On Political Forgiveness: Some Preliminary Reflections

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This policy brief is the product of initial research conducted by a group of committed and very bright graduate students at the Harvard Kennedy School—Juan José Aparicio, Yoko Okura, Diana Park, Derek Pham, Grant Rafter, and Abdulaziz Said—and led by me while a resident senior fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs in the fall of 2015.

It seeks to understand the processes through which countries attempt to achieve political forgiveness after war or abuses committed by one country against others. It begins by considering Germany and Japan, which have reckoned very differently with their wartime legacies; it ends by discussing Rwanda, an example both of how people who have experienced genocide attempt to overcome history, and of how the world struggles to deal with its failure to intervene. While much more research and analysis remain to be done, we hope the present discussion can at least illuminate some possible directions for future work.

As Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs from September 2011 to October 2015, I worked with diplomats in every region of the world, identifying ways to advance America’s security and interests. I was often struck by how longstanding hostilities between sects, tribes, religions, communities, and countries bore on our efforts. The inability to overcome longstanding grievances—however justified and deeply rooted—often undermined a group or nation’s current core interests.

This lack of forgiveness manifests throughout the world: tribal warfare in South Sudan, hostility between Saudi Arabia and Iran, seemingly irreconcilable differences within the European neighborhood, and, of course, the failure to reach a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians. Deep animus often seems to take precedence over interests.
This brief is an initial examination of political forgiveness, which occurs when countries or groups are able to reconcile or set aside historic enmities. We largely restrict our focus to inter-country dynamics, though a growing body of work examines how conflicting groups within countries attempt to reconcile with one another. In considering why there is such a paucity of forgiveness in world affairs, we first turned to the notion of personal forgiveness. While that phenomenon remains in the control of individuals, forgiveness between conflicting countries does not. If they cannot identify an alignment of strategic interests, they may reject outside exhortations for them to forgive one another as misguided attempts to minimize historical traumas.

Even so, there are insights from frameworks of personal forgiveness that can help nations to seize the moment when their interests do align and, accordingly, move to achieve political forgiveness. First, the process of forgiveness requires a sense of justice—victims must feel that perpetrators have been held accountable and will no longer be able to hurt them. It must also be a deep, extended undertaking: when perpetrators offer only superficial acknowledgments of the victims’ pain and attempt to move on quickly, victims perceive those efforts as perfunctory, even disingenuous. Additionally, countries must reestablish genuine, ongoing contact to overcome narratives of “the other” that inhibit forgiveness. They should not assume, however, that political forgiveness will proceed as a linear, three-part process in which the perpetrator issues an apology, the victim accepts the apology, and the two subsequently cultivate their ties on the basis of aligned national interests. We conclude, instead, that the process works best in the reverse order: only upon discerning that their strategic interests happen to align do conflicting countries begin to move toward reconciliation and forgiveness.
While political forgiveness can take many forms, it requires, above all, that perpetrators take ownership of their culpability. Apologies and calls for forgiveness can be instruments in that process, but they are not ends in themselves. Truth and reconciliation processes are similarly a means—especially with regard to crimes that perpetrators commit within their own countries—not an end. The most powerful agent of forgiveness seems to be remembrance: because it forces the perpetrator to acknowledge and own the crimes it has committed, victims are likely to find that admission more sincere than a brief apology.

Germany is an exemplar in this regard, and our initial findings suggest that its path toward reconciliation after World War II looms largest in the minds of U.S. policymakers. They may, however, overestimate how applicable a simplified interpretation of Germany’s postwar repentance is to current impasses, and impose unreasonable pressure on conflicting countries to reconcile when they lack the will to do so. As we will presently explore, the popular narrative downplays the strategic considerations that facilitated Germany’s effort to take ownership of the atrocities it committed during World War II.

We believe that a more nuanced understanding of political forgiveness would benefit policymakers. For instance, when working to build efforts to confront North Korea’s nuclear provocations, diplomats hoped that Japan and South Korea would be able to come to terms with their past and fully manage this profound security risk together. They did not minimize the reality of history and the profound impact it has on policymakers and citizens alike. In this case, Japan’s occupation of South Korea during World War II, and the oppression it carried out during that time—including the sexual enslavement of up to 200,000 South Korean “comfort women”—have understandably strained ties between the two countries in the postwar era. It was self-evident, though, that they would benefit immensely by partnering more closely with each other and with the United States—both to counter North Korea’s aggression and to maintain a stable balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region that can accommodate a resurgent China. Bitterness over the past was inhibiting each country from advancing its own interests. Encouragingly, while we were conducting our research, South Korea and Japan were able to achieve a reconciliation that their leaders hope will prove lasting.

