

Preventing Genocide in Burundi

Lessons from
International Diplomacy

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Summary

Since 1993, interethnic violence between the 15 to 20 percent Tutsi minority and the 80 to 85 percent Hutu majority in Burundi has taken an estimated 150,000 lives. The continuation of the conflict helps place tens of millions of people at risk in Central Africa and erodes the international norm against genocide. Despite considerable time and effort, the world's peacemakers have been unable to stop the bloodshed and facilitate a political settlement. An examination of the international response to the crisis furnishes valuable lessons for peacemaking in Burundi and other areas of genocidal conflict.

What distinguishes the violent conflict in Burundi from so many others is the extent to which elite-led, politico-ethnic rivalry for power has become entwined with mass killing and fears of group extinction. Ethnic violence and genocide are the results not of ancient tribal hatreds but of divisive colonial policies and the post-independence struggle for power among politico-ethnic elites in a polarized and overpopulated country. It is only since 1965 that the recurrent pattern of political extremism has become firmly established. Currently, Burundi is ruled by a Tutsi-led military regime that faces significant challenges from the Hutu-led National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) insurgency and Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) political opposition as well as from various Tutsi factions.

A long-term political settlement that took adequate account of Burundian history and circumstances would have three basic characteristics: (1) a form of democratic power sharing that was more majoritarian than consociational but provided significant protection for minority security and economic interests; (2) measures to address collective fears and memories of genocide by acknowledging past crimes and fixing individual responsibility for them; and (3) impartial outside military forces sufficient to control the Burundian military until it is reformed and ethnically integrated. However, as the democratization and power-sharing movements of the early 1990s indicated, a settlement is unlikely to develop without substantial international pressure and assistance. The lesson of these movements' tragic demise is that outside carrots and sticks must be focused on obtaining the engagement of all important parties, especially the powerful extremists, in compromise political negotiations.

Three recent policy initiatives illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of international peacemaking in Burundi. Beginning in late 1995, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali appealed for UN-approved contingency planning for deployment of a humanitarian military force in Burundi should full-scale civil war and genocide develop. His initiative was generally consistent with the need for strong international pressure against violence. But it foundered, largely because of lack of adequate diplomatic support from France and the United States. The mere threat of UN humanitarian intervention had a sobering effect on Burundian government leaders and played a role in their decision to invite in regional peacemakers. But the UN's initiative also complicated necessary efforts to engage the Burundian parties, including extremists, in the peace process—validating some French

and American concerns. An alternative way forward would have been to adapt the proposal to ongoing African efforts to mount all-inclusive political negotiations.

Over the past two years, seven regional African states have demonstrated an unusual degree of cohesion and determination in pushing for all-party political negotiations. However, their most significant initiative—economic sanctions against the Burundi government and mediation under the auspices of former Tanzanian President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere—have suffered from lack of sufficient Western support. On balance, the regional states have made progress, clearly edging the Burundian parties in the direction of political negotiation. European and American reservations were based on their belief that it was necessary to work through moderate political leaders and that a relaxation of sanctions would strengthen moderate forces for peace. But the Burundi government's military-oriented policies, even after sanctions were eased, indicated that relative extremists were largely in control. This suggested the need for more rather than less outside pressure, carefully orchestrated to bring the extremists into power-sharing negotiations that could protect their essential interests.

The regional effort was also hampered by deficiencies in the economic sanctions regime, particularly leakages from regional countries and inconsistencies of implementation. Even more serious was the region's slowness in addressing the growing tensions between Nyerere and regional leader Tanzania on the one hand and the Burundi government on the other. These problems complicated the Tanzanian facilitator's already difficult task of convening all-party negotiations.

Finally, in mid-1996, the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio (the lay Catholic group that helped mediate an end to the civil war in Mozambique in 1994) arranged secret peace talks between the government and the CNDD insurgents. The fruits of this year-long effort—which delayed Nyerere's all-party initiative—were disappointing, and there is reason to question some of its basic premises. In particular, the mediators and their Western supporters assumed that the CNDD would be willing to join in a mutual suspension of hostilities in exchange for agreement on just the "principles" of a settlement. They assumed that the privacy of the discussions could be preserved over a lengthy period of time, although their existence was an open secret among other important, and suspicious, political groups. And they assumed that the CNDD would tolerate the invocation of "progress" in the secret talks as justification for the public easing of sanctions against the government. In retrospect, the Sant'Egidio effort might have been better conceived as a short-term, limited effort to break down the barriers between the government and CNDD.

Given the virtues and failings of recent international approaches to peacemaking in Burundi, it would be desirable to combine greater Western and UN support for regional policy choices, with greater regional consultation of external partners to gain the benefit of their broad experience and detachment. Such an approach would also be based on the recognition that it is the region's political will and resources that will largely determine the outcome for peace in Burundi. A revised Western contribution would require a reexamination of policy perspectives rooted in past practices, bureaucratic agendas, and generic diplomatic responses. This is not likely to occur without firm political leadership and efforts by nongovernmental organizations to promote new policy approaches to the violence in Burundi.

One

Introduction

The October 1993 assassination of Burundi's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, by soldiers from the country's Tutsi minority provoked interethnic massacres that took approximately 50,000 Hutu and Tutsi lives and destabilized a fledgling democracy. The situation quickly inspired diplomatic and other initiatives to prevent further conflict. But the greatest impetus for international peacemaking was the spring 1994 genocide of an estimated 800,000 Tutsi (and liberal Hutu) in neighboring Rwanda. It was widely recognized that the international community had failed to prevent or stop the Rwandan holocaust. The conviction grew that in Burundi, "The international community must not again be caught unprepared."¹

Nevertheless, it is clear that the international community has been unable to control the onrushing violence, much less mediate a political solution. The death toll in Burundi has risen to an estimated 150,000, 2½ percent of the population of six million. At least 800,000 Burundians have lost their homes, including approximately 250,000 refugees, 250,000 internally displaced persons, and 300,000 forced into official "regroupment camps" as the government battles a rising Hutu-led insurgency.²

Despite the internationally supported effort by UN Special Representative Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah to foster a transitional political settlement, a long "creeping coup" culminated in a full-scale Tutsi military takeover in July 1996. A sustained African regional peace initiative, facilitated by former Tanzanian President Nyerere and buttressed by economic sanctions, has struggled to convene all-party political negotiations. UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's campaign for UN contingency planning for preventive humanitarian military intervention ended in failure, and a year of unofficial "second-track" mediation by the Community of Sant'Egidio between the government and the major insurgent group produced little more than an agenda for discussions. In the past twenty months, elements of the Burundi conflict have spread to the Congo (formerly Zaire), and military tension has grown between Burundi and its other large neighbor, Tanzania.

The Burundian conflict places tens of millions of people at risk in Central Africa, and its continuation erodes the international norm against genocide, which could have a negative impact on future violent conflicts in such volatile and strategic areas as South Asia, Eastern Europe, and North Africa. Why then have the world's peacemakers, despite considerable investments of time and effort, faltered in Burundi? To ask this provocative question is by no means to ignore the fact that genocidal communal conflict poses the most difficult of all challenges to outside amelioration—as events in Rwanda, Bosnia, Chechnya, Sudan, and, to a limited extent, Liberia have painfully illustrated. Yet cogent analyses of many of these cases have indicated that the international community might have taken more effective actions to constrain violence and promote longer-term political solutions.³ An examination of the response to the Burundi crisis can hold yet another mirror to

contemporary international policy toward genocide—the “odious scourge” that at least 120 countries have legally undertaken “to prevent and punish”⁴—and can furnish valuable lessons for future policymaking in Burundi and elsewhere.

This report analyzes major international diplomatic reactions to the Burundi conflict, particularly from late 1995, when emergency diplomatic efforts to foster temporary power-sharing arrangements visibly collapsed, to September 1997. Since then, despite some progress in internal peace talks, the basic political and diplomatic parameters of the conflict remain largely unchanged. While it would have been useful to give equal attention to the diplomacy of the critical 1993–95 period, when the cycle of violence intensified, my research opportunities (and limited resources) dictated an emphasis on the more recent past. By studying events as they occurred and interacting with key international and Burundian participants, it seemed possible to develop an unusually solid firsthand analysis of the subject. I have, of course, used others’ studies to provide the reader with necessary historical background on Burundi.

I focus on diplomatic efforts, official and nongovernmental, to address the broad parameters of the Burundi conflict. The ongoing crisis has provoked an enormous range of international responses, including the dispatch of Organization of African Unity (OAU) military observers, UN and human rights group investigations of political assassinations and massacres, the establishment of a UN Human Rights Center, various small projects to foster interethnic reconciliation, dozens (if not hundreds) of conferences and reports, and so on. However, I have chosen to concentrate on more general political, military, and economic initiatives to promote a political settlement and prevent genocide.

The report explores several basic questions: What is the nature of the political conflict in Burundi, and what is the range of potentially feasible solutions? Is international assistance necessary to prevent genocide and achieve a peaceful political settlement? If so, what kind of intervention is appropriate? To what extent have the UN, the Organization of African Unity, African regional states, and key Western nations manifested the political will and capacity to contribute to conflict prevention and resolution? How effective were the Community of Sant’Egidio’s second-track diplomacy and the concerted effort to prevent violence by American nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)? What lessons have been learned and how might the international community achieve more in the future?

Beyond the customary academic and documentary sources, this study has benefited from my interviews of a broad variety of important actors in the Burundian drama. A number of these interviews were conducted during a three-week visit to Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, France, and Belgium during December 1996. Between March 1996 and September 1997, I interviewed approximately 80 individuals, many repeatedly. All of these conversations were conducted on a “not-for-attribution” basis to maximize candor. Among my most prominent interlocutors were former President Nyerere, the designated African “facilitator” for peacemaking; OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim; Ugandan ministers of state Rebecca Kadaga and Anasas Mbabazi; Richard Bogosian, U.S. special coordinator for Rwanda and Burundi; Howard Wolpe, special envoy to Burundi; former national security adviser Anthony Lake; and UN Assistant Secretary-Generals Yashiko Akashi and Alvaro De Soto. I also spoke with a variety of Burundian military, political party, and insurgent leaders and representatives as well as policymakers, diplomatic

representatives, and human rights monitors from France, the United States, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Tanzania, and the United Nations. Last, but not least, I profited greatly from my participation in the monthly Washington, D.C., meetings of the Burundi Policy Forum (recently renamed the Great Lakes Policy Forum), which brings together concerned American and European NGOs, U.S. and foreign officials, and other informed observers.

