Reading: The 12 Ways to Deny Genocide

This reading is adapted and quoted from Dr. Gregory Stanton's article, *The 12 Ways to Deny Genocide*

1. **Question and minimize the statistics.**
   Perpetrators often use statistics to trivialize the events and distract from the real issue at hand.

2. **Attack the motivations of the truth-tellers.**
   Perpetrators attempt to underscore the victim groups' and upstanders' pursuit for justice by claiming that they have particular gains from genocide recognition.

3. **Claim that the deaths were inadvertent**.
   Perpetrators claim that the deaths are or were "a result of famine, migration, or disease, not because of willful murder."

4. **Emphasize the strangeness of the victims.**
   "Whether they be classified as infidels, primitive tribalists, or of another race and caste, [perpetrators insist] they are unlike us. "

5. **Rationalize the deaths as the result of tribal conflict**
   Perpetrators stress that the circumstances are the inevitable consequences to the history of relationships between the perpetrator and victim groups.

6. **Blame "out of control" forces for committing the killings**
   Perpetrators claim that the deaths are a result of famine, climate, terrorists or rebels not associated with the government.

7. **Avoid antagonizing the genocidists, who might walk out of "the peace process.**
   States justify inaction and deny to avoid angering or upsetting the perpetrators who they believe are genuinely pursuing a resolution to the issue.

8. **Justify denial in favor of current economic interests.**
   States deny genocide when economic relationships are valued more than human rights. Perpetrators often use their economic position to blackmail and bribe states who could potentially have influence establishing justice.

9. **Claim that the victims are receiving good treatment**.
   Perpetrators attempt to convince states and humanitarian organizations that the victims receive or had received good treatment.

10. **Claim that what is going on doesn't fit the definition of genocide.**
    ""Definitionalist" denial is most common among lawyers and policy makers who want to avoid intervention beyond humanitarian aid."

11. **Blame the victims.**
    Perpetrators claim that the group is simply fighting an insurrection by a rebel movement or groups who themselves commit war crimes. "By portraying the situation as civil war rather than genocide, deniers appeal to the common misunderstanding that the two are mutually exclusive, when in fact civil war is very often a predictor of genocide. Genocide occurs especially during civil wars because war is legalized killing, when even women and children of an adversary group may be seen as enemies of the state."

12. **Say that peace and reconciliation are more important than blaming people for genocide.**
    This is especially the case if the genocide happened in the past. "This is the justification for amnesties for mass murderers as part of peace agreements, and for opposition to post-conflict tribunals. But peace and reconciliation are not alternatives to justice. Lasting peace requires justice. Without prosecution of those who commit genocide, an expectation of impunity is created. One of the best predictors of future genocide is previous genocide that has gone unpunished. Without trials, denial becomes permanent."