



BEYOND THE HEADLINES

Featuring
ANDREW RICE
Author of the book

The Teeth May Smile But the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda

And special guest,
DUNCAN MUHUMUZA LAKI
Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations

Warren Hoge:

Good evening. I'm Warren Hoge, IPI's Vice President and Director of External Relations, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this evening's discussion based on a terrific new book about Africa: *The Teeth May Smile But the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda*.

With us, we have not only the author of the book, Andrew Rice, but also the key figure that gave rise to the book, Duncan Muhumuza Laki. I should also tell you there are books for sale outside, and those of you purchasing books, if you bring them back here at the end of the session, Andrew would be very happy to sign them for you.

In 2000, Duncan Laki came across a clue to the disappearance of his father, Eliphaz Laki, a 52-year old civil servant and regional county chief who had been summarily arrested by henchmen of Idi Amin. Taken from his office and driven away to an unknown location one day in September 1972, he was never again seen alive.

Duncan, now a member of the Ugandan mission to the UN, was to move to the United States with his wife and his family, who, I'm happy to say, are all here tonight, in the early 1990s. But he always kept with him a possession of his father's that eventually proved crucial to unlocking the secret of his father's disappearance and death.

It was a spare key to his father's Volkswagen. The significance of that possession and how it provided the principal clue is a story I'm going to ask Duncan to tell you himself. The linkage occurred in 1999, and two

years later, Duncan courageously began a search that led him to a shallow grave and to three old soldiers, including Idi Amin's military chief of staff. Then there was a lengthy trial with an ambiguous conclusion.

For four years, Andrew Rice followed the trial, spent time with Laki's family, and traveled across Uganda seeking to understand the consequences of Amin's era and the limits of reconciliation.

Commenting on the book, Howard French, an old *New York Times* colleague of mine, who himself was an insightful correspondent in Africa, said this in a Sunday *New York Times* review that we linked to in the invitation.

"As a matter of convention," Howard wrote, "we constantly say and write things about Africa that would be unimaginable with any other continent." In that connection, Howard bemoaned what he called the often "thoughtless broad brush treatment" of many commentaries about Africa.

Then he added, "Once in a while, though, the experience of much of the continent is crystallized in the story of a single country, and when that story is told with a combination of attentiveness to historical background and a genuine care for the lives of real people, the small world of serious Africa books for non-specialists becomes enriched. Andrew Rice," Howard said, "has written just such a book."

Now, in addition to being a detective story and a political history, the book is a thoughtful meditation on the nature of memory and reconciliation on a continent where the simple desire to forgive can be an integral concept of a nation's culture.

The Uganda that Andrew arrived in in 2002 struck him as rehabilitated after the years of Amin's brutal rule and the civil wars and the chaos that followed his ouster in 1979. But he noticed something else, too. "The past," he said, "always lurked just a few steps down the garden path."

He found that Ugandans had dealt with the atrocities of Amin and the subsequent violence, neither by forgiving, nor on the other hand by pursuing prosecutions, but by resigning themselves to the injustices of an imperfect peace. This, of course, runs contrary to the remedies of the international community, which often prescribes criminal courts, truth commissions, and special tribunals that are supposed to mark a new era of accountability where countries and leaders recover their future only by exploring their failures and crimes in the past.

But Duncan, in a few minutes, I want to ask you about that Volkswagen key, and about what occasioned your initial hesitance in trying to achieve the justice you sought, why you decided to step forward when you did, and how the experience shaped your conceptions of justice and accountability.

But first, Andrew, to the book, and what writing it told you about Uganda, and by extension, about Africa? And maybe a good place to start is that engaging phrase in the title, "The teeth may smile, but the heart does not forget," which you say is based on an old Ugandan proverb from Ankole, home of the Laki family. Andrew?

Andrew Rice:

I really appreciate your having me here, Warren, to talk about my book, and I thought, you know, what does the phrase that's in the title mean? I thought that maybe the best way to elucidate that would be just to read a section of the book from which the title is taken. And this begins with a scene of a memorial service. Not a funeral, but a memorial service for a man who had disappeared, whose body had never been found.