Research for this report was supported by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Peace from October 1996 through July 1997. Previously, two short consultancies with the International Crisis Group had introduced me to this significant and haunting subject.

Two

Burundi: The Politics of Genocide

What distinguishes the violent conflict in Burundi from so many others is the extent to which elite-led, politico-ethnic rivalry for power and economic and social advancement has become entwined with mass killing and fears of group extinction. Would-be peacemakers not only confront the challenge of fostering nonviolent processes of decision making and building trust among former enemies, they must also address the fears of the 15 to 20 percent Tutsi minority and the 80 to 85 percent Hutu majority that the other group will eventually commit genocide against it. As political scientists and human rights monitors have testified, much of the current violence is in fact genocidal, even if it is not always possible to document the “intent” to partially or wholly destroy an ethnic group required by the international Convention on Genocide.⁵ Rene Lemarchand, the foremost scholar of Burundi politics, explains,

Behind the murders of political opponents, the systematic ethnic cleansing of urban and rural districts, the armed attacks on refugees and internally displaced persons, and the ambushes of civilians lies the conviction held by both Tutsi and Hutu that unless the other’s crimes are retaliated against by retribution, planned annihilation will inevitably follow.⁶

In Burundi, even relative “moderates” are enveloped in the atmosphere of fear and re-primination that ultimately justifies preventive violence. Thus, many Hutu political leaders who have sought nonviolent, compromise political solutions nevertheless strongly suspect that their “moderate” Tutsi counterparts were complicit in the murder of President Ndadaye. Some of these leaders, in reacting to the assassination, made remarks that may have unintentionally fueled ethnic massacres of Tutsi. On the other hand, many on the Tutsi side who supported the democratic transition believe that the main Hutu-led party planned for massacres of Tutsi even before Ndadaye’s assassination. They speak darkly about the “necessity of eradicating genocidal ideologies.”⁷ Neither side’s allegations have been proven, but both are “credible” in the context of Burundi’s political experience.

The Roots of Conflict

A look at history sheds light on the dynamics of Burundian political development and its implications for peacemaking.⁸ As in Bosnia, ethnic violence and genocide are by no means the inevitable results of ancient tribal hatreds. In fact, there were few violent confrontations between Tutsi and Hutu until a little more than 30 years ago. When German colonists arrived in the capital of Bujumbura near the end of the 19th century, Burundi was a long-established, decentralized kingdom. The principal political rivals were not Hutu or Tutsi but members of a small royal group, the *ganwas* or “princes of the blood.” Although

the predominantly pastoral Tutsi benefited more from the extensive patron-client system than the mainly agricultural Hutu, the two groups inhabited the same lands, spoke the same language, shared a largely common culture, and often intermarried. Despite an overall distinction in social status, their economic circumstances were often quite similar. Even status differences were subject to qualification. Some Hutu clans were very influential, furnishing the ganwas with many of their advisers, managers, religious authorities, and local deputies. And certain Tutsi clans were forbidden to enter the king's court. Generally speaking, regional and family identities appear to have been more central to traditional Burundi politics than ethnic ones.

It was under the influence of colonialism that ethnic ties became more salient. Centralization and modernization eroded old identities based on locality, kinship, and dynastic rule. Moreover, Belgium's colonial takeover after World War I produced authoritarian manipulations of the ganwa system that made it less able to satisfy its Hutu constituents. At the same time, Belgian educational, cultural, and administrative policies promoted the social and political advance of the "noble" Tutsi, whose "fine bearing alone guarantee them considerable prestige over . . . the worthy Hutu, less clever, more simple, and more trusting."⁹

As elsewhere in Africa, the transition to independence spawned a struggle for power among politico-ethnic elites who gravitated toward authoritarianism. But nowhere was the conflict as stark as in overpopulated Rwanda and Burundi where just two groups, with radically different populations and social statuses, confronted one other. There was hope that Burundi might avoid the worst because its ethnic dichotomies were less extreme than those of its "false twin," Rwanda. But Burundi's politics was heavily influenced by the sudden, Belgian-abetted rise of Hutu power in independent Rwanda, a power that literally drove much of the Tutsi population out of Rwanda. In 1963, Burundi prime minister-designate Prince Louis Rwagasore—a ganwa who had brought Hutu and Tutsi together in the dominant UPRONA (Union for National Progress) party—was assassinated by political rivals. After that, the political process unfolded with the fatalism of a Greek tragedy.

Politico-ethnic conflict, centered in the urban elite, led to the assassination and wounding of two more prime ministers. In 1965, when it appeared that the Tutsi side had seized the upper hand, some Hutu officers and politicians attempted a violent coup. This led to the first ethnic pogroms, including the liquidation of almost the entire Hutu political elite. It also ushered in a long series of military-based governments. After another, more serious Hutu armed challenge in 1972, the regime murdered 100,000 to 200,000 people in three months, a "selective genocide" that targeted educated Hutu. Concerning this entire period, a former Burundian leader wrote, "A minority of tribalists . . . lit the spark that destroyed a whole building."¹⁰

The recurrent pattern of Burundi politics was now established: Political exclusion and repression generate extremist movements of resistance that propound ideologies of ethnic superiority and are willing to use indiscriminate violence against other ethnic groups. Many power-holders react in like fashion. In the process, relative moderates are either eliminated or move toward adopting more extreme agendas. "All Burundi," former UN Special Representative Ould-Abdallah has observed, "at a given moment are extremists. For a very simple reason—politics in their country has a vital stake . . . life and death for

each person.”¹¹ After a period of restored stability in which regional, clan, and other divisions within the ruling elite come to the fore, the cycle of interethnic violence begins again.

These defining years also marked the rise of the Southern-based Tutsi military-political-business faction known as the “Bururi Lobby.” Its ascendancy continues to the present day. The corrupt regime of Captain Michel Micombero was overturned in 1976 by a coup led by his cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza. Although Bagaza initially promised ethnic reconciliation and took some modernizing economic initiatives, he also pioneered new forms of repression, including a reinforcement of educational discrimination and restrictions on the dominant Catholic Church. The latter, along with moves to downsize the army and charges of government corruption, helped provoke a 1987 coup led by Major Pierre Buyoya, Bagaza’s cousin and Micombero’s nephew.

Recent Political Developments and International Reactions

Although Buyoya initially showed only a faint intention to change the political structure, he was soon transported by events. In 1988, rising ethnic expectations and fears erupted into genocidal killings of up to 20,000 people in two northern communes. Most of the dead were Hutu, victims of blind army retaliation. Unlike 1972, these well-publicized massacres led the U.S. Congress, Belgium, the European Union (but not France), and the World Bank to threaten to withhold aid unless the government moved toward reconciliation with its Hutu citizens. Dependent upon foreign assistance for a quarter of its gross national product, the Buyoya regime promptly adopted a top-down program of liberalization. With a push from the West, an international effort to prevent further genocide seemed to be having an impact.

Under additional pressure from the spreading African democratization movement and Western donors, the government accepted multiparty democracy. Buyoya and the governing UPRONA party hoped to co-opt enough Hutu support to maintain substantial Tutsi domination. But the Hutu-led FRODEBU (Front for Democracy in Burundi) party swept the June 1993 elections. Within four months, the Tutsi military’s attempted coup fatally wounded democracy and reawakened the Furies of genocide.

What lessons can be extracted from the international community’s first, abortive attempt to alter the generation-old pattern of Burundi politics? First, democratic change was profoundly threatening to Tutsi interests. But, in contrast with South Africa’s contemporaneous transition from minority rule, Burundi evaded negotiation of compromise solutions to virtually all of the flammable issues of national politics. These included the return and absorption of hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees; the integration of Hutu into the army, police, judiciary, and civil service; and revisions of state policies on loans, contracts, and privatization of industry to incorporate Hutu interests. Disputes over these issues helped incite the attempted coup and subsequent violent conflict. In the absence of progress toward a new political consensus, relatively moderate leaders like Ndadaye, who incorporated substantial opposition forces into his government, and Buyoya, who relinquished power after his electoral defeat, could not contain the extremist forces of Burundi politics.¹²

Second, although ethnic massacres had been central to political life, there was no effort to defuse intergroup fear and craving for vengeance by acknowledging the worst crimes

of the past and providing some measure of accountability for them. As events in the former Yugoslavia were then demonstrating, leaving the “culture of impunity” intact only encouraged further genocidal violence.¹³

Third, the transition, like Rwanda’s, contained no effective counterweight, domestic or foreign, to the overwhelmingly monoethnic military. This left the decisive card in the hands of a group that both mirrored continuing Tutsi civilian concerns and felt specifically threatened by the new government’s announced reforms of the security forces.¹⁴

Following the assassination of Ndadaye and the ensuing interethnic massacres, Burundian politics became more extreme and fragmented. Tutsi political hardliners within UPRONA and an increasing number of small parties, together with elements of the military and civilian militia, embarked upon a “long series of provocations and killings . . . to weaken FRODEBU, intimidate moderate politicians (including those within UPRONA) and paralyze public life.”¹⁵ In this they drew support from the Tutsi-dominated Constitutional Court, which delayed the selection of a new president after Ndadaye’s successor was killed in a plane crash along with the president of Rwanda. On the other side, certain elements of FRODEBU began to arm and attack the Burundian military.

During 1994, and especially in the wake of the Rwandan genocide, the international community, acting through UN Special Representative Ould-Abdallah, helped the Burundian political parties reach a series of transitional power-sharing agreements. These accords were designed to ensure “a minimum of political stability” pending the 1998 elections.¹⁶ They failed for two principal reasons. First, the major agreement, the Convention of Government, virtually annihilated FRODEBU’s election victory by essentially superseding the 1992 constitution, guaranteeing the Tutsi-led opposition a 45 percent share in the government, and establishing a National Security Council in which the opposition could block key moves by the FRODEBU Hutu president. More fundamentally, as Filip Reyntjens later commented, “Rather than attempting to tackle the real problems of the country, these negotiations dealt with the distribution of offices and functions.”¹⁷ The UN’s emergency diplomacy was perfectly understandable, but in the special context of Burundi politics it proved inadequate to control the extremist dynamic unleashed by Ndadaye’s assassination and even seemed to fuel it. The Convention of Government and related power-sharing accords were undermined by opposition, intimidation, and violence from the Tutsi-led parties, the army, and associated militia. And disillusionment with the Convention and its consequences spurred the growth of violent Hutu-led resistance.