Considering political forgiveness necessarily leads to considering the deepest of wounds—genocide. I was Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs at the time of the Rwanda genocide, and like so many of my colleagues, I deeply admired the actions of President Paul Kagame in the aftermath. He brought his country together by speaking of the Rwandese people, rather than of Hutus and Tutsis. His anger was, understandably,
more focused on the outside world that had stood by while hundreds of thousands of Rwandese were slaughtered. Years later, however, as Undersecretary, I noted that while Kagame had registered great economic achievements for his country, his neighbors and political opponents contended that he was taking Rwanda in an authoritarian direction, and was supporting violent groups inside the country and in neighboring countries. Given the trauma he suffered and the burden he has shouldered, the world has been wary of criticizing him—as it has been of other leaders whose countries have emerged from such horrors. Perhaps out of guilt, or perhaps fearing that they might be perceived as insensitive, policymakers outside of those countries have not fully considered how this “social license” might be exploited, and how they might act to ensure that victims do not exploit their past suffering to commit abuses of their own. 

In this brief, we set out to identify the conditions necessary for political forgiveness and explore the process through which it is achieved. How is it that some countries, like Germany, have been able to find their way through this thicket, while others, such as Japan, have not—or at least not to a comparable extent? And, in cases of genocide, such as Rwanda, where political forgiveness may well be impossible, should the international community more purposefully examine the social license extended to victims?

Even a cursory consideration of these inquiries reveals a surprising sparseness of scholarship on political forgiveness between countries—in stark contrast to the wealth of literature on formal frameworks, such as truth and reconciliation commissions, that countries employ after enduring civil wars or intrastate atrocities. In a path-breaking 2008 book, Jennifer Lind notes that “international relations scholars so far have not systematically tested the effects of apologies and other acts of contrition” on relations between countries. Thomas Berger goes further, lamenting that “there has been a strong tendency on the part of political scientists to avoid dealing with the topic [of historical memory] at all. The general view in the discipline is that historical memory is an issue for cultural historians and literary theorists; serious political scientists should focus on the ostensibly more substantive forces that really drive politics and international affairs.” But historical memory is, of course, a substantive force, one with enduring ramifications not simply for relations between countries but also for the evolution of regional orders and world order overall.
Germany

Germany is often held up as the paradigmatic “success story” of a country that has reckoned with its past crimes—especially the Holocaust—and U.S. officials often wonder why others cannot emulate its course of atonement. A widespread narrative holds that Germany moved to apologize for its crimes with unexpected swiftness and care. Historian Elazar Barkan explains that “as it moved away from the war, the most significant response to Jewish claims for reparation came from Germany itself, and restitution to Jewish victims became a cornerstone of the newly formed Federal Republic. The process began in the early 1950s, shaped by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and a group of leading German politicians who viewed it as a moral obligation.” Barkan goes on to note, however, that German politicians were also motivated by strategic interests, beginning with the resuscitation of an economy whose industrial output in 1947 was only a third of its 1938 level. They regarded the initiation of reconciliation as a prudent measure “that would facilitate the acceptance of Germany by the world community. Specifically it would give Germany an improved public image in the United States.”

What makes Germany perhaps most exceptional in the annals of political forgiveness is the extent to which remembrance has become embedded in its body politic. In a speech last January before the Bundestag, German President Joachim Gauck solemnly intoned that “there is no German identity without Auschwitz. Remembering the Holocaust remains a matter for every citizen of Germany. It is part and parcel of our country’s history.” Not even eight decades ago, led by the individual who remains synonymous with evil, Germany destroyed European order and sparked the most ruinous conflict in human history. Today, it enjoys productive relations with its neighbors, serves as the linchpin of the European Union’s economy, and, according to global polls in recent years, is seen as one of the chief contributors to peace and stability. The rapidity of this turnaround is truly remarkable.

