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## Interviews

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# RPF is the Ugandan army, says expert

*This interview with a British East African expert from the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, was made available to EIR by a journalist.*

**Q:** What seems to be fairly clear is that the RPF [Rwandan Popular Front] was actually trained and armed and financed in Uganda.

**A:** No, no, no! That's throwing roses at it. The RPF is the core of the Ugandan Army! The RPF consists of 10,000 Ugandan soldiers of Rwandese ancestry. The officers are exiles from 1960; the rank and file are basically the children of exiles born in Uganda. This was the backbone of the army which took Museveni to power. Remember, Museveni, in the 1980 elections, got no votes anywhere to speak of. So he recruited the Rwandese exiles to be the core of his army.

When Museveni started demobilizing troops, and oddly enough, getting international funding for demobilizing, they demobilized by crossing the border in completely equipped units, taking their insignia off their shoulders as they crossed. This is why they are such an effective army. They're an army that won a war in Uganda and their commander is the man who, until three months before the first invasion [of Rwanda] in 1990, was the number three, the head of intelligence and counterintelligence in Museveni's army [current Vice President and Defense Minister of Rwanda Paul Kagame]. And clearly they have had access throughout to fuel and ammunition. There is only one possible source of this.

You can add on two other factors. The first time one had the attempted coup in Burundi [in October 1993], one simply assumed, from the past record, that this was the hard-line Tutsi leadership in Burundi, although this looked odd, because the person who had run in the election on the Tutsi ticket, if you like, and lost, was a general, of course, and [he] insisted on the turnover to the first murdered President of Burundi. And the coup *didn't* succeed because the senior Tutsi leadership wouldn't back it. I mean, it caused hell on earth, but it didn't succeed.

Now, the logical result of shooting down the plane with the two Presidents in it, whoever did it—and you can figure out who I think did it—would have been to cause the exact results in Burundi that one got in Rwanda. Almost exact, at least the same as happened after the first President's death. . . .

But my feeling is that both of the coup attempts in Burun-

di and the loss of the presidential plane, trace back to the State House in Entebbe. If that is true, there will be no peace in Rwanda or Burundi, *whatever* happens in the countries, until it is made clear to State House in Entebbe, with credible warnings as to what will happen—e.g., a cutoff of oil—that it must keep its fingers *out* of Rwanda and Burundi.

This is not justifying what happened in Rwanda. . . . But what one now has in Rwanda, is a very effective army of 10,000 Ugandan troops of Rwandese ancestry, with half a dozen long-, long-, long-exiled Hutu, who are viewed, I am afraid, as nothing more than puppets. And when you have a Hutu President, where I can't find anybody who knows who he *is*, a prime minister who is known to have been out of the country for 25 years and been a public relations man for a Tutsi army organization—and then, a major general is both vice president and minister of defense—one's eyebrows might tend to rise, even if one is less suspicious than a Rwandese Hutu might tend to be.

You have the parties which were the majority in the government at Habyarimana's death, which were then led by the lady prime minister, who was taken away and killed, out of the midst of the 200 U.N. troops who were supposed to be protecting her, without a finger being raised! In other words, the majority of the cabinet were from the minority party, some of which were largely moderate Hutus, some of which were the indigenous or resident Tutsi, some of which were mixed. The cabinet majority, so far as we know, were slaughtered to the last man (or woman) by the Hutu.

Therefore, the minority parties are beheaded, literally. . . . This, by the way, indicates that I take the view that *the minute* the prime minister and the majority of the cabinet were killed, the then-rump government was not a legitimate government of Rwanda. You then have Habyarimana's old party, which, I am very much afraid, would win a free election if one were held in Rwanda tomorrow.

However, you have what I believe is unprecedented. About one-quarter of the adult population of Rwanda *personally* have blood on their hands.

In other words, this is not comparable to Germany. No one ever claimed that one-quarter of adult Germans *personally* had blood on their hands. I am afraid there is a difference between having participated in genocide and having been part of actual mobs that killed people, rather than simply tolerating a government that does it.

As you can see, I view these three components as an exceedingly unpromising mix for producing a government of national unity, or a government with any base at all. Frankly, my view is that Rwanda needs a trusteeship government.