By 1995, beneath a veneer of multiparty governance featuring FRODEBU President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and a UPRONA prime minister, Burundi was largely controlled by an uneasy coalition of the army, various Tutsi militia, UPRONA hardliners, and small Tutsi parties. But it faced a growing challenge from Hutu-led insurgents, especially those of the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), which was headed by former FRODEBU Minister of the Interior Leonard Nyangoma and backed by perhaps half of FRODEBU’s increasingly powerless parliamentary majority. Arms flowed freely to both sides, including notable shipments to the government from China, Russia, and Eastern Europe (via Belgium, Rwanda, and Tanzania) and to the CNDD from the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Angola, and South Africa (via Belgium, Sudan, and Zaire,

the latter channel involving the family of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko). As dramatic massacres and displacements proved, the main victims of the war were civilians.¹⁸

Buyoya's July 1996 coup brought greater coherence to the government while removing the last remnants of Hutu political power. Many Western officials were grateful that the army did not install a more "extreme" leader, such as former President Bagaza. Still, the coup generally signaled a more uncompromising political stance and a greater emphasis on military repression. Even as Buyoya somewhat acceded to international pressure for secret talks with the CNDD and cooperation with regional African mediation, his government legally harassed the powerless FRODEBU parliamentary and party leadership, doubled the size of the army, and undertook a massive forced temporary "regroupment" of hundreds of thousands of Hutu peasants. In late 1996, the regime became modestly involved in the conflict in eastern Zaire and benefited from one of its major results: the dismantling of the CNDD's main external bases.¹⁹ By September 1997, security in some parts of Burundi had improved and the monthly death toll had been cut in half, to 400 to 600. But the insurgency still appeared well rooted and continued to have some access to the outside through Tanzanian and other porous borders.²⁰ And sputtering tensions between Burundi and Tanzania raised the possibility of a wider war.

Possible Political Solutions and an Appropriate International Role

Even if the government were able to temporarily contain the CNDD and two smaller rebel groups—PALIPEHUTU (Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People) and FROLINA (National Liberation Front)—the basis for future conflict and genocide would still exist. The last 30 years of Burundi history suggest that the only way out of the labyrinth of violence is a compromise political settlement followed by a long period of peacebuilding. But what kind of settlement is feasible given this bleak past?

Partition, a frequent recourse in desperate ethnic conflicts, seems unlikely here, although it cannot be excluded as a last resort. There are no traditional "Hutulands" and "Tutsilands" in Burundi. And while the war has recently brought about a substantial amount of ethnic segregation, this has been at the local rather than regional level; therefore, any attempt at territorial division would entail truly massive population transfers. Most important, the task of calculating a mutually acceptable partition between the politically predominant 15 to 20 percent Tutsi minority and the subjugated Hutu majority would be an extremely daunting one. Another major obstacle would be anticipated resistance from the Tutsi-led regime in adjoining Rwanda, which could not be happy about a precedent for territorial division and possible new security threats along the border.²¹

Nor do Burundian circumstances seem propitious for the reconciliationist system of "consociational democracy." The Tutsi comprise too small a part of the population to benefit much from the principle of proportional representation. A "grand coalition" of political elites would be impeded by the fact that these elites have been heavily implicated in past ethnic violence and have few cross-cutting relationships that transcend ethnicity. And any comprehensive minority veto on national political issues would undoubtedly stymie Hutu advances.²² Consociationalism is no recipe for long-term political stability in Burundi.

Suggestions for bypassing ethnic conflict by incorporating Burundi into a larger regional system of economic and ultimately political cooperation have the potential for a “win-win” payoff for both Hutu and Tutsi. But this is a long-range remedy, one that will also have to overcome strong patterns of discrimination against both groups in neighboring countries.

A political settlement that took adequate account of Burundian history and circumstances would probably have three basic characteristics. First, the essence of any *enduring* compromise would be a form of democratic power sharing that was more majoritarian than consociational but guaranteed minority security—perhaps in part through local autonomy—and provided some significant protection for minority socioeconomic and political interests. What is needed is a negotiated accommodation between the aspirations of the majority and the acquisitions of the minority, a specifically Burundian version of what has recently occurred in El Salvador and South Africa. Of course, in the Burundi case, the achievement of a negotiated compromise is greatly hampered by the history of genocide.

Second, there would be measures to address collective fears and memories of genocide by acknowledging past crimes and fixing individual rather than ethnic group responsibility for them. There is an emerging international menu of ways to deal with this problem, ranging from truth commissions and amnesty programs in El Salvador and South Africa to national criminal prosecutions and international criminal tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Also, according to the head of a leading Burundian human rights organization, Burundians have relevant local traditions of justice, including that of pronouncing sentences for certain crimes but not carrying them out.

Third, there would be impartial outside military forces sufficient to control the Burundian military and other armed groups until an ethnically integrated and politically subordinate military institution emerged (probably three to five years). This is particularly necessary in Burundi, which has absolutely no tradition of constitutional rule and where the military has long governed as an instrument of Tutsi privilege and security. In this respect, the Burundian situation differs greatly from those in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and El Salvador.

It is almost unthinkable that such a settlement could develop without substantial international support, including a deft mixture of carrots and sticks. “One thing I know,” observed an African leader who had worked to reconcile the Burundian groups for almost two years, “They can’t do it on their own.” Because fear and extremism rule the “land of a thousand hills,” moderate initiatives only develop with the help of outside pressure and assistance. Prime examples are the liberalization of the late 1980s and early 1990s and the power-sharing accords of 1994.

The demise of these initiatives holds some important lessons regarding the way in which the international community needs to direct its pressure. As we have seen, these failures largely stemmed from the lack of genuine engagement of all important parties, especially the “extremists”, in successful political negotiations. Without such engagement, the “moderates” who helped spark constructive change were ultimately powerless. Ironically, a moderate political system in Burundi can only be established with strong participation from extremists, who constitute the dynamic forces in Burundian politics.

The challenge to the international community is to use its carrots and sticks to engage the extremists in peacemaking.

There is no more powerful argument for this proposed international role than that provided by neighboring Rwanda's descent into civil war and genocide. Although the central issue there was the alteration of a system dominated by a narrow Hutu political elite, it took concerted international pressure to produce political negotiations. Yet these did not succeed, because key Hutu extremists did not participate, a mutually acceptable balance of majority rule and minority rights was not achieved, past crimes were ignored, and a UN peacekeeping force was too weak to control the Rwandan military and associated militia.²³

As the Burundian civil war intensified in late 1995, members of the international community undertook new approaches to prevent genocide and foster political reconciliation. We now turn toward the analysis of these approaches.

Three

The United Nations and Humanitarian Military Intervention

On December 29, 1995, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali warned the Security Council, “There is a real danger of the situation in Burundi degenerating to the point where it might explode into ethnic violence on a massive scale,” even “a repetition of the tragic events in Rwanda.”²⁴ This statement marked the beginning of his campaign for UN-authorized “contingency planning” for the deployment of a multinational force in Burundi. Boutros-Ghali was convinced that existing “preventive diplomacy” to foster a political dialogue had to be complemented by “a credible threat of force.” He hoped that this would “improve the chances of convincing the parties in Burundi to show more flexibility, thereby obviating the need for more direct military involvement.” But if a worst-case scenario of full-scale civil war and genocide developed, the international community should be prepared to dispatch a 25,000–50,000-person force to deter massacres; provide security to refugees, displaced persons, and civilians at risk; and protect key installations.²⁵

After the trauma of Rwanda, it is difficult to quarrel with the notion that the international community needs to be better prepared to intervene militarily against Hutu-Tutsi violence in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Indeed, President Clinton recently apologized to Rwandans for the international community’s failure to act during the 1994 genocide. Yet the secretary-general’s proposal foundered, largely because of lack of adequate support from two key permanent members of the Security Council: France and the United States. The Burundian government’s cautious reaction to mere discussion of an international military option partially confirmed Boutros-Ghali’s premise concerning the political utility of a threat of force. However, the subsequent counterreaction of various Burundian political groups validated some of France’s and America’s concerns about the dangers involved. The whole episode suggests that international military pressure is appropriate in the Burundian situation but that it needs to be more closely synchronized with the political track of engaging Burundian groups in negotiations.

The Secretary-General’s Proposal

In UN parlance, the secretary-general wished to invoke Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which deals with “peace enforcement.” Unlike Chapter 6 “peacekeeping,” this includes military intervention without the consent of the warring parties. Unfortunately, recent Chapter 7-type operations in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia have demonstrated that the UN’s planning, rapid deployment, and command and control structures are not yet able to manage such activities effectively. Also, the organization has become something of a scapegoat for its members’ failures to back up approved missions with adequate resources.²⁶ Hence Boutros-Ghali suggested a “contracting out” approach for Burundi, along the lines of the

UN-approved “coalitions of the willing” that had gone into Korea, the Persian Gulf, the initial U.S.-led operations in Somalia and Haiti, and the French-led Operation Turquoise in Rwanda. A multinational force—including some African units—would be planned, organized, and led by a state or group of states possessing a “recognized rapid-response capacity.” The force would receive a broad humanitarian mandate from the Security Council, which might even authorize its deployment on a contingent basis.²⁷

Western and Other Reactions

As with other risky UN military initiatives, the key determinant of success or failure was the political will of the five permanent members of the Security Council. Russia, China, and Great Britain did not have strong diplomatic interests in Africa; France and the United States did.

