



Don't 'shy' from Africa

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on Albanians in Kosovo with machine guns and mortar fire, as Western ministers meeting in Bonn struggled to find a way to quell the fighting.

"We are reminded of the capacity of people everywhere ... to slip into pure evil. We cannot abolish that capacity but we must never accept it," Clinton said.

He acknowledged the international community did not move quickly enough when evidence surfaced of the slaughter, and did not prevent killers from seeking safe haven in U.N. refugee camps later on.

Genocide can occur anywhere. It is not an African phenomenon. We must have global vigilance. And never again must we be shy in the face of the evidence," he said.

Rwanda's president Pasteur Bizimungu thanked Clinton for making the three-hour stop at the Kigali airport.

"Your decision to visit Rwanda

is an eloquent statement of your condemnation of genocide, a show of solidarity with the victims and a challenge to the international community to work together to stem the recurrence of genocide," he said.

Bizimungu said the killings continue in eastern Rwanda even today and bemoaned that the perpetrators of the 1994 massacre have eluded justice.

Clinton said the Rwandan crisis demonstrated the need to create a permanent international court to bring killers to justice quickly and he vowed to back such an effort, which is being discussed at the United Nations.

Clinton met with six survivors of the genocide before his speech, including Gloriosa Uwimpuhwe, a woman whose mother, father and four siblings were killed. The neighbor who led her family to slaughter has moved back next door, she said.

"None of us is going to harass her or to kill her or to attack her.

But it's finished with our relations with her," she said with no emotion.

Venuste Karasira, another survivor, was among 4,000 Rwandans who had sought refuge at a school outside Kigali, thinking they would be protected by Belgian troopers. But U.N. forces withdrew after 10 soldiers were killed and the slaughter began.

"The cries of the people in agony were everywhere. They took us to a hill. Some were killed along the way. We accepted our fate to die," he told Clinton, whose face tensed. "The next morning, among the crying of the dying, among the blood, they brought us to the hospital and we survived."

Clinton announced that the United States would become the first to contribute to a survivors fund, giving \$2 million this year.

The president also announced \$67 million in U.S. aid to promote the justice system in Rwanda and elsewhere, and to avoid future African conflicts.

Economic ties to Africa strengthened

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recently was passed by the House, to reduce duties on African imports.

Sub-Saharan Africa has become alluring to corporations that see a vast market of about 600 million people, a combination of peace and stability in a growing number of countries, an end to apartheid in South Africa, and annual growth that has averaged 4 percent in the last three years. With half the population younger than 20, forging brand identity now can pay dividends well into the future, executives said.

Despite those strides, Africa still suffers from the stigma of decades of strife, erratic leadership and grinding poverty, an image that Clinton has said he hopes to change.

Investing in Africa is fraught with challenges and setbacks. America Mineral Fields of Hope, Ark., for example, cut a much-heralded \$1 billion copper and cobalt deal with Laurent Kabila's rebel movement before it won power in a military coup in Congo, but then was unceremoniously dropped by Kabila's government late last year.

Even with the risks, the payoff can be enormous. The Commerce Department said U.S. investment in sub-Saharan Africa generated a return of 31 percent in 1996, compared with 12 percent in

Latin America, 13 percent in the Asia-Pacific region and 17 percent in the Middle East.

That kind of return is what attracts companies like Coca-Cola Co., now in the midst of five-year \$600 million spending program. The company is carefully targeting the money on people such as Hassan - in Kenya alone Coca-Cola has supplied 750 kiosks and has made similar investments in other micro-enterprises across Africa.

"We believe we can obtain sustained double-digit growth in Africa for many, many years to come," said Carl Ware, Coca-Cola senior vice president and president of the company's Africa Group, and one of the dozen or so business leaders accompanying Clinton on the trip.

South Africa, which the company has used as a base and testing ground for its Africa expansion strategy, now is its 10th largest market in world. If economies improve in other countries, growth is almost unlimited. In Ethiopia, with 55 million potential customers, annual consumption per person of Coca-Cola products is just three, compared with 370 products per person in the United States and 155 in South Africa. In Kenya, where the company helped Hassan, it's 29 a year.

"The story in Africa is getting in

early," said Jaideep Khanna, manager of Morgan Stanley's \$250 million African Investment Fund. But it also requires getting in carefully, he said.

"Our fund will try to avoid the more volatile markets." The fund's largest investments are in South Africa, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Mauritius and Ghana.

Investors who are interested in natural resources such as oil and gas and minerals have been willing to take a chance even in some of the more unstable countries.

Population, privatization and natural resources are Africa's greatest assets in terms of increasing trade and investment.

Many countries in Africa are privatizing poorly run government concerns. U.S. exports of telecommunications equipment to Africa have increased by more than 60 percent, said Commerce Secretary William Daley, adding that "these antiquated state-run telecommunications network" represent a huge opportunity.

The willingness to privatize reflects an important generational change.

"The generation that led Africa into independence looked at capitalism as being part of the colonial problem," said David Miller, former ambassador to Zimbabwe and Tanzania and executive director of the Corporate Council on Africa.

Around Charlotte

Panthers looking for TopCats

Auditions begin Saturday for the TopCats, the Carolina Panthers' cheerleading squad.

This year's audition begins at 9 a.m. and will be held at Ericsson Stadium. Candidates should be 18 years of age or older and have graduated high school by Saturday.

For more information, call the TopCat hotline, 358-7533.

Taylor sews up award

Charlottean Gladys E. Taylor recently garnered one of Las Amigas' top award.

Parliamentarian for the Charlotte chapter of National Women of

Achievement, Taylor received the Outstanding Member of Las Amigas for 1998.

Taylor also received The President's Award from National Women of Achievement.

Active in the community, Taylor spearheaded "Give to Live," a program to aid people in nursing homes and homeless shelters as well as a Zairian clothing drive and an adopt a senior program.

In addition to her work for National Women of Achievement, Taylor serves as audit analyst for the Charlotte Chapter of Las Amigas.

Registration open for vets

All Mecklenburg County veterans

wishing to receive medical treatment from the Veterans Administration after Oct. 1, 1998, are encouraged to register with the Veterans Service Office.

"Though veterans are not required to enroll, and no one will lose their medical benefits if they don't enroll, it is important for them to do so," says VSO director Dan Crawley. "The VA allocates resources and funding based on the numbers of registered vets, so it's crucial that we report accurate levels of registration in order to continue to receive adequate funding and support for the veterans in Mecklenburg County."

Veterans who have received medical treatment at a VA center since Sept. 30, 1996 will be automatically registered. For more information call 336-2102.

Today

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