Equally urgent, is to find out what help the government of Burundi needs, so we don't have a second Rwanda. In other words, any more initiatives from the State House in Entebbe could well topple Burundi into the same situation. And the fact that it has and would love to get rid of 300,000 Rwandese refugees, including, basically, die-hard members

of the party and a fraction of its army, means that Burundi is *terrified*. It has minor outbreaks of killings and cross-killings in the area where the refugees are, but it is doing its best to damp this down. But you can see why I say that the whole thing in Burundi is on a knife's edge. The Hutu and Tutsi leadership in Burundi *want* peace. They almost, but not quite, trust each other. But there are real animosities between these two communities.

In Burundi, you never had planned genocide. Half of the killing in Burundi was what I would call a "forward defense" policy. If you were a village, you were afraid that the army would attack you, so you killed the soldiers. The army then came and killed you. So an army post that was largely Tutsi in a totally Hutu area was afraid it was going to be attacked, so it attacked first. In other words, you didn't have the planned genocide.

If that syndrome starts again, there is no way that the Burundi government, its army, can stop it. Therefore, the Burundi government needs to be approached, and asked, "What can we do?" including getting these refugees out of Burundi, almost anywhere, as long as it is not Burundi.

The problem is that it is not clear to me what the RPF means when it talks about trying those directly involved in genocide, which I suggest is a quarter of the adult population. This, however morally desirable it may or may not be, is hardly practical. I am sure the RPF would like most of the refugees to come home and would be perfectly willing to have them live quiet lives with them. Certainly, the international community will look at them askance when they have only half of the population of the country in the country, if only because of the cost of trying to keep them alive outside the country. You can't run Rwanda with half of its population missing.

But I must say that a lot of the people have good reason, in terms of their conscience, to wonder whether it is safe to come back. And given the high-profile murder of the archbishop and bishop, even people who are personally quite innocent might very well be worried. [The RPF on July 1 murdered Bishop Thaddee Nsengiyumva; Vincent Nsengiyumva, Archbishop of Kigali; and Bishop Joseph Ruzindana in Kabgaye, where they had sheltered 30,000 Tutsi refugees.]

The claim that there was really no difference between Hutu and Tutsi because there was some intermarriage, which there was; that there were no real communal hostilities toward each other, is simply not true. The Belgians ruled entirely through the Tutsi, locking in what was originally a minority invader kingdom with tall pastoralist warriors ruling short, crop-tilling helots. The claim that the thing is entirely artificial is not true. That certain people have chosen to *inflame* it is true, but they weren't operating on nothing.

And, of course, in 1960, the Hutu overthrew the Tutsi government in a bloodbath. But a lot of Tutsi stayed in the country and, on average, they were richer, better educated,

and had better positions. The Habyarimana government and its predecessor thought that the 15% Tutsi minority, as long as it wasn't supported externally, was safe enough and that affirmative action-type methods would keep some kind of balance.

**Q:** The British generally have most to do with government aid. Did the British pay for the demobilization?

**A:** It might have been them. Remember, Museveni is the only African President who can say, "There will not be multi-party elections until I am dead," and get his foreign aid quota over-fulfilled. You had these non-party rigged elections, and now you have this rigged non-party constituent assembly.

**Q:** Who do you think shot down the plane?

**A:** Uganda. I can't prove it, but it would have been easier for Uganda to do it than for the RPF itself. The RPF did have a contingent in Uganda, I mean in Kigali, on the hilltop; on the basis that that would be safe for them, but that meant that they were perfectly easy to be watched. So I don't believe for a moment that they could have got people with a shoulder-held missile close enough to the airport to shoot it down. The U.N., of course, supposedly had the airport secured. But I think it is nonsense to say that anybody who could easily get a shoulder-held missile and is good at cross-country walking, couldn't have got within a mile or so of the airport—I don't know what distance is required to shoot the plane down. In other words, it doesn't have to be Uganda, but on the basis of who benefits. . . .

## British Foreign Office: 'Where's Rwanda?'

*EIR interviewed the relevant official at the British Foreign Office East Africa Desk on Aug. 8.*

**EIR:** On the situation in Uganda, there has been some discussion that the RPF was actually trained and armed in Uganda.

**A:** I can't comment on that, I have no idea. Ask the Ugandans. We wouldn't know about that. I don't know if there is anyone here who could give you a definitive answer on that. Speculation is speculation, about Zaire and the RPF; speculation about Uganda and the RPF. There is no doubt that, because of traditional historical background, Museveni has been closely connected with the RPF. But, as I am sure you well know, he has denied any kind of involvement to the extent you have mentioned. Sorry I can't be more helpful.

