

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

October 30, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Burundi

Burundi Ambassador Terence was called to the Department October 18 and informed of our new policy toward his government. David Newsom expressed our profound shock at the mass killing of Hutus. He said we have no choice but to maintain our relations with Burundi at a minimum level.

The Ambassador was defensive. He acknowledged that the government's response to the initial uprising was severe, but claimed that the threat to governmental authority was massive and potentially lethal. He denied any ethnic character to the reprisals, and argued that the situation has now returned to normal. He said he was sure his government could provide evidence of national reconciliation and of the equitable distribution of relief assistance.

Our new policy should not come as a surprise to Burundi. During my stay in New York, the Burundi Foreign Minister asked to see me. I refused even though I received every other foreign minister who requested an appointment. I also deplored the Burundi massacre in talks with ten of the African ministers, a number of whom expressed agreement. George Bush also pointedly failed to attend the Burundi reception on October 12.

In Burundi itself, the killings have ended, but the atmosphere is still tense. There is no indication that

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the 50,000 refugees in neighboring countries feel it is safe to return.

On the positive side, the continuing power struggle among Tutsis has edged virtually all of the most extremist politicians from public office. The group now in the ascendancy has shown signs in the past of wanting to reach a political accommodation with the Hutu majority. Recent public statements by Prime Minister Nyamoya have stressed the theme of national reconciliation. With respect to relief for the victims, United Nations Under Secretary Brad Morse informs us he now has assurances from the Burundi Government that UN medical teams will be allowed to travel freely and dispense treatment without restriction. Whether or not the assurances are genuine remains to be seen within the next few weeks.

Until there is a much clearer indication of changed attitudes and policies from the Burundi Government, our activities will be confined to strictly humanitarian programs in support of voluntary and UN agencies. For the present, therefore, we will suspend self-help, a rural health center project, population activities, cultural exchanges, and the admission of students to the International Police Academy.

Our current bilateral action should help persuade the present leadership that while the killings have stopped, the shockwave is still reverberating. To the extent that the Tutsi leadership cares about external opinion, our reaction may enhance the current barely perceptible trend toward moderation.

Ambassador Yost has been recalled for consultation and is now in Washington.


William P. Rogers

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