The French formally opposed contingency planning, arguing that preventive diplomacy was the best course, at least for the moment. As one French official remarked, “There are two schools about what would happen if the UN went in: It would either fight the Tutsi army or encourage attacks by the Hutu [insurgents].” France feared that even public discussion of possible intervention could trigger preemptive massacres, yet it was not willing to kill the idea by vetoing it in the Security Council. In fact, the French government told the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations that it would “consider” providing financial and logistical assistance if a contingency force were established. France’s position reflected a subtle balancing of interests. As Burundi’s primary bilateral military and economic aid donor since the 1970s, France tended to identify its political interests with those of the Tutsi elite it had supported. Yet the French had been greatly embarrassed by their alliance with the genocidal Hutu political elite in Rwanda and were disinclined to go it alone again in this volatile region.²⁸

This left the initiative very much to the Americans. At first the United States strongly supported Boutros-Ghali’s recommendation, using its influence to get a broad endorsement through the Security Council. Although the language of this March 1996 resolution was somewhat weaker than the United States would have preferred (for example, encouraging the secretary-general’s continued “consultations” with concerned states on contingency planning rather than approving it outright), it did provide the necessary legitimacy for a “coalition of the willing” in Burundi.²⁹ But here was where American support flagged.

Still smarting from its 1993 military and political debacle in Somalia, the Clinton administration declined to pledge any ground troops, although it did offer other military support, including “urgent and tanker airlift” that would place 150–300 military personnel in the region. Moreover, in contrast with its performances in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, and Haiti, the United States declined to wield its full diplomatic influence with other countries to help assemble a strong multinational force. Responding to appeals from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, several African states—Malawi, Chad, Zambia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Egypt—indicated that they could provide ground troops. And a few European countries and Japan promised to furnish, or consider furnishing, logistical or other support.³⁰ The key to success was not simply more troops but specialized personnel and equipment in such areas as command and control and mobile deployment. Potential sources of these contributions included such Third World countries as South Africa, India, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe and possibly some of the

smaller European countries and Canada. However, while the United States did make inquiries of some of these countries, it was unwilling, officials acknowledged, to invest the high-level diplomatic capital that might have produced important results.

Within the American government, the push to back Boutros-Ghali was led by the the White House National Security Council (NSC) staff, which feared a Burundian version of the Rwanda genocide, possibly during the upcoming U.S. presidential campaign. But the NSC did not have strong presidential support for preventive military contingency planning. As one official explained, "It never got to the presidential level of lining up countries. The crisis was not developed enough to sell this, and we had no clear concept of action." Moreover the Defense Department, under the reigning "Powell Doctrine," which linked the use of force to the prospect of a clear military victory, shared France's concern that messy political tensions could tie down a humanitarian expedition. And the Pentagon worried that the United States would get increasingly drawn into such a conflict, generating new demands on resources already stretched by commitments to Bosnia. At the State Department, many officials sympathized with the military's reticence. For one thing, France's views on Africa and Burundi counted with the diplomats in Foggy Bottom. For another, the newly appointed regional African "facilitator" for Burundi, former Tanzanian President Nyerere, indicated that the UN resolution was making it harder for him to coax the nervous Burundian government into political negotiations. Nothing was more consistent with the State Department's characteristic bureaucratic style than to listen closely to traditional allies and grasp at any opportunity for negotiation.

In the absence of strong presidential involvement, the divergence in agency views was resolved by the illusion of action. The NSC pushed the Pentagon to prepare a contingency plan for submission to the United Nations and key Western allies. But without being able to identify real military units from specific countries, the Pentagon could only come up with a series of "planning assumptions" involving a Chapter 6-type mystery force of 20,000 troops that could, with "the acquiescence of the parties," enter Burundi within six months to establish three "safe havens" for humanitarian relief. Left unanswered were key questions concerning potential sources of hostility to the force, who would perform command and control, and strategies to protect vulnerable civilians throughout the country.

By the summer of 1996, the notion of a Chapter 7 contingency force had become academic, although this was not publicly acknowledged. "Let me be frank for once," confided one of the "Perm 5" ambassadors in September, "The contingency has superseded the contingency planning. 'Contingency planning' is something that is being done because we are not really ready to intervene yet." Since there were no leading states ready to organize a humanitarian force, the United States and other nations suggested that the United Nations itself could lead the operation. Given the organization's admitted weaknesses in peace enforcement, this was a most unlikely proposition. Out of 31 governments solicited for military contributions, only five sent replies. Of these, just one (Ethiopia) was positive.³¹

Evaluation

Aside from the lack of international support for humanitarian contingency planning, how well did the secretary-general's proposal match up with the requirements for preventing

genocide and advancing peace in Burundi? Certainly his initiative was generally consistent with the need for strong international pressure against violence in Burundi. Not even the reluctant French could bring themselves to deny that, if worse came to worst, the world might have to intervene to prevent another Rwanda. Furthermore, there is little doubt that the mere *threat* of international contingency planning had a sobering effect on Burundian government leaders. This was apparent as early as January 1996, when the government, reacting to Boutros-Ghali's recent statements as well as visits by high UN and U.S. officials, clamped down on violent demonstrations by extremist groups in the capital.³² Even more important, Western and African diplomatic sources believe that fear of UN Chapter 7 intervention played a major role in the government's June 25th decision to *invite* a substitute regional African peacekeeping force into the country, temporarily boosting African efforts to promote a political settlement.

On the other hand, the UN initiative complicated efforts to engage the Burundian parties, including the extremists, in the peace process. The emphasis on humanitarian intervention gave the appearance of neglecting the political elements of a comprehensive solution. This provoked particular resistance on the Tutsi side, because Hutu politicians had recurrently called for UN military intervention after the assassination of Ndadaye. Nyerere complained that controversy over the proposal was impeding his effort to bring Tutsi leaders to the negotiating table. As further confirmation of the need to develop a political framework for anticipated military intervention, the July coup fostered by Tutsi extremists led to the withdrawal of the previous government's request for regional peacekeepers.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, if sufficient political support had existed for the creation and eventual deployment of a Western-backed, African and Third World contingency force, its humanitarian mission would have been difficult but not impossible. Burundi was a small country with a 16,000-person military that had never fought an external enemy. Moreover, the army did not have a good reputation for counterinsurgency. Its posture was overwhelmingly defensive, and the customary response to a guerrilla attack was to wreak vengeance on nearby civilians. Experience elsewhere in Africa suggests that the kind of force contemplated for Burundi could have largely accomplished its prime mission of deterring massacres. No one has challenged the contention of Major-General Romeo Dallaire, the UN commander in Rwanda in 1994, that an expanded, largely African force of 5,000 could have stopped the Rwandan army and militia from killing hundreds of thousands of people. In Liberia, an undermanned, underequipped West African force was generally able to protect the majority of the resident population during a brutal seven-year civil war. According to a military analysis of Burundi conducted for the International Crisis Group in March 1996 by Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, the Burundian army could have been defeated by a force of perhaps 1,000 to 3,000 top-notch combat forces of the caliber of U.S. Rangers, backed by aerial transport and firepower. On the basis of U.S. experience in Somalia and elsewhere, O'Hanlon estimated that such a force would suffer casualties as low as 100 to 300.³³ Even if the likeliest elite forces were South Africans, Indians, and Pakistani, there seems little reason to doubt the ultimate result. And it is by no means certain that the Burundian army would have chosen to take on a "robust" UN contingency force.

But while a Chapter 7 force was most unlikely to be militarily defeated, it was apt to face sniping and small-scale attacks from segments of the Burundian army, Tutsi political extremists, and Hutu guerillas trying to get at the army. As the experience of military intervention in Somalia and Liberia showed, the lack of an adequate political framework to accompany military intervention could prolong the stay of outside forces and gradually sap their will to continue.

Considering both the actual impact of the UN initiative, and the probable consequences of its implementation, it should have been revised to address the political fears of the contending forces in Burundi, especially the Tutsi. Perhaps the best way forward would have been to adapt the proposal to ongoing African and other diplomatic efforts to mount all-inclusive political negotiations. While discreetly maintaining a Chapter 7 option, the United Nations could have placed the emphasis on orchestrating Burundian acquiescence to an invited Chapter 6 force with both humanitarian and political confidence-building objectives. *This force would have been deployed in the context of developing all-party negotiations for democratic power sharing.* Compared with Boutros-Ghali's formulation, this military-political alternative would have had the advantage of offering the Tutsi groups a package that (1) was more consensual and (2) took explicit account of their political interests.

Even an invited Chapter 6 force associated with ongoing political negotiations might have faced attacks by discontented Tutsi and Hutu extremists. And there was always the possibility that the government would withdraw its consent. Still, concerted international pressure for a consensual military presence associated with a credible political framework would have been the best way to minimize these risks.

Boutros-Ghali's proposal contained the seeds of the suggested Chapter 6 operation: It contemplated the future transformation of a humanitarian intervention force into a consensual one that could uphold a political settlement. In the spring of 1996, at the urging of the Security Council, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations quietly prepared a rough Chapter 6 plan for a 15,000-person humanitarian force to open roads and deliver relief to limited "safe areas." Around the same time, the United States proposed the creation of a separate 5,000-10,000-person, all-African, Western-financed, African Crisis Response Force capable of carrying out a similar consensual mission in Burundi or elsewhere.

But neither of these proposals was specifically linked to a strategy of fostering political negotiations. In the absence of a political approach to gaining Burundian consent, the UN's Chapter 6 plan was not seriously pursued. As for the U.S. plan, it was greeted by African and European complaints of lack of consultation and lack of clarity regarding authorization and command of the African force. In the end, the notion of a real and effective force was replaced by one merely of training peacekeepers in various African states. The new African Crisis Response "Initiative" had little relationship to the Burundi crisis or to any similar conflict that might develop.

As the next chapter indicates, even a reformulated political-military approach to peacekeeping would have required additional support from the world community. But it would have constituted an important step toward a more effective international policy in Burundi.