"In 1990, when Duncan was 28, he decided that the family should hold a memorial service for Eliphaz Laki. That December, a few days after Christmas, his father's friends and relatives gathered at the farm in Ndejja. They placed a simple stone in the ground near the house Laki had built for his family. A plaque affixed to it read, 'Lord, grant us decent rest and disappearance no more.' President Yoweri Museveni attended the memorial service. His presence acknowledged a secret and personal debt. Over the years, Laki's children had come to realize that there was much their father had not revealed to them. He'd been involved in the clandestine resistance to Amin's dictatorship. He wasn't a victim, they now knew, but a martyr. He'd given his life so that a better future could prevail. In his address to the memorial service, President Museveni praised Laki as a man of integrity and told those assembled cryptically that there were those who had chosen the other side. Someone had turned Laki over to Amin. This person or people remained hidden among them. The mourners listened silently. They already knew that Laki had been betrayed. Laying the stone, Museveni said, would help to mend the wrong that had been done to Laki. By recognizing how he lived and why he died, the president said, the family had consecrated their father's sacrifice. Perhaps his soul really had found rest. Laki's children could only pray that was true. The chief's body had never even been recovered. Outwardly, like the country itself, Duncan appeared to be prosperous and at peace, but the people of his Banyankole tribe had a proverb: 'The teeth may smile, but the heart does not forget.' Duncan could never keep the absence of finality from preying on his mind. In conversation, others solemnly referred to his father as 'The late Laki,' but he could never bring himself to use those words, or to speak about his father in anything but the present tense. His family, his government, his better judgment, all of them told Duncan that his father was dead, that seeking the truth was a dangerous indulgence. But something persisted: an inner determination to know."

And so, you know, I think that that passage gets at what the central theme of this book is, which is what happens in societies where the natural desire to know the truth about what happened to one's loved ones during times of dictatorship comes into conflict with a sort of larger government policy or societal consensus towards amnesty, reconciliation, and of necessity, silence, because oftentimes, speaking can disturb the kind of reconciliation that's necessary to achieve peace.

So for those of you who aren't intimately familiar with Uganda's recent history, I'll just give a little background on the larger context in which this story takes place. I can begin in a lot of places, and actually in the book, I begin in multiple different places. But I think that, you know, the best milestone to begin with is in 1986, which is when Yoweri Museveni, who had been a rebel leader, and in fact a leader of the resistance to Amin, and I should mention that actually one of his comrades in that resistance is here tonight, Ambassador [Ruhakana] Rugunda [of Uganda], who's

sitting over there, who was actually a college friend of President Museveni's, and participated in that very dangerous undertaking.

President Museveni took power in 1986 as a rebel leader after really 20 years of conflict. That conflict had begun under Milton Obote, the first president, had continued under Idi Amin, and had continued after Idi Amin under a series of different governments, one of which included Milton Obote, who was the first president. But the general point is that there was 20 years in which there was instability and chaos in Uganda. And when Museveni took over, he stood, I believe, on the steps of Parliament and gave a speech and promised a fundamental change in the politics of Uganda, and there really wasn't much reason to believe that it was true.

I mean, people had given up Uganda as a hopeless case nation. But over the succeeding 23 years now, President Museveni has achieved a great deal of what he promised. Not everything, but certainly the country has been at peace, it has seen peace relatively, it's been a gradual process of bringing peace, but as of now, Uganda is a fairly peaceful country.

It's achieved a degree of economic growth. If you go to Kampala today, which I encourage all of you to do, you'll see a town that's bustling and full of life and full of young people who don't really have much recollection of the terrible years that preceded their birth or preceded their memories, and that was the Uganda that I came to know when I lived there. I went there in 2002, and I was really struck by how the country had really, had changed in such a drastic degree from a lot of what I had read about it, which dated back to the 1970s and 1980s, because that period of Amin and immediately afterwards was the period that's really been emblazoned and imprinted on most people's minds. One thing that really kept striking me when I lived there, though, was that there wasn't really a lot of memory of Amin, of what had happened.

It's not to say that people didn't remember Amin. As I say in the book, he was the most famous Ugandan who ever lived. You know, everybody -- this post-dated my time living there --, but everybody saw *The Last King of Scotland*, everybody knows Idi Amin, he's been by no means forgotten. He's still a looming, towering figure over Uganda.

