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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ANTHONY LAKE

SUBJECT: Recent U.S. Initiative on Burundi

Purpose

To provide an update on our recent efforts to help resolve the crisis in Burundi.

Background

Current Situation: The situation in Burundi continues to deteriorate. ~~Estimates are~~ hundreds of people are dying weekly. Analysts predict a high-level assassination, coup attempt or insurgent attack on the capital Bujumbura (all serious possibilities) could precipitate massive killing and refugee flows, possibly on a scale approaching that of Rwanda in 1994.

Purpose of My Trip: ~~In an effort to ensure the United States has done all it reasonably could to try to avert disaster in Burundi, I traveled to France, Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda, May 11-16. My objective was to launch a new U.S. strategy agreed at senior levels May 6 aimed at trying to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Burundi.~~

U.S. Strategy in Burundi. Our strategy has three components: 1) shoring up the "moderate" ~~center in Burundi~~ ^{and strategy} which leads the ~~fragile~~ Hutu-Tutsi coalition government; 2) urging the Tutsi moderates to rein in Tutsi extremists responsible for much of the killing; 3) curbing the deadly and destabilizing extremist Hutu insurgency based in Zaire. ~~In addition, We will increase support to the negotiating efforts of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere by appointing a special envoy to assist him in the region.~~ ^{also}

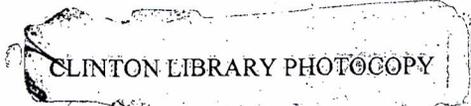
Results of My Trip: Our message ~~of continued support for the moderates, determination to isolate any extremists who come to power by force and readiness to welcome to the negotiating table any extremists who moderate their views~~ was well received by all with whom we met. ~~Burundian government officials and army~~ ^{were}

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Reason: 1.5 (d)

Declassify On: 5/20/06

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff



~~leaders thanked us for our presence, strategy and continued concern.~~

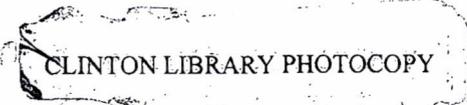
While it is impossible to measure ~~our~~ success in any concrete terms, I believe my trip ~~served to advance~~ the first two elements of our ~~Burund~~ strategy. ~~In the past, U.S. visits have helped quell violence and encouraged Burundian moderate leaders who fear for their lives to remain in positions of influence. This is crucial since their departure would result in a dangerous power vacuum and enable extremists to seize power. Several Burundian leaders with whom I met thanked me for my visit and commented that our continued support gave them the strength to persevere.~~

While ^{we try also} the United States ^{can} continue to ^{try} to influence Tutsi extremists by threatening to isolate any government that comes to power by force, our leverage is limited. Those with greatest influence ~~over Tutsi extremists~~ are Tutsi moderates in the Government and Army. In the past, when willing, they have ~~been able to curb extremist activity by arresting perpetrators and appealing to the population to exercise restraint. I pushed them to do so again. They said they recognized their responsibility and would do their best. However, They asked for our assistance, in return, to curb Hutu extremist activity. I said we would do all that we could in this regard consistent with the third element of our strategy.~~

^{Fulfilling this pledge}
The Need to Engage Mobutu: ~~Implementing the third element of our strategy requires prevailing upon the Hutu insurgents and their Zairian sponsors to halt the civil war and commit to power-sharing negotiations under the auspices of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. Key to resolving the crisis in Burundi is persuading President Mobutu of Zaire to rein in the Hutu insurgents and curb arms flows to the region.~~

^{At present}
~~With Mobutu's assent, Zaire serves as a base for the Hutu insurgency. Mobutu's generals and personal associates are selling large quantities of arms to the Hutu insurgents as well as allowing inflammatory radio broadcasts into Burundi from Zaire. Mobutu has also refused to implement pledges to arrest suspected Rwandan war criminals resident in Zaire and allow UN monitoring of airports used for arms shipments.~~