Four

Regional African Diplomacy for a Negotiated Political Settlement

As Boutros-Ghali was launching his campaign for humanitarian military contingency planning, several East and Central African states, in conjunction with the OAU, were developing a much broader peace initiative. Over the past two years, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Zaire, Kenya, and Ethiopia (joined by Zambia after October 1996) have demonstrated an unusual degree of cohesion and determination in pushing for a negotiated settlement. In 1996 and 1997, they held five Presidential Summit Meetings on Burundi; engaged former President Nyerere as their “facilitator”; sponsored four major Nyerere-hosted political discussions among Burundian parties; began planning for the dispatch of thousands of regional peacekeeping troops to provide security and facilitate negotiations; adopted and modified economic sanctions aimed at persuading the Burundian government to restore constitutional legality and pursue unconditional, all-party negotiations; established mechanisms to regulate the sanctions; and worked to coordinate their efforts with those of other governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

The regional group’s basic thrust—using its considerable political, economic, and military influence to nudge the Burundians into all-party negotiations—is unexceptionable. However, specific initiatives, particularly economic sanctions against the Burundian government and the priority given to African-led mediation, have suffered from lack of adequate Western support. Even when France, the European Union, or the United States accepted the region’s decisions, they usually declined to back them with measures of their own or to offer the region technical assistance in implementing them. And when they disagreed with the regional group, they were sometimes unwilling to defer to the African consensus.

On balance, the regional states have made progress with their approach, despite uneven Western support. If they have not yet convoked full-fledged, all-inclusive negotiations on democratic power sharing, they have clearly edged the Burundian parties in this direction. They have also outlined the gist of a settlement based on power sharing. And they have become involved in planning for the largely African peacekeeping force that is a sine qua non of any political resolution. The Europeans and Americans have had arguable concerns, but their fears and expectations were almost certainly overdrawn. Still, the Africans have stumbled in their inefficient implementation of sanctions, and they have been slow to deal with the reality that Nyerere’s effort at mediation has been affected by his government’s and his own deteriorating relations with the government of Burundi.

Had the African and Western states collaborated to provide strong backing for the conditional sanctions and regional political mediation, they would have put terrific pressure over time on the conflicting parties to reach a compromise settlement. What seems

desirable is a new and closer collaboration between African and Western states based on (1) a mutual recognition of the basic soundness of regional policy; (2) more open and joint discussions between African and Western leaders (compared with typical one-on-one diplomatic lobbying) that could enable the Africans to benefit from Western experience and detachment as they pursue their objectives; and (3) a mutual realization that strong Western backing of African consensus decisions is essential for effective international action.

Regional African Initiatives

The region's activism on Burundi constitutes a notable reversal of African states' past reluctance to intervene against the continent's major human rights abuses. This is partly a reaction to events in Rwanda and Burundi. Systematic violence and coups generated massive refugee flows to neighboring countries, often with attendant threats of political unrest, yet the international community did not intervene to prevent these calamities.

The new regional energy also reflects the advent of a new generation of civilian African politicians, led by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania. Although their regimes vary considerably in their commitment to democracy, these leaders' experiences have convinced them that basic moral values have a prominent place in foreign policy and that they need to act together to resolve many of their economic and political problems. Indeed, one of the remarkable aspects of regional decision making on Burundi has been the willingness of participants to make the compromises necessary for joint action. For example, according to well-placed African and Western sources, the regional decision to impose economic sanctions against Burundi was a middle ground between Uganda's preference for an ultimatum to the military to relinquish power immediately and Rwanda's desire for a delay in action. And the subsequent easing of sanctions on "humanitarian" goods represented a compromise among countries that wanted to maintain restrictions, partially relax them, or expand existing humanitarian exemptions.

The first step in the region's campaign was actually taken by leaders of the OAU who had strong regional connections. According to knowledgeable regional officials, in mid-1995 the new chairman, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, and the veteran secretary-general, former Tanzanian Foreign Minister Salim Salim, began encouraging former Tanzanian President Nyerere to "become involved in Burundi." A structure for peacemaking started to emerge in November when former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, through the Carter Center, facilitated an African Summit Conference in Cairo. There the presidents (or their representatives) of Zaire, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi considered the "persistent tensions, hostilities, insecurities, and recent genocide in the Great Lakes Region." Although Nyerere was unable to accept an invitation to help "mediate" at the conference, he subsequently made a number of visits to Burundi and discussed his possible role with UN officials in New York. At the follow-up Tunis summit of March 1996, he accepted the mandate "to assist the people of Burundi in finding means to achieve peace, stability, and reconciliation," including "the resolution of fundamental problems relating to the access, control, and management of power, so that either the ethnic or political minority is reassured."³⁴ Given his great prestige, Nyerere would become far more than a

facilitator for the Burundian parties. He would be a principal adviser to the regional presidents, helping to ensure continuing priority for the Burundi crisis.

In the spring of 1996, Nyerere sponsored two meetings of Burundian political parties in Mwanza, Tanzania, but little progress was reported. Representatives of FRODEBU and UPRONA quarreled over whom to include on a list of genocidal killers and whether or not to endorse the largely moribund Convention of Government. UPRONA rebuffed Nyerere's effort to broaden the discussion by inviting delegates from the armed rebels.³⁵

In June, the regional states held their first Burundi-only summit in Arusha, Tanzania, adding the presidents of Kenya and Ethiopia to their number. The summit accepted the surprise (and domestically ill-prepared) request of Burundi's Hutu president and Tutsi prime minister for a regional peacekeeping force to guarantee security for all and established a technical committee to plan the assistance.³⁶ In making their request, the Burundian leaders appear to have been responding to pressure from the insurgency and the United Nations, and to President Museveni's urging that they reform the army with the help of outside trainers. Following the July coup and the withdrawal of the Burundian request, the second Arusha summit imposed comprehensive economic sanctions against the regime. These were conditioned upon the restoration of the National Assembly, the unbanning of political parties, and immediate and unconditional negotiations with all political parties and armed factions.³⁷

The third Arusha summit in October included the president of Zambia, which controls part of an important lake route to Burundi. The regional leaders noted that they had granted sanctions exemptions for the importation of fertilizer and vegetable seeds because of President Buyoya's partial steps toward resurrecting the parliament and parties. But they stressed the centrality of unconditional and inclusive negotiations, which they envisioned beginning within a month.³⁸ Nyerere's Mwanza Three meeting finally came off in December, attracting representatives of a broad variety of political groups, including the government, CNDD, FRODEBU, and many smaller Tutsi parties. UPRONA, no longer a governing party under the coup regime, was a notable stayaway. The format was restricted to Nyerere's individual "consultations" with the parties about their positions along with useful informal contacts among the delegates. Nyerere had reluctantly concluded that there was little space for a more ambitious effort because two key parties, the government and CNDD, had become engaged in separate, Western-supported secret negotiations for a suspension of hostilities under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome. Ironically, regional sanctions pressures had helped give life to the Sant'Egidio effort, pushing regional mediation into the background.

In April 1997, the fourth Arusha summit eased sanctions on certain products (food, medicine, educational and construction materials, and agricultural inputs) to "alleviate the suffering of the people of Burundi." According to African and Western observers, this moderate relaxation resulted as much from the suspicions of Kenya and other countries that their partners might be profiting from sanctions evasions as from reports of limited progress in the Rome talks. At the same time, the regional leaders kept up their pressure for peace by calling on Burundi to restore full freedom of movement to the FRODEBU speaker of the assembly (who was being investigated for possible participation in the 1993 massacres) and disband regroupment camps, and by appealing to the

international community to “exert full political, economic, and diplomatic pressures on all the parties to pursue a negotiated settlement . . .” including an arms embargo and the denial of visas to those obstructing the peace process.³⁹

The Sant’Egidio talks stalled in May, opening the way for African-facilitated negotiations. Nyerere prepared a two-week meeting in Arusha and the prospects for broad-based, high-level participation seemed favorable. But at the last minute the government declined to show up and prevented others from departing Bujumbura. Insisting on a three-week postponement, the government cited its worsening relations with Tanzania on account of the latter’s “ever-increasing campaign” for sanctions and its alleged toleration of armed attacks by Burundian refugees from its territory. Throwing down a gauntlet, the Burundi government observed that such circumstances made “the mediation—no matter how illustrious—of a Tanzanian citizen very hard for Burundians to accept.”⁴⁰ According to well-informed Western diplomats, the *immediate* cause of the government’s withdrawal was Buyoya’s inability to overcome internal resistance to allowing the speaker of the assembly, another high FRODEBU official, and former President Bagaza to travel to Arusha, and his knowledge that their absence, particularly that of the speaker, would be intolerable to Nyerere.

After presiding over a truncated meeting at Arusha in September, Nyerere offered to step aside as the facilitator. But the fifth summit, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, confirmed his “crucial role” and urged him to continue. It also rejected President Mkapa’s offer to no longer host political negotiations, insisting that the next round at least would be in Arusha. In a strong statement, the regional states expressed their “disappointment” with the Burundi government’s refusal to attend all-party talks, reaffirmed existing sanctions, and established a new secretariat to ensure their “scrupulous application.” It also called on the government to create a propitious climate for the talks by disbanding regroupment camps, halting trials for the 1993 massacres until a negotiated solution is in place to deal with such crimes, and permitting the speaker as well as former presidents Ntibantuganya and Bagaza to travel freely and participate in the talks.⁴¹

The Western Reaction

The West looked benignly, if sometimes critically, upon the African effort, but it did not put its weight behind some of the most important initiatives. The thrust of its reservation was that overly blunt efforts to prevent genocide ignored the need to continue to work through moderate politicians in Bujumbura. France opposed sanctions from the beginning, maintaining that it was necessary to support Buyoya’s government lest it fall to more extremist forces led by former President Bagaza. As an alternative, France favored a vaguely defined international conference to resolve the problems of the Great Lakes region. But the major vehicle for French and other European policy in Burundi was the European Union. Through Special Envoy Aldo Ajello, the Europeans sometimes lobbied for limited easing of sanctions against the Buyoya regime or greater official recognition to reward its willingness to talk with the CNDD in Rome.

Like the French, the Americans’ first instinct had been to oppose sanctions as undermining a relatively moderate leader. This propensity had been overcome by a last-minute appeal from Special Envoy Howard Wolpe, but the United States soon joined the

Europeans in recurrently lobbying for a modest but politically meaningful relaxation, such as the suspension of restrictions on commercial air travel. The West's desire to bolster and encourage Buyoya as a moderate alternative (the normal diplomatic response in an abnormal country) also made it disinclined to back the regional sanctions with its own actions. For example, the Americans did not revive earlier proposals to deny visas to Burundi government officials or to freeze their foreign assets. No Western government adopted the African sanctions. And the UN Security Council went no further than to threaten to impose an arms embargo and other undefined measures against those obstructing peace.⁴² Furthermore, while it was quickly apparent that there were considerable "leakages" in the embargo, the West did not offer intelligence or other technical assistance to help plug them up.