But what had happened hadn't really been memorialized or commemorated, I think, in a systematic kind of way, in the way that I perhaps had come to expect as a person who came from a Western context, who came from this tradition that I think, you know, you can date that back at least to the Holocaust, memorialization of this idea that in order to get past the traumas of the past and assure that they wouldn't be repeated, that you needed to memorialize them, you needed to have trials, that you needed to have people brought to justice, that there was an intrinsic stabilizing force in the power of, intrinsic stabilizing power in the process of bringing people to account and taking accounts of the past.

And, you know, this was, as I spent time there, this was something that really confused me about the country when I first went there, and as I spent time there. I learned that part of the political context there was, in fact, a sort of attempt at a commission of inquiry, a sort of proto-Truth

and Reconciliation Commission that had done some work when Museveni had originally come to power.

But there had been kind of a political compromise made at some point, which was basically, there were a bunch of rebel groups in northern Uganda, and these rebel groups actually had formed out of the remnants of Idi Amin's old army. Some of them were even commanded by people who had been top generals to Amin, and the government had basically made a deal saying, "We'll give you amnesty. You guys can all come home, live in your area, as long as you pledge allegiance to this current government. Basically, you're not going to be disturbed."

A lot of it was on the level of sort of a tacit agreement that these issues of Idi Amin would not be excavated, would not end in trials and hangings as they did in Nuremberg, but rather that people would be accepted back, and in fact, when I lived in Uganda, certain members of Idi Amin's regime actually occupied relatively high levels in the current government as a sort of concession to the idea that unity and reconciliation was a higher value than justice.

In fact, there was even in Uganda a certain strain of revisionism that I describe in the book that among people who came from or considered themselves kin to Amin, particularly people from the northwestern area, his ethnic groups, and people who shared his religion, Islam, there's a great deal of affection still for him, a sense that he had been *their* president, and even among Ugandans of other ethnic groups, of other tribes, other backgrounds, there was a sort of romanticization of his period of rule, particularly related to economic justice issues.

Basically, to put it very briefly, Indians had controlled, South Asian Indians had controlled much of the economy going back to the colonial era under the British, and Amin had actually expelled them, and many Ugandans even today cite that as a kind of nationalistic moment that was one of Amin's positive legacies, if you can call it, if you can cite any kind of a positive legacy from a person who had murdered that many of his countrymen.

And you know, I think that this is kind of the context in which Duncan did something very brave. I mean, I think, I'll just read one other brief passage from the book that kind of gets at this idea of these, what I call twin histories.

"These twin histories of Amin's regime, one that says he was a devil, and one that hailed him as a savior, ran like parallel threads through Uganda's fragile patchwork peace. If you pulled one frayed strand of truth, you never knew what might unravel. So Ugandans talked a great deal about this individual, Idi Amin, the legend, the celebrity, and talked very little about what had actually happened in their country during the time he ruled. They could not come to terms with their history, because even the most basic facts were still in dispute. Ugandans had simply set aside their argument for the time being, because silence was the price of peace. Every so often, though, some artifact would surface, a reminder of dormant rifts."

And, you know, I'll let Duncan pick up this story here, because the artifact in this particular case was an automobile, a 1972 Volkswagen

Beetle that had belonged to his father, and more specifically, actually, a very prosaic piece of paper, which was the car's registration, which, it was registered under the license number UYO 010. So I think maybe I'll just, at this point, let Duncan pick up and tell us what UYO 010 meant and how he pursued the case from there.

Duncan Laki:

Thank you, sir. Am I on? Okay, thank you. Thank you so much, Warren, for getting us here, and thank you all for coming. Thank you, Honorable Ambassador, for coming, and your wife and all the friends that we work together with. You recognize the registrar of the International Criminal Court. Many times, people don't understand when we talk about reconciliation or lack thereof, but maybe as you listen to Andrew and as you will get to read the book, you will understand where we are coming from.

But I had prepared some little thing here. In the invitation flyer to this event, my name appears under the caption "featured guest." Well, following that example, I thought I should come along with special guests of my own. So for that reason, I brought along, and I should ask you to recognize Dr. Catherine Muhumuza Laki, you can just wave, Mbangira Muhumuza Laki, you can wave, Miss Otandeka Kanyesigye Laki, you can wave, Miss Asiimwe Amara Laki and recognized in absentia is Mr. Kagi Muriisa Laki who could not get a day off from his classes. [applause] Thank you very much.