Perhaps I should tell you two more things about Museveni which relate to my conviction on that. During the war—originally the Tanzania war through the Ugandan invasion out of Kigara to smash the bases—and because Tanzanian public opinion almost got out of hand, and because Amin threatened to kill everybody who welcomed the Tanzanians if they [Amin's forces] withdrew (and that promise was only too believable), that then turned into a war of liberation of Uganda. Museveni turned up and said he had 4,000 troops and said he wanted to join in. The only thing was that the average age of his troops was 10.

**Q:** Was what?

**A:** Ten. In other words, they ranged from 8 to 14 years old. The Tanzanian generals, being somewhat Sandhurst types, also believing the place for children is at home, created a western front out of thin cloth, up along the lake, which was of no military significance. In other words, the direct line through to Entebbe and Kampala was on the eastern side of the country. The western front was created simply to keep Museveni's children out of harm's way. They were given 250 Tanzanians to be a shield, in case they actually ran into any Ugandan troops, which wasn't expected. Unfortunately for everyone except Museveni, they ran into an entrenched position of 500 Libyans who had not withdrawn. The Tanzanian colonel with the shield force looked at this for five minutes and told Museveni, "We'll hold for five days. I will get the high command to send over artillery and we'll shell them out, and we'll go forward with no losses."

Museveni refused to accept that and launched a human wave attack with his children. He won the battle and became a war hero. But, of course, 500 children died for no military gain whatsoever.

Then you have two events on the road to Kampala. The first was that about 20 or 25 of his people sneaked into Kampala, ran through the gates of the central arsenal, grabbed handfuls of weapons, and then ran into the Catholic cathedral and knelt down with the people at mass. Given the ill-disciplined nature of the Ugandan Army, what happened next was predictable. The congregation was machine-gunned by the people chasing them. Who gained?

Then, in other areas, while I do not justify what the army did, but the army was being sniped at by boys of 10 not in uniform who ran out of villages and either shot at them or threw hand grenades at them. The ill-disciplined Ugandan Army became so terrified that anything that moved in the village, they shot it. So you got these pyramids of skulls. . . .

The question is whether Museveni was working on the basis of encouraging his enemies to engage in such atrocities that they would be totally unrespectable to anyone. He is a great student of left-wing guerrilla literature, you know. This is a tactic that was argued by the New Left—you get the government to engage in such mad repression that everybody abandons them. And for shooting down the plane, killing

the two Presidents, to create such atrocities by the Hutu majorities in Rwanda and Burundi that no one would touch them again, would then be part of this policy. Then, of course, spending your friends' lives like money in a bank account.

I do not call Museveni's the thinking man's army for nothing.

**Q:** What is his overall plan? Greater Uganda?

**A:** I don't think he is quite that mad. I presume he wants to see Tutsi rule in Rwanda and Burundi again. If he gets it by this method, they will be pretty much satellite states of Uganda. Remember there is no evidence, at least before this latest set of horrors, that the resident Tutsi minority in Rwanda particularly supported the RPF. The RPF controlled 20-25% of the country, but it was empty. The resident Tutsi minority hadn't moved into the area controlled by the RPF, therefore I would view it as an indication that their enthusiasm for their liberators was somewhat muted.

**Q:** Are there other theories on who shot the plane down?

**A:** There have been arguments that the presidential guard did. The only snag with that argument is that this was a praetorian guard which appeared to everybody, before this rumor, to be totally loyal to the President. Furthermore, it is not simply saying the presidential guard [did it], it is saying an uncle and two brothers of the President did it.

The other claim, which I think is simply a *cui bono*, is that the RPF did it. But the snag with this is that I don't see how they *could have*. And, of course, the claim of the rump government is that the Belgians did it, but I don't believe that. . . . Besides which the results of shooting down Habyarimana were only too predictable—a mass bloodbath—and no government in Brussels would have dreamed of putting its hand to that.

**Q:** Some French think this was an Anglo-Saxon conspiracy?

**A:** I wouldn't say so in the active sense. Given the nature of the two initial invasions, and the fact that the RPF has never been short of ammunition and fuel, the main question is whether the U.S. and British diplomatic missions in Uganda were leaning heavily enough on President Museveni. I mean, it is not easy to get large quantities of fuel and ammunition across Uganda and into another country without the knowledge of the Ugandan government or, in fact, in any way other than under Ugandan government control. Museveni runs a tighter ship than that, or he'd be dead. Therefore, I think you could fault the U.S. and British diplomatic missions for *not* leaning on Uganda.