As for the Africans' focus on political mediation, the Europeans and Americans prevailed on Nyerere to delay efforts to achieve all-parties political negotiations in favor of the secret Rome talks on a suspension of hostilities between the government and CNDD. Although they recognized that these talks had succeeded in getting the government to dialogue with the CNDD, both Nyerere and the regional leaders were uncomfortable with the degree of Western emphasis on the Rome process. In December 1996, Western envoys had to push Nyerere into changing the format of his planned Mwanza Three negotiations from a "conference" (which would have emphasized, at least symbolically, future African-led negotiations) to "consultations" (which deferred more to the Rome process). Furthermore, the West periodically pressed the Africans to relax sanctions in response to the Rome talks, which fell far short of the broad, all-party negotiations the region demanded. In August 1997, on the verge of a two-week all-parties conference in Arusha, Buyoya withdrew. Western diplomats echoed many of his complaints about Nyerere's lack of adequate consultation and Tanzania's alleged toleration of the insurgents. Rather than continuing to press Buyoya to attend the long-planned conference and take up his issues there, they supported his request for a three-week postponement and subsequently sought to advance consideration of his proposal for a change of venue.

Evaluation

While one could argue about the merits of particular measures, the weight of the evidence is that the regional sanctions have, to a limited degree, "worked"—and that they might have worked even better with more Western support. There is every indication, in both official statements and the evolution of policy since mid-1996, that Burundi endorsed the principle of unconditional all-party negotiations, engaged in secret talks with armed rebels in Rome, and participated in some of Nyerere's meetings largely in the hope of meeting conditions that would enable sanctions to be lifted.

Considering both these positive steps and the government's long reluctance to enter all-party negotiations, it appears that stronger international pressure would have been desirable. In interviews in December 1996, high Burundian military and civilian officials described their policy as one of continuing to push for military successes that would enable them to "negotiate on our terms." This was hardly consistent with the regional states' repeated calls for urgent, "unconditional" negotiations. Nothing reveals the continuing lack of effective support for this idea in the Burundian government more than one

Western official's recent private observation that Burundian leaders need to "see how [they] are perceived internationally":

The military has gone from 15,000 to 40,000. The Tutsi think they can win a military victory and sanctions are crumbling. There have been executions [mainly of Hutus judged by Tutsi courts to have committed genocide] and regroupment camps. And we have, at the same time, been advocating relaxation of sanctions. . . .

The West argued that easing rather than intensifying sanctions in reaction to Buyoya's positive moves would strengthen moderate forces for peace in Burundi. But if this were true, one would have expected to see greater flexibility in the government's position after sanctions were partially relaxed in April 1997. No change occurred, partly because the government was buoyed by its improved military position following the events in eastern Zaire. Even if Buyoya himself was relatively moderate, the dynamic forces in Burundi politics were, as we have seen, relatively extremist. In fact, they had become more extremist than ever since the October 1993 genocidal massacres and the April 1994 genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda. As one of Buyoya's colleagues noted in December 1996, "The president's political constituency is unclear." If it was indeed the extremists who held the political balance, what was required, as explained in chapter 2, was outside pressure to get them engaged in negotiations for a form of democratic power sharing that protected their interests. Of course, there had to be a balance between coercion and political explanation and reassurance in order to avoid a backlash. In the absence of adequate pressure, extremism would inevitably spawn continued violence.

By oversimplifying the political contest in Bujumbura as one between "the moderates" led by Buyoya and "the extremists" looking to Bagaza, Western officials may have also overdrawn the contrast between the two presidential cousins. It was true that Bagaza had been a particularly authoritarian ruler, that he had financed a violent Tutsi militia, and that some of his followers were younger, more militant Tutsi. But in his maneuvering for power, he had helped finance FRODEBU's political campaign, favored a national conference instead of the patch-up Convention of Government, and agreed to all-parties negotiations with the CNDD and FRODEBU. He also had a long relationship with President Museveni who, despite Hutu suspicions, was a strong critic of the Tutsi-led coup government and a firm advocate of ethnic integration of the army. It may be significant that a number of important CNDD and FRODEBU leaders make little political distinction between Buyoya and Bagaza.

Regional sanctions have bitten in Burundi, but their implementation has suffered from serious deficiencies. According to a thorough Western government analysis in April 1997,⁴³ Burundi was able to export almost all its 1996-97 crop of coffee and tea by air and lake, although at a lower price and higher cost than usual. Most fuel needs were satisfied by smuggling from Tanzania and Rwanda, but shortages and sanctions premiums caused a tripling of the price of gasoline. (This was a prominent complaint of members of the political elite, although a narrow segment of that elite has certainly profited from the sanction-busting trade.) Burundi's small industrial sector, a major source of government revenue, was significantly affected by the cutoff of raw materials, but here too there were leakages; for example, through Rwanda.⁴⁴

Members of the regional and national committees that were hastily appointed to administer the sanctions admitted they lacked the means to monitor and enforce them. Furthermore, regional modifications of sanctions to accommodate humanitarian needs were often hampered by irregular meeting schedules and weak coordination mechanisms. While the recent decision to establish a sanctions secretariat should help, resource and technical constraints will continue. In this regard, Western states have considerable experience with sanctions regimes and could make a major contribution by supplying intelligence, technical aid, and other resources as long as sanctions continue.

The region's focus on all-party political negotiations was clearly central for peace-making in Burundi, and some progress was made toward this end. (The serious problem posed by the competing, Western-supported Rome process will be discussed in the next chapter.) But the regional mediation effort was not without flaws. Of course, any regional facilitator would have had a difficult job trying to overcome the fears and suspicions of the deeply divided Burundians. And the challenge was further complicated by the fact that the region was trying to establish a form of power-sharing democracy in Burundi and employing regional economic sanctions against a refractory government. Many Western diplomats also criticized President Nyerere and his staff for not spending enough time on the process or on the ground in Burundi, displaying a somewhat authoritarian style, and needlessly antagonizing the Burundi government with certain public and private statements.

These charges are difficult for an outsider to fully assess. What is clear is that Nyerere and his home country were perceived by the Burundian regime as the most influential proponent of sanctions. (Indeed, all regional summits on Burundi were held in Tanzania, which was regarded, according to one African leader, as the "chair" country for Burundi.) Furthermore, Tanzanian-Burundian tensions increased greatly after October 1996, when fighting in eastern Zaire forced the CNDD to relocate many of its external cadres to Tanzania, albeit under the government's injunction (not universally effective) to avoid military action. Since the regional states were, in a way, interested parties to the Burundi-Tanzania conflict, they were slow to deal with the Burundian government's growing disaffection, which posed a threat to the negotiations. The problem could have been addressed in a number of ways, from dealing directly with the Tanzania-Burundi conflict to introducing additional non-Tanzanian personnel into the mediation process and altering the venue of some meetings.

If the West had strongly supported conditional economic sanctions, including measures to reduce regional leakages, the poverty-stricken, besieged Burundi government would have come under enormous pressure over time to reach a negotiated compromise with its opponents. On the other side, Western support of the April 1997 arms embargo against the CNDD as well as the government would have put a brake on the insurgents' hopes for total victory. Furthermore, the region's drive toward all-party negotiations was hampered by an inability to correct for counterproductive national and regional interests. External partners might have introduced a greater measure of impartiality.

Building on past progress, a more effective regional policy might be based on a revised relationship between the African states and other key actors: France, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations. Those other actors could provide consistent

support and technical assistance for key regionally determined policies such as sanctions, all-party mediation and, in the future, UN peacekeeping. In return, the region could accept closer consultation with its external partners, which might enable it to profit from their broad experience and provide a useful corrective to regional self-interest. In the end, the region's "friends" would accept the need to support African consensus decisions, as it is the region's political will and resources that will largely determine the outcome in Burundi.

Five

“Second-Track” Unofficial Diplomacy and Other Nongovernmental Initiatives

Peacemaking in Burundi has been distinguished by at least two unusual and sustained interventions by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The Community of Sant’Egidio

In the middle of 1996, the Community of Sant’Egidio—the Rome-based lay Catholic group that helped mediate an end to the civil war in Mozambique—began to arrange secret peace talks between the government and the CNDD. In testimony to the power of extremism in Burundian politics, both sides considered it politically dangerous to meet “the enemy” openly. Between September 1996 and May 1997, four rounds of discussions took place in Rome. According to participants, the purpose of these talks was to achieve a suspension of hostilities based on agreement regarding the general principles of a political settlement. Such an accord between the two main armed parties would establish the framework for future Nyerere-led all-party negotiations. The Rome process received strong support from the European Union and the United States, whose special envoys attended as observers, although they did not directly participate in the discussions. Also present was a South African special envoy and, beginning in December, Nyerere’s top aide, Felix Moshia.

It was not until March that the talks produced any written agreement, but this agreement concerned only the framework of the ongoing discussions and their agenda. The parties would first consider the “reestablishment of constitutional and institutional order,” “questions of defense forces and public security,” and a “suspension of hostilities.” When they reached agreement on the “fundamental principles” for resolving all three issues, along with their “modalities of application” and “guarantees,” a suspension of hostilities would go into effect. Then the parties would discuss “the question of the functioning of justice” (including an international tribunal to judge genocide and other political crimes since independence and the proscription and repression of the ideology of genocide); “the identification and modes of engagement of other parties”; and the cease-fire.⁴⁵

By early May, the parties were at an impasse on the first agenda item: constitutional principles. The CNDD demanded a return to the 1992 constitution, which had produced a FRODEBU-dominated government, while the current regime insisted upon a new constitution. At the same time, the Rome process, which was increasingly an open secret, became public through press leaks and a subsequent Burundi government news conference. Amidst growing doubts about their future, the talks were recessed, and they have not yet been revived. The focus shifted back to Nyerere’s renewed efforts to convene all-party political negotiations.

Evaluation

Certainly the Sant'Egidio initiative was useful in getting the representatives of the major armed parties to talk to each other. Despite its lack of substantive results, one CNDD delegate spoke of "significant progress" because, "At least we were able to agree on something" (that is, the agenda). Still, the fruits of this year-long effort were disappointing, and there is reason to question the basic premises behind it.