In his introduction, Warren said that we have not only honored the author of the book, Andrew Rice, but also a key figure that gave rise to the book, Duncan Muhumuza Laki. True, sometimes I enjoy a little bit of limelight, but this key figure thing arises out of personal tragedy, and I would willingly take a huge pass on it.

One is reminded of the first O.J. Simpson trial some 12 years ago. Jay Leno of *The Tonight Show* usually satirized the proceedings, for which he received an award as the best show of the season. In his classic comic style, while accepting the award, he said, "Thank you, O.J. for making it happen." Well, I kind of thought, thank you, I don't know who, but in this book, as a key figure, not because I wanted, not because of anything I did, but because of something that happened to me.

The first time I met Andrew Rice, I had gone to Kampala, and my colleague in the law practice that still bears my name informed me that some exotic-sounding person with an equally exotic name was looking for me, and that he had given him his, he had given him my contact in New Jersey. Well, I called Andrew, and he thought I was calling from New Jersey. We linked up, but I could not provide straight answers to his requests. From childhood, we had been trained never to volunteer information on the very delicate issue of our fatherhood. Later on, where he might be or what might have become of him.

I sought the wise uncle, or wise counsel of Uncle Yona, who had advised that since Andrew is a professional journalist, I should freely talk to him. Hence, *The Teeth May Smile, But the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda*. I should state that memory is, that word memory is kind of a misnomer in this context, because from my background, in my cultural background, it connotes remembering after you had forgotten. Yet I can assure you that there was never a day

when I ever forgot about my father, and therefore technically, I didn't need to remember.

At any rate, let me share with you a little bit of my father. He was born in 1920, and not in 1924 as appears on the memorial stone. Therefore, he was 52 when he died, and not 46 or 48 as appears in the book. Like many mysterious things about him, his age was not an exception. In many traditions, you do not perform a memorial service or the last funeral rites before a burial, but Mr. Laki defied this, and we had the memorial service, some kind of funeral rites, before he was buried, because at that time, we had not found the remains, and we didn't even know what had become of him.

The Friday morning was like any other. For one, my father, rather it was like no other. For one, my father was late to go to work. That's how I was able to get the one schilling from him for ink to put in a pen to write with. I continued to try to remember whether I picked it from his hand, in which case, when I touched him, the last time, that last time. I will need somebody to tell me whether I really touched him or not, but yeah.

When I returned for lunch, my cousin, Francis, told me that, "Your father has been taken." Even at that young age, I knew what that meant. I took the one schilling coin – in today's terms, it should be maybe \$5, or the schilling coin is like a quarter, but the value was \$5 of today. I took the one schilling coin and put it on the bedside table then proceeded straight to the garage to check for the car. Francis told me that the car had also been taken. I ran back to school to inform the headmaster, because I knew he was my father's friend and contemporary, but he was at a loss as to what to tell me. I proceeded to the pastor, and he too did not know what to say. He prayed for me and told me to return home. I knew in my heart what had happened, but somehow, I switched off that side of reality. Somehow, I knew that I could salvage the car, though.

For one, I could see the spare key of the Volkswagen, and sometimes I would attach it admiringly, but also with reverence. It was my only connection between what was remaining of my father and myself. You see, there were not too many cars in our town, and my father owned one of the few of them, and then one time when we were moving from our country home to where he worked, he gave a ride to one gentleman. He did not get a fare, because it was a free ride. I thought that was cool.

Earlier on, about a couple years ago, a couple years before, a bunch of, you know a group of people were on a truck, they were going for a political rally, so when they came, they said, "Yeah, let's wait until he drives in front of us," and then one of the men said, "Oh, you know, this guy drives very fast, you cannot even see him when he goes ahead of you." And I took that in my mind, not only does my father have a car, he really can race it!

And you know, those are some of the first memories of my father, and they continued with me. So as I was saying, in high school, there was this boy who knew almost all the owners of the various cars in town. As I said, there were not too many of them anyway. I asked him if he knew the owner of a Volkswagen registration number UYO 010, and sure he did. He said it belonged to a man from the army barracks. This was in 1976, and my father had disappeared in 1972.