While we began our study by considering how other countries might emulate its postwar evolution, we soon realized that Germany is the outlier, not the norm—and that its narrative is far more complicated than is commonly understood. To begin with, Germany was occupied by the allied nations, led by the United States, which in turn was taking into consideration the concerns of the newly formed nation of Israel—a unique situation in which promoting justice for the victims of a genocide was among the highest priorities of a country’s diplomacy. Moreover, because the Nazi leadership had been in power for only 12 years, German identity was not deeply intertwined with that power structure (in
contrast to other societies, whose rulers were often considered divine). Thus, the German people could engage in, or at least observe, acts of remembrance without feeling that their identity was under assault.

The country’s initial steps toward remembrance were encouraged, and sometimes even imposed, by external powers. The allied powers, after liberating many concentration camps and under pressure from Israel, were especially focused on holding accountable the perpetrators of the Holocaust. They presided over the Nuremberg trials and included the initial compensation and restitution laws in occupational law. Though some German leaders had wished to move toward accepting culpability for the Holocaust, the risk of a popular backlash was so high that such ownership would likely have been impossible without the option of deflecting criticism onto foreign rule.

German ownership deepened in the ensuing decades, exemplified by the reparations agreement that Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany signed in 1952. Chancellor Adenauer was intent on repairing both the economic and reputational damage his nation had incurred during the war, but he recognized that moving too swiftly could provoke a backlash. When he was elected, after all, reparations were widely unpopular. In his famous September 1951 speech to the German parliament, Adenauer notably declined to issue an apology or assign responsibility to German citizens as a whole; in fact, he gave reasons why the German people could be proud:

> The government of the Federal Republic of Germany and with it the great majority of the German people are aware of the immeasurable suffering inflicted upon the Jews in Germany and the occupied territories in the era of National Socialism. The large majority of the German people abhorred the crimes and did not participate in them....[T]here were many Germans, despite endangering themselves out of religious reasons, the call of conscience, and shame at the dishonor of Germany’s name, who showed a willingness to help their fellow Jewish citizens. In the name of the German people, unspeakable crimes were committed which create a duty of moral and material restitution.....Regarding the extent of the reparations...one has to take into account the limits set on the German ability by the bitter necessity to supply the countless victims of war and to care for the refugees and expellees. The Federal Government is prepared...to bring about a solution to the material reparation problem...[which is] the most distinguished duty of the German people.\(^{13}\)

In short, the speech struck a middle ground—coaxing Germans gently toward owning their culpability. Still, under Adenauer, mainstream German sentiment largely maintained that blame for the Holocaust lay solely with Hitler and the Schutzstaffel (the SS).\(^{14}\) There
was little public wrestling with the range of deeper societal elements that might have contributed to that catastrophe. Not until 1970 did Chancellor Willy Brandt kneel to lay a wreath in memory of the Warsaw Ghetto—a deeply powerful act of remembrance—and only in 2000 did President Johannes Rau ask for forgiveness in a speech to the Israeli Knesset.¹⁵

Thus, the German process of accepting responsibility was not only slower than many contemporary observers realize, but also highly motivated by strategic considerations. As Michael Wise explains, “Adenauer recognized that reparations were the price for West Germany’s admission into the community of civilized nations.”¹⁶ When Adenauer assumed the chancellorship in September 1949, the Marshall Plan had only just begun; NATO, meanwhile, had been formed six months earlier. Both Germany’s economic recovery and its defense against Soviet aggression required it to atone; German leaders were able to preempt nationalist backlash by citing those imperatives.

European reconciliation also bypassed the challenge of forgiveness. Long before Germany apologized, in fact, French leaders expressed their willingness to make amends with West Germany in the interest of forging a strong alliance against the Soviet Union. In 1951, for example, France and Germany helped establish the European Coal and Steel Community. The two countries also needed each other: France sought to demonstrate that it had recovered from the humiliation of German occupation, and Germany sought to assuage French concerns over its potential resurgence. Public opinion followed suit, and by 1960, French citizens overwhelmingly reported favorable sentiment toward Germany. The West also played an indispensable role—rewriting textbooks, defining a new constitution, investing in development, and conducting the Nuremburg trials, which held individuals accountable without condemning all of Germany. These steps set the stage for an iconic reconciliation in 1984, when German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterand joined hands at the Douaumont Ossuary, a cemetery in Verdun that contains the remains of over 130,000 German and French soldiers.

The combined effect of these developments was to nurture an atmosphere that facilitated a national reckoning with the past, which was welcomed by Germany’s new allies rather than eliciting further recriminations. In this new environment, it was able to restore its power without compelling its neighbors to form a countervailing coalition.
Japan

The Japanese example is strikingly distinct from the German one, and much more emblematic of the historical norm. One might expect Japan’s relations with South Korea to mirror those between Germany and France, given their strategic alignment against North Korean provocations and, more recently, their common concerns regarding China’s resurgence. However, longstanding tensions have continued to inhibit bilateral cooperation.

