

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

4450

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August 9, 1973  
INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY KISSINGER

FROM: Harold E. Horan *HEH*

SUBJECT: Burundi Problem - A Response of African Leadership

Attached is an information memorandum (Tab I) to you from State reviewing recent developments concerning Burundi, some of which I have reported as briefing items.

The memorandum makes two essential points. First, the leaders of Tanzania, Rwanda and Zaire have all promised assistance in guaranteeing the security of Burundi's borders against further incursions by dissident Hutu refugees in their countries. The Government of Burundi has consistently maintained that the killings of Hutu inside Burundi have been the result of threats and attacks by these refugees against the Tutsi. Hopefully, State's memorandum observes, in return for guaranteeing the security of Burundi's borders, its neighbors will demand that the Government of Burundi find a non-violent solution to its ethnic problems.

Secondly, President Mobutu's leadership in recent meetings with the others was critical and has added to his stature in Africa.

Attachment

Tab I - State's memo (Pickering to Kissinger), August 8.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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August 8, 1973

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER  
The White House

Subject: Burundi Problem - The Response  
of African Leadership

In accordance with our policy to persuade African leaders and the OAU to take responsibility for finding a lasting political solution to the genocidal conflict in Burundi, we approached various African leaders on the problem of Burundi and have received generally favorable responses. President Mobutu of Zaire invited Presidents Micombero of Burundi, Habyalimana of Rwanda and Secretary General Ekangaki of the OAU to a meeting in Goma, Zaire, to discuss the problems of tribal strife and border friction. The result of the meeting was a general agreement by the three countries to work together to ease border tensions and to attempt to find a non-violent solution to the ethnic strife. Both Rwanda and Zaire have taken steps to prevent Hutu refugees from making armed incursions into Burundi.

Following the meeting at Goma, President Mobutu accompanied President Micombero to Dar Es Salaam for a meeting with President Nyerere. The purpose of this meeting was to resolve the problem between Burundi and Tanzania resulting from recent strikes by the Burundi Army against Hutu refugees in Tanzanian border villages. Bands of refugee rebels had been making raids into southern Burundi. As a result of the strikes into Tanzania, however, Tanzanian dockworkers had been boycotting all goods bound to or from Burundi. At the meeting, the Burundi Government acceded to Tanzanian demands that the GOB admit it had violated Tanzanian territory, apologize, and pay compensation to the victims. In return, the Tanzanian Government agreed to end the boycott and to move the remaining refugees to a resettlement camp away from the border.

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The role of President Mobutu in these meeting was critical as he not only initiated and hosted the meeting at Goma, but accompanied the Burundi delegation to Dar and dictated Burundi's acceptance of Tanzanian demands over the objection of Burundi's Foreign Minister. The Government of Zaire has been very concerned about the Burundi problem and has indicated that in its opinion, the long term solution for the problem in Burundi must involve gradual democratization of the political/social structure with guarantees for the Tutsi minority to prevent a massacre by the majority Hutu. The GOZ has emphasized its intent to work with the Government of Rwanda and Burundi to push economic development in the area thus alleviating some of the economic and social stresses underlying the ethnic strife.

President Mobutu's initiatives overshadowed the visits of Secretary General Ekangaki of the OAU and a mission representing President Gowon of Nigeria, present President of the OAU. Although the role of this OAU representation was rather passive in the meetings, their presence served to underscore the concern of African leadership with the problems of Burundi. The leaders of Tanzania, Rwanda, and Zaire all promised their assistance in guaranteeing the security of Burundi's borders against further incursions by dissident refugees in their countries. The Government of Burundi has consistently maintained that the killings of Hutu inside Burundi have been the result of threats and attacks by rebel Hutu in neighboring states. Hopefully, in return for guaranteeing the security of Burundi's borders, the African leaders will demand as a quid pro quo efforts by the Government of Burundi to find a non-violent solution to its ethnic problems.

  
Thomas R. Pickering  
Executive Secretary

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