Like I had been prompted, I didn't question any further. When Idi Amin was overthrown in 1978, I urged my mother to approach the returning contemporaries of my father so that they could help us get back our car. Well, she hushed me up. She said, "If they cannot find theirs, how could they found ours?"

But that was not the reason. We had grown up to be told, don't ever delve into that subject. And everybody else took heed except myself. I really wanted to know a little bit of something, and especially to get back the car. My mother, my brothers, and my sisters were of a different persuasion. They thought we were better off letting go of the past and go on with the present. I should say that the only other person who supported me was Cathy, my wife, thank you very much, Cathy. See, in my tradition, there is this proverb which is that a good daughter-in-law is the one who finds a grave, rather than a mother or a father-in-law. Now when I married Cathy in 1990, I was, my father's grave was missing. I think she probably wanted to make sure that there was one. So Cathy supported me, and we eventually came to where we ended.

What was my motivation? I was motivated by the need to accord a fitting burial to my father. I detested the possibility that farmers or construction workers or hunters might one day chance on my father's remains and scatter his bones, trashing them as if he had been a common thief. And at that time, Idi Amin had decreed that if you find anybody indulging in mischief like stealing, like all these kinds of stuff, you should kill him by mob justice, never mind that he was engaged in the mischief of his own in even bigger proportion.

So that motivated me to keep looking for my father's remains. Yet, it was a tightrope. If I show interest in the matter, someone might hide the evidence. So even if someone I knew worked in the car registry, I could not bring myself to tell him, "Let's look for this." I struggled with the idea of asking him to trace the ownership of UYO 010, but I couldn't bring myself to that reality. I should say also that I had an uncle who worked at that car registry, but I didn't want to indulge him, because he was my mother's cousin, so he probably would have shunned it or told my mother things would have not been very nice for me.

So my opportunity came much later after I had grown and married and started a family of my own, and I was doing some work for the revenue authority – that's Uganda's tax collection agency. I went in as if I was going to pick some records regarding non-payment of revenue, since that was my schedule, so I asked the gentlemen whether they could lead me, first of all to tell me whether the records that went far back to the early 70s were available, and the first break was when the attendant told me, yeah, they were available. Actually, they are better kept because nobody tinkers with them.

After getting the record, I faced the dilemma of what to do and how to proceed. Well, once again, I talked to my uncle Yona, and he says now that we have the records, let us see where, what to do with them. At that point, I still wanted to get the car, no other motivation. I took it step by step. So then another break came when we got hold of Muhammed Anyule. Muhammed Anyule is the guy who transferred the car into his names in 1973, I believe – is that what you found out?

Rice: '73 or '74.

Laki: It's all in the book. [laughter] So Muhammed Anyule was arrested, and when he was asked by the police investigators, he said, "I know the owner of the car, of the Volkswagen. He is dead, but I'm not the one who killed him."

At that point, I felt that I was under a very big shared weight which was removed off my shoulders. Well, like I just said, the rest of the story is in the book, and we got the gentlemen, they started prosecuting them, and you know, I was going back and forth, because my family was here, and the prosecution was going on in Kampala.

But I also knew that even if they were convicted, these were errand boys. So you could really not get a whole lot of satisfaction by saying, you know, these fellows had been convicted. To that extent, it also shaped how things, events followed.

But also, the other thing is, if you put this vital evidence, and to the prosecutor, it is evidence, but to me, it is my father's remains, so that was the whole thing. You can imagine somebody who clings to a car key, now I found the remains.

So for some reason, we thought that we should cut our losses, as it were, and we proceeded. Unfortunately, that was also, to affect the outcome of the trial, but it's not that they were found not guilty. The case was withdrawn, so that's how things are shaping up. I'm available to answer any questions if you have any. [applause]

Hoge: Thank you, Duncan. I'd like to just ask you a couple of questions and then open it up to the floor. I said in the introduction that the trial had an ambiguous result. In fact, three men who almost certainly had been involved in the death of your father walked free. I want to read what Andrew says about that, because it's a nice piece of analysis, and then Duncan, I want to ask you, if you don't mind, what you felt when that moment happened.