A number of factors might help to explain this discrepancy. Because Japan occupied Korea for an extended period—1910 to 1945—Korean ire was aimed more at Japan itself than at a deposed regime. In Germany, moreover, Hitler committed suicide, and the Nazi power structure was destroyed and replaced after the war. Japan did not perpetrate a holocaust of six million people; nonetheless, because Emperor Hirohito survived and continued to occupy a far more sanctified place in Japanese culture than Hitler ever had in Germany, it was easier for the German people to blame the Nazi regime for the Holocaust than it was for the Japanese people to hold their own leaders accountable. Lastly, because Japan’s actions did not occur within its borders, the average Japanese citizen was less compelled to consider his or her own complicity (because of government propaganda, in fact, many Japanese were unaware that those actions were even occurring).

The Japanese case is further complicated by the U.S. use of nuclear weapons to end World War II—a reality that surely influenced Western powers’ postwar behavior toward Japan: although they established a war crimes tribunal, for example, they made no significant effort to rewrite the country’s textbooks or hold the emperor accountable. Even as late as the 1980s, some Japanese officials would cite the U.S. use of nuclear weapons to deflect attention away from its wartime record.

While Japan did offer apologies in the decades after World War II, and scholars have noted popular support for acknowledging its wartime abuses, Japan and South Korea have never fully reconciled. Berger argues that South Korea as well as China wished to preserve their ability to mobilize nationalist sentiment against Japan. Thus, Japan’s apologies have never been wholeheartedly accepted. The tenor of those apologies may explain why:

...official apologies from Japanese officials have been perceived as too little and too late, and often contradicted by other comments from officials that seemed to whitewash history or question whether Imperial Japan’s atrocities really occurred. Part of the problem is a refusal among Japanese conservatives to allow all aspects of Imperial Japan—a period that spanned almost
80 years as opposed to Nazi Germany’s 12—to be condemned. In Japan, it’s not rare to see the Rising Sun flag, for example, a flag that many South Korean and Chinese critics compare to the Swastika. Prime Minister Abe and other Japanese leaders before him have visited the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, a shrine that commemorates all who died in service of the Empire of Japan, including a number of people considered war criminals.17

Against that backdrop, why did Japan and South Korea strike an agreement over the issue of comfort women earlier this year—for the first time since 1965—with Japan agreeing to pay $8.3 million to the 46 surviving comfort women and enshrine remembrance in its textbooks? Two historical coincidences likely motivated the leaders, though it is unlikely that those factors alone would have produced an agreement in the absence of geopolitical shifts that aligned the two country’s interests. First, the 50th anniversary of the normalization of their ties provided a symbolic backdrop against which to demonstrate progress in their relationship. Second, both countries’ leaders descend from statesmen who led the 1965 restoration of ties: South Korean President Park Geun-hye is the daughter of the late Park Chung-hee, the president for whom the agreement is considered a defining element of his legacy. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has noted that his grandfather, who had previously served as Japanese prime minister, along with his uncle, “were deeply involved with the normalization process.”18

As before, though, there were also strategic imperatives at work. Some observers cite North Korea’s increasingly brazen defiance of international law and China’s resurgence as the forces that motivated the two countries to forge a more durable strategic partnership. Others argue that the agreement stemmed from Japan’s concern that South Korea was less concerned than it was about China’s increasingly assertive behavior—and its consequent motivation to enlist deeper strategic support from its neighbor. For much of the postwar era, Japan could afford to sustain an antagonistic relationship with South Korea because its security was guaranteed by preponderant U.S. power. Now, though, in a far more challenging Asian-Pacific security environment, it has had to reconsider. It is noteworthy that both Japanese conservatives and the South Korean government supported the aforementioned agreement, a testament to the nexus of national interests and political forgiveness.

