienate her from comity of nations, particularly in the regional Africa and Arab bodies. The West painted an image of Gaddafi that would arouse feeling of fear, mistrust and hatred in many Arab and African states. Libya was depicted as key source of violent actions in several places in the world and threat to leadership in her regional nations. Gaddafi was accused of grand design to build "Greater Libya" and attributed the problems in Chad, Sudan and Tunisia in the 1980s to such cause. On the prima facie, Gaddafi did not help matters. He appeared over ambitious and arrogant to most leaders in his regions. His forceful occupation of Chad under the guise of Organization of African Union (OAU) mandate further portrayed him as an 'imperialist' and fundamentalist. As a result, Libya is being isolated by many nations as illustrated in the failure of OAU conference of August 1982 in Tripoli.⁴⁹

Thus the face-off between Libya and America led to the contemptuous description of Gaddafi as a villain, hence he was a terrorist. But Gaddafi argued always that America practices terrorism more than any nation. This has been exemplified with the American activities in the Caribbean and other parts of the Third World. In real sense, Gaddafi was a terrorist simply because he supports the free people of the world against American policies of domination and exploitation. R. Delorme and A.E. Murad have shown in the book, *Libya: Terrorist or Terrorized*, that terrorism was being used by America as a scapegoat to attack and destabilize Libya for subverting America interests. Since the end of the Cold War and Israel's agreement to negotiate with Arabs, the cries and hues of terrorism against Libya are fading out. There is even a move towards normalizing relationship between America and Libya as reported in the *International Herald Tribune* of Monday March 27, 2000 (page 8) with a caption "How Terrorist Victims are Forgotten."⁵⁰ The write-up shows how the killing of 189 passengers on board Pan Am 103 Flight by two Libyan terrorists is forgotten eleven years after with the Clinton administration's move to normalize relationship with Libya. And that the push to close the books on the bombing of Pan Am 103 and other Libyan misdeeds are coming from American oil companies, Britain and Egypt who saw the move as a reward for Gaddafi's abstinence from terrorist exploits. If eventually the relationship were normalized then Gaddafi would be decertified as a terrorist and therefore not a villain.

But for a Palestinian Arab, Gaddafi was a hero. He was able to survive America propaganda machine, isolation and even military attacks. Gaddafi was able to even carve a niche for himself as a true Arab nationalist. He remains unwavering in his bid to achieve justice for the Palestinians and unity for the Arabs. When America found him a hard nut to crack, Gaddafi was simply waved aside as a lunatic. Some innocent souls might have died in the cause of his support for the Palestinian struggle for their homeland, but Gaddafi's terrorism is purely to make the world to listen and consider the plight of the Palestinian people. And since this is being achieved with the current peace move between Israel and the Arab states, the acts of terrorism by Palestinians is considerably reduced. In this sense, Col. Muammar

Gaddafi is considered by many Arabs particularly the Palestinians to be a hero; this was borne out of the fact that he was able to bring mighty America and Israel to do what they thought they could push aside with the wave of a hand, i.e. to negotiate on the Palestinian question.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it was observed that Muammar Gaddafi who had a humble beginning rose to become one of the famous leaders on the African continent. On assuming power, Gaddafi adopted a socialist ideology which was not favourable to the West particularly U.S and Britain's interest in Libya, but was introduced to reform and reposition the Libyan society. Through the Jamahiriya championed by Gaddafi, Libya was able to utilize her natural and material resources to maximal output to develop the country.

However despite all his efforts in turning around the fortunes of the Libyan society in particular, and Africa at large, many critiques still see Gaddafi as a villain considering his defiant position to the West particularly America through his foreign policies and economic policies. But as far as many Africans and Arabs are concerned, Gaddafi was and still remains a hero in some aspects hitherto regarded as “no-go” areas, particularly the Palestine question.

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THE RWANDAN CONFLICT, 1990-1994: LESSONS TO ALL AFRICAN STATES AND THEIR POLITICAL LEADERS

Malachi Elisha Brown*

Abstract

The study is an examination of the conflict in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994. It analyzes the causes of the conflict and observes that several factors exacerbated the conflict. These are colonialist interests, peasant revolution, the uprising before her independence, the imbalance created during the army take-over, the political or governance structure that degenerated into armed conflict and so forth. It is a study in historical perspective whose methodology relied on data collections from primary and secondary sources. The findings of the study reveal that the United Nations intervened to quell the conflict after it had escalated into full scale war and genocide, despite the fact that there were early warnings. It concludes that African states and their political leaders must eschew all forms of ethnic crises, corruption, bad governance, lack of transparency and accountability in the course of their leadership roles in their respective African states.

Introduction

Rwanda thrust itself into the centre of world attention through the perpetration of one of the worst acts of genocide in the latter half of the 20th century. The aim of the genocide – organized and executed by extremist members of the then Hutu Government, the *Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR)* and a specially created civilian militia called the *Interahamwe* (those who work or attack together) – was the elimination of all minority Tutsi and moderate Hutu in the country.

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