What Andrew writes is, "Maybe the trial that had begun as a contest over the legacy of Idi Amin had ended up delivering a verdict about the Uganda of Yoweri Museveni. Eliphaz Laki had been killed for protecting Museveni the rebel, yet Museveni the president had instituted a legal system that had given Laki's accused killers the benefit of the doubt. That Yusuf Gowon, Muhammed Anyule, and Nasur Gille" – these are the three men – "could walk out of their prison cells into the embrace of family and friends was perhaps in a perverse way a measure of how far Uganda has come since the days of Amin."

Duncan, presumably you were there, and there were pictures and description in the book of these men being received by their families with warmth and embraces. Have you come to terms with the fact that this was the best result you could get, or do you still wish there had been a truth commission or some other kind of investigation?

Laki: The truth commission would have been the best in the circumstances, but I'm not too sure that it would also bring finality to the whole thing. Like my friend Titus would say, it would bring closure, but I'm not too sure that there is anything like closure in this matter, because I just said, they were errand boys. In fact, my older brother, who is himself a colonel in the army, says, "These gentlemen were taking orders." It's not so much of a defense, but I think they had no motive of their own.

There must have been somebody behind who first of all made the lists of who was to be exterminated, and so the result, yeah I got kind of disappointed. I should have, I don't know how to, if they had been convicted, certainly it would have been a much better result, but not that it would bring any kind of finality in this whole matter.

Hoge: I think Andrew says in the book that you at one point said that, had they been convicted, you would have been in favor of pardoning them. Is that accurate? Because that's interesting.

Laki: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, that's the truth. If they had been pardoned, I definitely would have walked myself to nothingness until I probably could have issued a pardon, but that also tells you they would now be in my hands, it would be at, and that's probably what might have, it might have helped, that they are now at my mercy, but also since the case was withdrawn and they are not convicted, every day they are walking, they are probably looking behind their backs to see if the prosecutor might have got some other evidence. So yeah, to that extent, as long as they are on the run, I think they are not living with impunity, either.

Hoge: What you did -- and Andrew writes about this feeling in the book -- was a pretty brave and courageous thing, and I think you actually waited a year or two before you decided to pursue the matter. And as you said, you had your wife supporting you, so that was helpful. Have any other families in Uganda gone the same route since you did this, which was very well publicized at the time?

Laki: Yeah, there have been some families who have tried to get the remains of their fathers, but my father's case was very different, because he was gotten from an up-country place, he was killed alone, and he was left there by himself. Many other families, they were bundled into a mass grave, mass graves all over the place, or thrown in rivers or whatever, so you don't get too many. And some people have felt that it is perhaps not worth pursuing that course of action. I don't know whether that is some kind of intuition, but I just could not see how I would not do this, and while I respect other people's views, I wouldn't just rest until, you know, some kind of justice is meted out on the perpetrators, if they can be found.

Hoge: Andrew, while we're on the subject, you mention in the book that President Museveni, in this same spirit, has actually tried to reverse some of the convictions of the Amin people. Can you mention something about that?

Rice: Well, not actually reversing the convictions, but pardoning them. Actually, there are no, as of earlier this year, I believe it was, the last, there have been one or two isolated people who have been convicted of

crimes at various different points; some of them were convicted under a previous regime and imprisoned, and steadily they had been pardoned and released from prison.

And the last, I believe he was the last major Amin era convict, was pardoned earlier this year. He was a man named Ali Fadhul, and he was quite old at this point, so the government has in fact very much pursued a policy, even with people who have been convicted in courts of law, of basically saying, "Let bygones be bygones." And in fact, there's a certain perverse justification for it, because the few unlucky saps who did get convicted for one reason or another can point to all the even worse guys who are still out there, and in some cases living quite well, and say, "What did I do that was so much worse than these others?"

Hoge:

Just finally one not small question, but a relatively small item in the book: you tell the story, the horrific story of something that happened in June of 1979 in a place called Kiziba, which was basically a massacre of Muslims by Christians. I found that chilling to read in light of what has been happening recently in East Africa in places like Rwanda, of course, but more recently in Kenya. Is there any problem of that kind in Uganda right now? Is there a Muslim-Christian divide, or a tribal or other ethnic divide that could lead to this kind of mass killing that we unfortunately have seen elsewhere on the continent?