Still, the two countries have a long way to go on the road to lasting political forgiveness. The deal required intensive U.S. mediation, and it does not have the full support of the Korean people. Indeed, for fear of sparking popular outrage that could derail the agreement, the South Korean government has been hesitant to remove a statue near the Japanese embassy in Seoul that commemorates the suffering of comfort women. The Japanese government, meanwhile, has conditioned its disbursement of compensation on the statue’s removal.
Rwanda: A Case Study on Genocide

I once believed political forgiveness could be granted in every circumstance. Today, however, I share Elie Wiesel’s conviction that victims of genocide may never be able to forgive fully. As such, leaders must appeal to national imperatives to help them navigate the difficult terrain of rebuilding. Because the healing process is so fraught—and others’ guilt, so potent—these leaders may be granted a certain latitude in the aftermath of atrocities, even if unwittingly. It behooves policymakers and scholars to recognize the existence of this social license and to ask if there should be a statute of limitations on it—especially if leaders use it to justify their own crimes or abuses of power.

We considered a number of countries that have experienced genocide and explored how they conducted themselves in the aftermath, but decided to focus our attention on Rwanda. Over 100 days in 1994, a mere half century after intoning “never again,” the world stood idly by as some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered in Rwanda; between 100,000 and 250,000 were raped. Both then president Bill Clinton and then ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright have expressed regret over failing to act.\textsuperscript{19} Had it not been for the intervention of a rebel force led by Paul Kagame, the carnage would almost surely have continued. In the intervening decades, Kagame has led his country through the difficult processes of rebuilding. Seeking to create a coherent national vision that transcends tribal Hutu and Tutsi allegiances, he has fostered a Rwandese identity that is grounded in the values of survival, self-defense, and self-reliance. As impressive, if not more so, are the developmental strides over which Kagame has presided. A recent assessment observes that:

\textit{...by almost all social and economic measures Rwanda has proved to be the developing world’s shining star. Income per capita has doubled since 2000 and, unlike most other countries in the region, it has managed to grow quickly while also reducing inequality….The UN Human Development Index shows that Rwanda has improved by more than any other country over the past 25 years.}\textsuperscript{20}

But some observers believe there has been a dark underbelly to this progress. In a report for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Robert Gersony, who was leading a mission to repatriate refugees, expressed concern about reports that had surfaced during hundreds of interviews in Rwandan communes suggesting that Kagame’s forces had killed between
25,000 and 45,000 Hutus from April to August 1994. Kagame also stands accused of having fomented conflicts in the Congo that have killed over five million people since 1998; a 2012 UN Security Council report contends that the Rwandan government has supported the M23 rebel movement that has ravaged its neighbor. Kagame claims that the Congo has given sanctuary to a Hutu militia, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, which contained leaders who orchestrated the 1994 genocide. At home, he has been accused of cracking down on the free press and ordering the assassinations of prominent dissidents. While these charges have tainted his legacy among journalists, activists, and human rights organizations, they have not had as much of an impact on his reputation among Western opinion leaders. Former Africa correspondent Howard French laments that:

"20 years after the genocide, Mr. Kagame...tours U.S. college campuses, where he receives honorary degrees and is toasted by the great and the good of the Western world."

"Western sympathy and guilt over the genocide explain much of this, but Mr. Kagame also has excelled at conveying an image of Rwanda as something new to Africa: a capable, technocratic state dedicated to good governance, a regional financial hub, and an Internet-for-all society."

Only in recent years have Western officials begun to criticize Kagame’s policies publicly, and even then the criticism has been muted in comparison to denunciations of comparable transgressions by other governments. The UN suppressed Gersony’s report, noting that “the international community understood the difficult context in which the new government was operating.” Even today, when confronted with allegations of abuses at home and abroad, Kagame often brings up the horrors of 1994 to place his interlocutors on the defensive:

"Kagame has capitalized on his powerful connections and his record of achievement to deflect criticism. He also exploits Western guilt, pointedly reminding governments that they abandoned Rwanda on its judgment day; some of his biggest fans, like Bill Clinton, have become teary with regret. The message is clear: No one on the outside occupies the moral high ground when it comes to Rwanda, and nobody should tell Kagame what is right or wrong."

As the international community mulls its relations with Rwanda and Kagame, there are no simple answers. He can hardly be blamed for regarding criticisms of his policies as sanctimonious. Our analysis is not intended to examine the allegations against Kagame, merely to highlight that social license exists—and that holders may exploit it. Unfortunately,
human fallibility will always tempt some leaders to engage in abuses—even those who stand for justice after a genocide. Our goal is to encourage a discussion of this license and a critical exploration of how it can be—and is—used. Should there be a statute of limitations on social license? Is it a form of reparations, in that the international community does not demand the same level of accountability of victims of genocide that it expects of those who have been spared such horrors?