As for this particular French argument, I don't believe there is any evidence that the French embassy in Uganda was leaning very hard on Museveni either. There was no evidence of an outcry in European capitals about Ugandan support for the RPF, which was an open secret, nor much comment about

it by the international press.

**Q:** Who put Uganda on its feet again, who reorganized it?

**A:** Call the World Bank, they will give you the breakdown of the aid flows. It was a lot of British, U.S., EC [European Community] and, I expect, Japanese [funds], and then, of course, the World Bank. Another \$820 million was pledged two or three days ago, and there were no political conditionalities on it at all, like, "Keep your fingers out of Rwanda and Burundi, please." If it was raised, it was to sympathize with Museveni that he had such a problem neighbor. Which is like saying, "We're sorry you are an orphan," when you have just killed your father and mother.

## British role still dominant, says banker

*This interview with an official of Barclays Bank of London with wide experience in Uganda was made available to EIR by a journalist.*

**Q:** The Rwandan Patriotic Front was trained in Uganda. Could you give me some background?

**A:** In the late 1950s there were similar troubles in Rwanda, and at the time the Tutsis were thrown out, most of them into Uganda. So now the second generation have organized themselves and invaded Rwanda.

Now, they were all along considered as Ugandans, until suddenly they realized that they needed to go back [laughs]. It is as if you had generations of Italians, and then they suddenly decided to pick up arms and go back.

So they were Ugandans as far as they were concerned, until they realized that they wanted to go back home, and [many were] obviously recruited. And many of them, surprisingly, had joined the army. Therefore, they were competent fighters, all they needed were the weapons.

**Q:** So they got support from President Museveni, I presume?

**A:** Officially, I do not think they did. Officially, they wouldn't.

But I think because some of them were senior commanders in the army, they would have kept in touch with them. Whether he gives them proper support, logistics, it is likely, yes, but I can't comment on that. They wouldn't make it public. But it has been said and I believe there is truth to it. . . .

**Q:** Who gave Museveni his initial help, in his guerrilla days?

**A:** Initially, he had leftist tendencies. It was thought maybe he had some backing from the Soviet Union. But it would appear that he got some money from the Libyans, some from

the Scandinavian countries—Norway, Sweden.

Tiny Rowland gave him some money, but when he got into power he didn't want to deal with him. I think he realized he was the wrong chap. He did give him some business in the beginning, but Museveni privatized everything, and Rowland would have got some of that.

**Q:** What is the extent of British corporate or banking presence in Uganda now?

**A:** Barclays is there. Grindlays was there also, and then it was bought by Standard Bank of South Africa. They are the main foreign banks; then you have local banks.

**Q:** With Uganda's privatization plan in full swing, has there been a lot of British capital flowing in?

**A:** Yes, you had that, but much of it came from Americans, also.

**Q:** How about the British multinationals?

**A:** You have BAT [British American Tobacco], which is the largest; they still have I think a monopoly on tobacco. But I know that one has also been privatized, so they may be getting competition. Shell, Lonrho is there, but very small, mainly agencies for British motor cars and some cotton. Coffee, obviously, is the biggest export of the country and you have very many companies in there, mostly small companies, but they sell to the large commodities companies. There used to be a government monopoly on marketing coffee, but that also has been privatized.

**Q:** Is there much of a presence of British advisers?

**A:** Oh, yeah! I mean the economy is virtually run on expatriates, as they are called. They virtually run the ministries. That is how you get things done. Otherwise the local people, first of all local skilled people, are away. But, more importantly, the education system was disrupted during the troubles, and you have not turned out many intellectuals. And certainly there is a lot of corruption.

So the only way to make it work is to bring in expatriates. I mean, the tax collection is run by a company which is expatriate, the Uganda Revenue Authority. They run the tax management. The government just gives them a budget and gives them targets and they go out and collect the taxes.

**Q:** That is mainly British nationals?

**A:** Yes, British. Some Scandinavians, but mostly British.

I know the Overseas Development Agency [under the Foreign Office], they are seconding people out there. You have the Ugandan Investment Authority, which is also run by expatriates. That's in charge of all investment policy. The deputy executive director is British, Martin V. Hogg.

Yes, here I see the Overseas Development Institute [funded by the British government] has been seconding people out there.