Rice:

Well, the background for the audience on that particular massacre he mentions, it occurred in 1979 in an area not far from where Duncan's own family lived, and what happened is once Amin was overthrown and his army retreated to the safety of their home area, the local people, exhorted by some unscrupulous politicians, basically rose up against the people that they had access to, who were the Muslims who lived in their area, some of whom had collaborated with the Amin regime, many others of whom were innocent women and children, and I believe it was 79 or more people were killed in this one particular incident that I described.

The reason I describe that incident is to sort of make the point that, you know, there are no, you can't talk about, the whole point of justice and the kind of justice that Duncan is pursuing is that, is this idea that there's collective guilt, is one of the major sort of infectious agents that causes these problems, like in Kenya and Rwanda, the idea that because a president who's a Kikuyu in Kenya steals an election, that you should go out and kill innocent Kikuyu villagers in order to extract revenge for that. That, you know, is one of the great problematic issues in politics, and I think, as I said, in this case, almost always, I think it's not a product of spontaneous ethnic hatreds or anything like that, but rather planned by people who don't necessarily get their hands dirty, but go ahead and make sure that people have machetes and are motivated to use them.

So I think maybe when you ask if there is potential for that to happen again in Uganda, the answer is, Yes, as long as there are politicians. And I should say that there are politicians on both sides, within the opposition and the government, that have at times made appeals to ethnic loyalties, as long as that aspect of the collective, of the collective, – "Our tribe benefits because our tribe is in power," or "This tribe, we take revenge against this tribe because they harmed us when he was in

power,” – as long as that is a controlling sort of political discourse in Africa, I think you’re going to see problems like that happening again and again, and though Uganda is peaceful now, I think that you can never say that that’s completely been put to rest.

Hoge: Very good. I would love to go to the audience now for any questions or comments anyone wants to make. If you would just raise your hand, and somebody with a microphone will show up by your side, and you can identify yourself and... Have we answered all the questions? Ambassador, please.

Ruhakana Rugunda: Thank you very much, chairperson. I really just want to salute Andrew Rice, the writer of the book, because the compendium gives a graphic description of what has happened to many families in Uganda. Minus the role of Muhumuza, Andrew, not many families have attempted to do even a quarter of what Muhumuza was able to do.

It’s good that somebody from Brooklyn comes to Uganda, stays with the population, studies a rather complex situation, and comes out with quite an accurate story of what has happened to the country. It actually gives the history of Uganda. So Andrew, congratulations. You can do even more work in that direction. [applause]

Let me also pay tribute to the extraordinary courage of Duncan Muhumuza. Sticking to the key, and I even saw him with the key today. Why don’t you show us where the key is? Uh-huh, there the key is! [applause]

And really being able, in a very, very tortuous way, to trace what happened to his father, and eventually to even get the remains of his father and give them a very belated sendoff. I thought this was a great act, and as a parent, I would want to have a son like Muhumuza.

In this case, it was difficult to be able to handle it in the way he did, so that was really good. With that point, we say that, yes, yes, yes, [applause] and incidentally Muhumuza had big resistance from his family. I think he was torn. “What do I do? Do I respect and obey what my mother has said? Or do I continue and look for the remains?” I’m glad that he chose to look for the truth and eventually got it.

That point, it is good that the Institute has made it possible to have this discussion about this important book.

Fourth point: actually, what is happening in Uganda is, I think has been well described by Andrew, but I’d better add one thing: that Uganda is also learning. Initially, everybody who was involved in activities of this nature was given blanket amnesty. But over the last few years, the amnesty rule of Uganda has been amended, and now, each individual case, especially for key people who were involved in organizing these atrocities, these cases are examined before you can be given amnesty, so we are learning lessons from this experience.

So once again, thank you for organizing this, and thank you for giving us a compendium to be able to learn more about Uganda and about Africa,

and Andrew, thank you for that courageous work that you did.
[applause] Duncan.

Hoge:

Thank you, Ambassador, for those good words. I'm open to questions, but if there are no other questions, that's a wonderful note to end on. Duncan and Andrew will be sticking around a while. Again, there are books for sale out back, and if you want them to be signed, just bring them up here. Thank you very much, all of you, for coming, and thank you both for being so forthcoming. [applause]