Conclusion

We end here with our basic question—under what circumstances is political forgiveness possible? Our conclusion is that the strategic interests of conflicting countries must align (note that their interests need not be identical, merely aligned). Consider, for example, the remarkable rapprochement between the United States and Vietnam: a mere four decades after the fall of Saigon, the two countries have become close diplomatic and military partners in an effort to balance China's resurgence. Prospects for Sino-Japanese ties, meanwhile, are less hopeful. China is unequivocal that any reconciliation with Japan will be impossible unless Japan atones for the crimes it committed against the Chinese during World War II. It also contends that Japan is a crucial adjunct of the U.S. reorientation to the Asia-Pacific, which China regards as a euphemism for containment. Japan, meanwhile, fears China's regional ambitions and contends that China is making illegal claims to the Senkaku Islands. But fatalism may be premature. In early 2010, after all, “historians appointed by both countries did, for the first time, agree that the Japanese army committed atrocities during the war and that Japan's illegal acts of aggression were the main cause of hostilities.”

Sino-Japanese trade, meanwhile, continues apace. Turning to South Asia, few expect India and Pakistan to make amends. The two countries have fought three wars, and the aftermath of their partition was one of the greatest human tragedies of the last century. Perhaps the best one can hope for is that the two nuclear-armed neighbors sustain a cold peace, aided by growing trade.

These examples suggest another question: what mechanisms should external actors use when trying to nudge conflicting countries along a path toward political forgiveness? Consider, for example, the role of the United States. In some cases, U.S. political pressure may facilitate progress because the countries value their relationships with the United States. In other cases, the United States may be able to serve as an arbiter, helping them discern, or even create, an alignment between their interests.
Additionally, how much weight should one assign to the sincerity with which a country requests forgiveness? One author notes that apologies “may simply operate to serve the self-interest of those who have caused the harm, avoiding the full force of the law (national or international).” Some South Koreans contend not only that Japan’s recent apology was bloodless and perfunctory but also that South Korea betrayed the memory of the women who served as sex slaves during World War II. Those who are more concerned with stability in the Asia-Pacific, however, may not worry as much about such perceptions. The United States immediately welcomed Japan’s apology, in no small measure because enmity between the two countries has diluted the impact of its rebalance to the region.

Finally, when considering Rwanda and other countries that have emerged from genocides or other mass atrocities, how can the international community acknowledge the enormity of the task they face in rebuilding and afford them the space they need to do so without awarding them a social license of indefinite scope and duration? What criteria should it use to distinguish between policies that are actually essential to rebuilding and those that justify abuses of power under the pretext of reconstruction?

Regardless of how one answers these questions, and others, we should acknowledge how much progress has been made in the last century to help countries transcend deeply rooted enmities for mutual strategic benefit—often involving processes of accountability that would have been unheard-of a century earlier. Wise notes that prior to the aforementioned 1952 agreement between Israel and West Germany, “there was no precedent in international law for a nation-state to assume responsibility for crimes it committed against a minority within its jurisdiction, and no precedent for collective claims of this kind. Even if nothing can call the dead back to life or obliterate the crimes, Nahum Goldmann wrote in his memoirs, ‘this agreement is one of the few great victories for moral principles in modern times’.” It behooves policymakers and scholars alike to consider not only how we can extend the sorts of victories Goldmann describes but also how we can make political forgiveness an organizing principle of international affairs.
Notes

1 See, for example, Rachel Glennerster, “It’s been 25 years since Sierra Leone’s brutal civil war. Here’s what we know about helping communities recover.” The Washington Post (May 13, 2016).


3 Ibid.


15 “German president begs forgiveness,” BBC (February 16, 2000).


18 Remarks delivered at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the normalization of Japan-ROK relations, Tokyo (June 22, 2015).

19 Clinton wrote in his memoirs that “[t]he failure to try to stop Rwanda’s tragedies became one of the greatest regrets of my presidency.” See My Life (New York: Knopf, 2004): p. 563. Albright calls it “the greatest regret that I have from the time I was UN ambassador.” See PBS, Ghosts of Rwanda (April 1, 2004).

20 “A hilly dilemma,” The Economist (March 12, 2016).


25 Leave None to Tell the Story: p. 1112.


27 Kate Merkel-Hess and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Nanjing by the Numbers,” Foreign Policy (February 9, 2010).


29 “Reparations,” op. cit.
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