^{also}
Meeting With Mobutu: ~~In an effort to pressure Mobutu to play a more constructive role with respect to Burundi, with your approval, we took the unprecedented step of sending a high-level team to Zaire May 20-21. DDCI George Tenet, Assistant Secretary George Moose and NSC Director Shawn McCormick pressed Mobutu to take six specific steps to curb the violence in Burundi. These steps include: 1) pressing extremist Hutus to implement an immediate cease-fire, stop insurgent activity and accept~~



unconditionally negotiations under Nyerere's auspices; 2) stopping weapons shipments to the Hutu insurgents; 3) permitting UN observers at key boarder airports to monitor arms flows; 4) halting extremist Hutu radio broadcasts emanating from Zaire; 5) continuing to detain intimidators in the Rwandan refugee camps; and 6) arresting suspected Rwandan war criminals in Zaire.

While the U.S. team made no commitments regarding U.S. support, they indicated we would be prepared to reciprocate in some fashion if Mobutu first took concrete, positive action. U.S. "carrots" might include ensuring that Mobutu receives full credit internationally for ^{bringing in} ~~bringing about~~ a peace agreement, reconsidering providing him a visa to ~~visit the Carter Center in~~ Atlanta to participate in a Great Lakes conference, looking at ways to enhance our support for the upcoming elections in Zaire and perhaps assisting in supporting the re-establishment of an Economic Community of Great Lakes States (CEPGL).

~~In response to U.S. requests, Mobutu assured our delegation of his control over the Hutu insurgents and offered to obtain a cease-fire declaration from them in return for a cease-fire from the Burundian government and the beginning of negotiations. Mobutu asked our side to engage the Burundi government on a possible date for a cease-fire. He also said that a cease-fire would include a cessation of arms flows through Zaire.~~ *offer a* *he would stop*

While Mobutu did not immediately agree to stationing UN observers at key airports, he did agree to review the issue. Moreover, his National Security Advisor privately promised DDCI Tenet that he would push Mobutu hard on this point. Mobutu promised to deal with extremist radio broadcasts emanating from Zaire, if we could pinpoint exactly where the transmissions were coming from. We agreed to do so. Unfortunately, Mobutu made no commitments to continue detaining intimidators in the Rwandan refugee camps or to arrest war crimes suspects.

~~Mobutu's positive response was significant because he did not deny his nefarious actions toward Burundi, as he usually does. Instead, he took our approach seriously and focused on areas in which he can potentially deliver.~~ *While Mobutu* *call his bluff* *We have various indications that he may be taking some of the steps he pledged.* *We must wait and judge him on what he actually does.*

Military Contingency Planning: Finally, as we work to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Burundi, ~~we continue to lead efforts to conduct joint military planning to enable the international community to respond rapidly should preventive diplomacy fail.~~ *Assistant Secretary* *will lead an intergen team to the region this* *with the aim of deriving* *commitments from both sides to a cease-fire later in negotiations.* *press for* *the U.S.*

provide airlift and related support. ~~We also continue to stress~~ ^{for any deploying humanitarian force, what's making clear} ~~that~~ no U.S. ground troops will deploy to Burundi.

~~In contrast to our unsuccessful efforts last year to interest Western partners in contingency planning, we have recently had some success.~~ ^{recently} The UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Canada and Germany and the UN have ^{jointly} agreed to participate in joint planning efforts. The French, who had opposed such planning for over a year, informed me in Paris they are willing to participate in contingency planning under UN auspices. President Chirac stressed that although no French troops would deploy to Burundi, his government may provide logistical and financial support. In addition, several African countries have indicated a willingness to participate in a humanitarian intervention force, if provided the necessary equipment, logistical and financial support.

^{Burundi} The United States will proceed on two tracks: ^{also now} accelerating and refining internal USG political-military plans, and folding this work into joint planning efforts in New York with interested western and African partners. ^{but not provide ground troops.}

*The international community still
However, it remains far from ready
to deploy such a force in the near term*