

Narrative Essay - Romeo Dallaire

A Canadian Lieutenant General, Romeo Dallaire has made a great contribution into the peace-keeping mission and International human rights movement. Being an experienced soldier Dallaire did everything to protect human's rights and resist to the world coalition of false "peacemakers" who did nothing to help people in Rwanda during the genocide period.

Romeo Dallaire was born in 1946 in Holland. He spent his early years in Montréal and joined the Canadian Army in 1964. Further, Dallaire graduated from the Royal Military College and the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, and the British Higher Command and Staff Course (Melvern, 2004). Romeo Dallaire became well known during Rwanda mission in late 1993. His actions and strategic thinking shown in Rwanda, contrasted with the policy of many world countries helped to save lives for many civilians in Rwanda. To understand his contribution some events should be described. After the genocide had been started he needed a support to protect the government, and that's why he ordered ten soldiers from Belgia. During the operation in Rwanda they were brutally murdered, and Dallaire was accused in their deaths. After this event many governments evacuated their citizens, but did actually nothing to stop genocide. Dallaire was commander of a misnamed "peacekeeping" mission, whose main duty was to secure a non-existent peace. His urgent requests for additional support were ignored by his country. When he was denied permission to take aggressive action, he was left under-armed, hand-tied and powerless (Melvern, 2004). After some fails the UN turned Dallaire down. He asked American leaders to block the Hutu radio, but administration refused to do even that. So, he was along with the group of soldiers in foreign country on the civil war edge, but he stayed in order to fulfill his mission as a soldier (Barnett, 2003). The great contribution of Dallaire was his strong desire to protect human's rights closely connected with personal courage and charisma. Against political pressure to take sides in the conflict, Dallaire remained impartial, and his courage, compassion and

integrity earned him one of Canada's most prestigious military honours, the Meritorious Service Cross. In January, he received the inaugural Aegis Award from the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Great Britain. Following the Belgian withdrawal, Dallaire consolidated his contingent of Canadian soldiers in urban areas and focused on providing areas of 'safe control'. His actions are credited with directly saving the lives of 20,000 Tutsis. There is speculation that Dallaire's forces deliberately sabotaged equipment to slow their UN-mandated withdrawal from the combat zone (Romeo Dallaire, 2003). Also, Dallaire was made an Officer of the Legion of Merit of the USA. He worked as a Special Advisor to the Canadian Government and took an active part in international agencies protecting Human Rights and global peace, etc.

A book “Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda” written by Dallaire changed greatly people’s understanding of the events occurred ten years ago, and as the most important this book allows people around the world to know the truth about this war. Dallaire was able to reflect on the horror and use his own experiences to try to fix what is wrong in the world. The main contribution of Dallaire to the world is his analysis of the causes and outcome, and conclusion of what went wrong. He puts unsparing blame on the circular failure of the UN: lack of support from member countries, especially the U.S and the Security Council, which led to lack of respect for the UN, which then led to lack of support from member countries (Dallaire, 2003). Dallaire was called “an icon of Canada's pursuit of a human security agenda” because his philosophy is geared to fully utilizing Canada's strengths for the betterment of humankind” (Melvern, 2004).

Retired from the military he did not stay apart from the peacemaking activity and became a special advisor to the Canadian Minister for international co-operation, tending to protect children in war countries (Romeo Dallaire, 2003). Today, General Romeo Dallaire symbolizes the brave and courageous actions of those known and unknown soldiers who

want to prevent the injustice and unfairness of genocide around the world. He made an extraordinary commitment to his country, to the international community and to his fellows, convincing and compelling public to think and protect human's rights and dignity of those nations who is weak enough and needs global support.

References

1. Dallaire, R. Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda. Random House Canada, 2003.
2. Melvern, L. Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwanda Genocide and the International Community. Verso, 2004.
3. Romeo Dallaire. CBC News. 2003. Available at:
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