In the first place, the mediators assumed that the CNDD would be willing to join the Burundi government in a formal, internationally sanctioned suspension of hostilities preceding all-party negotiations in exchange for agreement on the general principles of a political settlement. While the mediators did not insist on an official cease-fire, they clearly envisioned a very lengthy truce that would continue during prolonged negotiations. Once signed, such a truce would be costly, in terms of international diplomatic support, to break. However, from Cambodia and El Salvador to Mozambique and South Africa, insurgent movements have generally required more specific political commitments and actions before voluntarily agreeing to anything more than unilateral or short-term interruptions in fighting. In genocidal Burundi, the CNDD was, if anything, even less inclined to put down its main instruments of self-defense and political pressure on the basis of vague promises by what it called "the monoethnic army." CNDD officials consistently maintained that, while they would respond to a Burundi army decision to stop killing civilians with an order to their units to fire only in self-defense, there could be no mutually agreed-upon military stand-down without the full restoration of the 1992 constitution (which might subsequently be amended), parliament, and political party rights.⁴⁶ Indeed, it was the CNDD's insistence on the constitution that contributed to the breakdown of negotiations. Next to these convictions, Western assurances that the CNDD would gain "status" over other nongovernmental political groups by helping establish the "framework" for all-party negotiations counted for little. Even if the CNDD had agreed to the kind of lightly monitored suspension of hostilities envisioned, it is questionable whether it would have held, given the unclear military lines and likely challenges from rival Hutu guerilla groups and Tutsi extremist forces.

The Rome participants were not totally unaware of this problem. Indeed, some of the language in the agenda seemed to look beyond general principles toward somewhat more specific understandings on "modalities of application" and "guarantees." But if the talks had veered off in that direction, they would have trespassed on the territory of the envisioned all-party negotiations. This would have taken them down the dangerous path of trying to formulate a political pact without the participation of key groups that had the power to disrupt any settlement. As we have seen, that course led to destruction in Burundi in 1993 and Rwanda in 1994.

This brings up two other questionable premises of the Rome talks. First, it was assumed that the privacy of the discussions could be preserved over a relatively long period even though their existence was an open secret and source of suspicion among the main groups that were excluded: PALIPEHUTU rebels, FRODEBU parliamentarians and party leaders, UPRONA officials, several small Tutsi-led parties, and military and civilian sympathizers of Bagaza. Second, it was assumed that the CNDD would continue to tolerate a situation

in which "progress" in the secret talks was frequently invoked by Sant'Egidio, Western, and African officials as a justification for public regional decisions to relax sanctions against the Burundi government.

Both of these assumptions exploded in April-May 1997, when the regional states eased the sanctions on humanitarian grounds. The CNDD angrily protested Buyoya's reference to the Rome talks in his first permitted appearance at the summit. Then news about the talks was leaked to the press, reportedly by the CNDD and leaders of a small Tutsi party. Finally, Buyoya held a press conference to defend the talks against internal Tutsi opposition. With the genie now out of the bottle, it was difficult to justify renewed discussions that did not include a broad variety of groups.

In retrospect, the Sant'Egidio effort might have been better conceived as a short-term and limited effort to break down the barriers between the government and the CNDD. That would have kept the focus of international peacemaking in Burundi where it belonged: on the patient and persistent quest for all-inclusive political negotiations. Even if separate government-CNDD (and PALIPETHUTU and FROLINA) talks were required to establish a suspension of hostilities and an internationally monitored cease-fire, there was no reason why these could not have been subsumed in broader all-party negotiations. With more realistic objectives for Burundi, Sant'Egidio and its largely Western supporters could have done more to strengthen the African-led mediation process. Today, as that process still struggles to establish its credibility, there may be an opportunity for the Community of Sant'Egidio to bring its energy and experience to bear in a new and more collaborative fashion.

Other NGO Initiatives

Motivated by what close observers called "a mixture of guilt and outrage over events in Rwanda," other American and European NGOs established collaborative mechanisms aimed at preventing further bloodshed in Burundi. The most notable was probably the Washington, D.C.-based Burundi Policy Forum (BPF), which was established in January 1995 by Refugees International, Search for Common Ground, the Center for Preventive Action of the Council on Foreign Relations, and the African-American Institute. The BPF's monthly meetings have been regularly attended by representatives of InterAction (the umbrella advocacy organization for most U.S.-based, nonprofit humanitarian, refugee, and development agencies), many of its members, human rights groups, and representatives from the U.S. and foreign governments.⁴⁷

Beyond its important role as a "clearinghouse for ideas and information,"⁴⁸ the BPF has been a theater for various efforts to influence American policy toward Burundi. In July 1995, more than 30 BPF organizations signed a statement calling for the United States to appoint a special envoy to Burundi, deploy UN military observers to refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania, and address the issue of accountability for past crimes.⁴⁹ In January 1996, 18 InterAction agencies wrote President Clinton expressing support for contingency planning for humanitarian intervention.⁵⁰

Furthermore, a small BPF Security Working Group, led by representatives of Refugees International and Search for Common Ground, has "served as an informal body for . . . off-the-record exchange of ideas among government, UN and NGO representatives where

the dialogue is candid and solution-oriented." Among the working group's accomplishments, BPF co-founder Lionel Rosenblatt of Refugees International cited its contributions to speeding up the assignment of a new ambassador to Burundi, increasing the presence of a U.S. military attaché in Burundi, provoking a high-level review of possible action against "hate radio stations," and promoting studies of potential U.S. assistance to improve the police and justice systems. In addition, BPF discussions and pressures helped persuade certain U.S. officials to contribute to the establishment of UN commissions to investigate arms flows to Rwanda and the assassination of President Ndadaye and the ensuing massacres.⁵¹

Evaluation

In the end, the BPF has made only a marginal contribution to *peacemaking* in Burundi. In February 1997, one of its co-founders bluntly informed the group that it had "not succeeded" in "its objective of preventing genocide." Much of the BPF's advocacy was concerned with relatively minor details of policy, not with its broad direction. Even public expressions by InterAction members (including BPF co-founder Refugees International) in favor of contingent humanitarian intervention did not develop into a sustained political effort.

As a large and diverse group, the BPF would have confronted a formidable challenge in attempting to develop a consensus for alternative U.S. and international policies toward Burundi. Moreover, to significantly advance such initiatives, members would have had to contemplate unprecedented steps to organize their donors and supporters into vocal political constituencies. As it was, the policy perspectives most *consistently* heard at the forum were those of its various U.S. government participants.

According to American officials, the BPF did have a diffuse influence on policy, because visible outside concern helped justify the time they spent on the Burundi issue and whatever they did about it. More specifically, the NSC staff and its allies used the existence of outside support for contingent humanitarian intervention as added ammunition for their inter- and intra-agency wars. Thus, the major American NGO policy initiative for preventive action in Burundi appears to have had a marginal impact on official U.S. policy agendas and to have largely avoided developing one of its own.

Six

Five Lessons from International Diplomatic Peacemaking in Burundi

Some particularly important lessons can be drawn from recent international policies toward the conflict in Burundi. Discussion of these lessons may be helpful to peacemakers dealing with other internal conflicts, particularly genocidal ones.

1. *Burundi cannot make peace by itself. Strong international pressure is essential to stop the violence and foster a political settlement. At the same time, collateral international efforts are necessary to engage all groups, including the extremists, in the negotiation of a feasible political compromise.*

Although Burundi lacks a long history of violent interethnic conflict, a recurrent cycle of genocidal violence has been established since 1965. Efforts to interrupt this cycle have been mainly driven by outside pressure. The post-1988 movement for liberalization and democratization was a response by Burundian political leaders to Western threats to withdraw assistance and to Africa's rising democratic wave. The 1994 negotiations to patch up the disintegrating political order after Ndadaye's assassination were largely the result of UN-led preventive diplomacy. The Burundi government's 1996 request for regional security assistance was strongly influenced by threatened UN humanitarian intervention and Ugandan President Museveni's persistent advocacy of regional military assistance to reform the army. And the major impetus behind the government's halting cooperation with efforts to restore the National Assembly and political parties and foster all-party political negotiations was its desire to lift regional economic sanctions.

If external pressures have not succeeded in ending genocidal violence, this is not because they have proved irrelevant or counterproductive. Much evidence suggests that they may not have been strong enough. The international community failed to augment Ould-Abdallah's preventive diplomacy with a credible threat of coercion, even as violence drove the course of events in the capital. And the West did not give full backing to the UN secretary-general's attempt to wield the threat of humanitarian military intervention or to the regional African states' use of economic sanctions to promote negotiations.

The international community has also failed to adequately address the imperative to engage all Burundian parties, including powerful extremists, in the negotiation of a political compromise that protects the essential interests of both Hutu and Tutsi. Top-down processes of democratization and preventive diplomacy evaded realistic internal discussion of how the burning issues of the country could be resolved. Boutros-Ghali failed to synchronize his proposal for military contingency planning with African efforts to engage Tutsi factions in political negotiations. Regional African leaders took insufficient account of the impact of Tanzanian-Burundian tensions on their attempts to lure the Tutsi leadership into all-party negotiations. The Community of Sant'Egidio, with support from the West, sponsored a long series of narrow-based secret talks that had the positive result of

bringing government and CNDD representatives together but diverted momentum from the regional drive toward broader, more inclusive political negotiations.

2. The main international impetus for genocide prevention and conflict resolution in Burundi has come from a relatively cohesive and determined group of regional African states. This group has demonstrated the clearest grasp of the major elements of peacemaking in Burundi: outside pressure and the engagement of all parties in compromise political negotiations. And it has evinced the political will to act. Yet its efforts have been tarnished by weaknesses in implementing sanctions and a reluctance to make necessary adjustments to ensure its credibility as a politically committed but fair mediator.

The regional governments have devoted considerable time to the Burundi crisis, created important structures for continuing action, and endured significant financial sacrifices as a result of the economic sanctions. Using their political, economic, and military influence, they have succeeded over time in moving the Burundians in the direction of all-party negotiations. In doing so, they have also highlighted two of the three elements of a possible political settlement: democratic power sharing and outside peacekeeping forces. They have not yet broached the issue of accountability for past crimes.

