

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Many readers, including me, make a habit of flipping to the end of a book before plowing into the beginning. Some will find that practice particularly helpful with this volume. The policy analysis at the end answers the “So what?” that haunts every author hoping to impinge on the precious time of her audience.

Instead of leaving it up to you to cheat, I might have interspersed in the text allusions to those lessons. But pointing to my conclusions throughout the book would have been at the expense of a different goal: letting you arrive at your own understanding even as your awareness meanders or is yanked from one setting into another. My bias is that insight gained through such a personal process is richer and more lasting.

Thus the vignettes that follow are described as I understood them at the time I experienced them. No one was ready then to apply what we were learning to conflicts in Rwanda, or to ponder a future application to violence brewing elsewhere.

That said, if you open to the last section first, don't feel guilty. Otherwise, move through the experiences as I did, and let the realization come to you that despite moments of courage and beauty, there was something very, very wrong with the way this war and this peace were waged. And what was wrong, we need to—and can—make right.