However, the regional effort has been hampered by deficiencies in the economic sanctions regime, particularly leakages from regional countries and inconsistencies of implementation. These problems have weakened support among certain participating countries, international humanitarian agencies, and Western states. Even more serious has been the region's slowness in addressing the growing impact of tensions between the regional leader, Tanzania, and Burundi upon the Tanzanian facilitator's difficult task of convening all-party negotiations.

3. Attempts by Western governments and the Community of Sant'Egidio to stimulate all-party negotiations by dangling "carrots" before relatively moderate government or insurgent leaders appear to be based on an exaggerated view of moderates' influence in Burundian politics. Efforts to cajole these leaders into cooperating by easing sanctions or elevating their status have not succeeded because their constituencies are relatively extremist.

The moderates' weakness was revealed by the collapse of democracy and emergency power sharing and the resulting militarization of conflict. Subsequent Western encouragement for President Buyoya and the April 1997 easing of sanctions failed to produce serious proposals for political compromise in Rome or participation in anticipated all-party negotiations in Arusha. Nor did Buyoya alter the governing elite's orientation toward using military pressure to achieve a resolution on its own terms. Similarly, hopes that relatively moderate CNDD leaders would be willing to join in a suspension of hostilities in return for the government's agreeing to "principles" of a political settlement appear to have underestimated the CNDD's distrust of the Tutsi-led regime. Approaches that focus on the "moderates" alone also neglect the problem of extremist "out-bidders" who could potentially threaten the constituencies of both the government and the CNDD.

4. Given the strengths and weaknesses of recent international approaches to peacemaking in Burundi, it would be useful to reconsider the current relationship between regional efforts and those of other important actors, including France, the European Union, the United States, the United Nations, and the Community of Sant'Egidio. A more effective international approach to Burundi would combine greater outside support for regional policy choices and

greater regional consultation with external partners to gain the benefit of their broad experience and detachment. Such an approach would also be based on the recognition that it is the region's political will and resources that will largely determine the outcome for peace in Burundi.

If interested Western countries had done more to back regional approaches on sanctions and political mediation—including the provision of technical assistance and other resources—there would have been strong pressure over time for a political settlement. If the regional states had consulted more with outsiders, they might have better addressed problems in the implementation of their key policies.

5. A more effective Western contribution to peacemaking in Burundi will require some revision of current policy perspectives. This is not likely to occur without firm political leadership.

Key Western states responded to the Burundi crisis with a repertory drawn from past policies, bureaucratic agendas, and generic diplomatic responses. To a large extent, the French stance was a mid-point between France's historic support for the Tutsi-led regime and its embarrassment at the consequences of its similar relationship with the former Hutu elite in Rwanda. American policy was mainly the outcome of struggles between politically appointed advisers anxious to avoid "another Rwanda," State Department officials concerned about offending France and missing opportunities for negotiation with the coup regime, and Pentagon representatives worried about committing American resources to "another Somalia." Western policymakers also tended to apply their normal diplomatic approach of backing the moderates in an abnormal, genocidal situation where the moderates lacked decisive influence.

Determined political leadership could overcome these obstacles to more effective international policies toward Burundi—and the Great Lakes region in general. Presidents and prime ministers might begin with strong public statements underlining the moral importance of opposing the continuing genocidal massacres of hundreds of thousands of human beings in Central Africa. They could also point out the West's material interest in saving the billions of dollars it has been pouring out in heartfelt humanitarian aid to victims of unaddressed political conflict in the region. And they could underline the danger that continued erosion of the international standard against genocide in Burundi, Rwanda, and Congo poses for future communal conflicts in strategic areas such as Eastern Europe, South Asia, and North Africa. Finally, concerned NGOs could also play an important role by promoting new policy approaches and mobilizing new political constituencies for them.

Notes

1. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, February 15, 1996, S/1996/116, par. 24.
2. U.S. Agency for International Development, Bureau for Humanitarian Response, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, "Great Lakes Complex Emergency," Situation Report #41, August 15, 1997, p.1. Estimates of regroupments are provided in Jean Hélène, "Un an après le coup d'état: Les exécutions se poursuivent au Burundi," *Le Monde*, August 12, 1997.
3. On Bosnia, see Warren Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (New York: Times Books, 1996), especially pp. xi–xvi, 156, 209, 225–226, and 241–242; Statement of General Galvin in House Committee on Armed Services, *The Policy Implications of U.S. Involvement in Bosnia: Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services*, 103d Cong, 1st Sess, May 25 and 26, 1993, pp. 4–5; and Don Oberdorfer, "A Bloody Failure in the Balkans," *Washington Post*, February 8, 1993, pp. A1, A14. For Rwanda, see Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, Study 2: Early Warning and Conflict Management* (Copenhagen: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996). The Liberian experience is discussed by Herbert Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peackeping," *International Security* 21 (Winter 1996–97), pp. 145–176; see also Margaret Aderinsola Vogt, "The Involvement of ECOWAS in Liberia's Peacekeeping," and Robert Mortimer, "ECOMOG, Liberia, and Regional Security in West Africa," in Edmond Keller and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Africa and the New International Order* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 1996), pp. 149–183.
4. United Nations, *Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, December 9, 1948.
5. Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 32–36.
6. René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xii.
7. This citation is from a recent public presentation by the foreign minister of Burundi, Luc Rukingama, who also stated, "The genocide itself has been prepared by Hutu FRODEBU leaders a long time before October 1993." (Transcription, Great Lakes Policy Forum Special Session, July 16, 1997, Washington, D.C.) The minister is a Hutu member of a Tutsi-dominated government.
8. The foremost scholarly sources on Burundian political development include Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*; and *Rwanda and Burundi* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970); Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *Burundi: L'histoire retrouvée: 25 ans de métier d'historien en Afrique* (Paris: Karthala, 1993); Jean-Pierre Chrétien, André Guichaoua, and Gabriel Le Jeune, *La crise d'août 1988 au Burundi*, Cahiers du CRA, no. 6 (Paris: Karthala, 1989); Filip Reyntjens, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise: Rwanda, Burundi: 1988–1994* (Paris: Karthala, 1994); *Burundi: Breaking the Cycle of Violence* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1995); and "Burundi: 1972–1988, Continuité et Changement," *Cahiers du CEDAF*, Novembre 1989, no. 5 (Brussels: CEDAF-ASDOC, 1989); André Guichaoua, *Les crises politiques au Rwanda et au Burundi (1993–94)* (Lille: Université des Sciences et

Technologies, 1995); and Lisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

9. Belgian Colonial Governor Pierre Ryckmans in 1931, quoted in Chrétien, *L'histoire retrouvée*, p. 320 (my translation).

10. Boniface F. Kiraranganya, *La vérité sur le Burundi: L'unité et la démocratie au Burundi* (Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada: Editions Naaman, 1977), p. 10.

11. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, *La diplomatie pyromane: (Burundi, Rwanda, Somalie, Bosnie..)* *Entretiens avec Stephen Smith* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1996), p. 191 (my translation).

12. Reyntjens, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, pp. 12–13; Alison Des Forges, “Burundi: Foiled Coup or Creeping Coup?” *Current History* 93 (May 1994), pp. 205–208.

13. See Neil Kritz, “The Rule of Law in the Postconflict Phase: Building a Stable Peace,” in Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson with Pamela All, *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1996), pp. 587–600.

14. René Lemarchand, “Managing Transition Anarchies: Rwanda, Burundi, and South Africa in Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol. 32, no. 4 (December 1994), pp. 581–604.

15. Reyntjens, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, p. 18–19.

16. Ould-Abdallah, *La diplomatie pyromane*, p. 142.

17. Reyntjens, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, pp. 18–19.

18. Conversations with UN human rights monitors are reported in Stephen R. Weissman, “Living with Genocide,” *Tikkun* 12 (July–August 1997), p. 53. On violence against civilians in recent years, see also Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Burundi: The Obsession with Genocide,” *Current History* 95 (May 1996), pp. 206–210. On arms flows, see Arms Project of Human Rights Watch, “An Overview of: *Stoking the Fires: Military Assistance and Arms Trafficking in Burundi*,” (1998). Sudan’s role as a transit route for CNDD supplies was emphasized by U.S. officials.

19. Burundi’s direct role in these events is unclear, but according to diplomatic and other on-the-ground observers, it consisted of permission for Rwandan and Zairian rebel forces to cross Burundian territory and probably provision of a limited number of military or paramilitary personnel. On Rwanda’s indirect support for Burundi’s objectives in eastern Zaire, see Gérard Prunier, “The Great Lakes Crisis,” *Current History* 96 (May 1997), pp. 196–197.

20. For a balanced analysis of the state of insurgency, see Jean Hélène, “Un an après le coup.”

21. Cf. the argument for partition in Chaim Kaufmann, “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars,” *International Security* 20 (Spring 1994), esp. pp. 168–169.

22. Reyntjens, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, p. 22, discusses some limits of consociationalism in Burundi. For a broader discussion of consociational democracy, see Timothy D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation and Ethnic Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1996).

23. Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, Study 1: Historical Perspectives: Some Explanatory Factors*, especially pp. 41–58; Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), chs. 4–7; and Lemarchand, “Managing Transition Anarchies.”

24. UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 29 December 1995 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/1995/1068, p. 1.

25. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, February 15, 1996, S/1996/116, p. 1; and *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, August 15, 1996, S/1996/660, p. 12.

26. See United Nations, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations*, 3 January 1995, A/50/60-S/1995/1, pp. 6–8.

27. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, February 15, 1996.

28. For an appreciation and critique of France's Rwanda policy, see Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, especially pp. 104–107. For a perspective on French policy toward Africa generally, see John Ravenhill, "Dependency by Default," in John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics: Post-Cold War Challenges* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 105–112.

29. UN Security Council, *Resolution 1049* (1996), March 5, 1996, S/Res/1949 (1996).

30. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, August 15, 1996, pp. 10–11; Barbara Crossette, "U.N. Asks Intervention Force as Burundi nears a Collapse," *New York Times*, July 25, 1996, pp. A1, A3. UN officials detailed particular country responses, including the unpublicized offer of troops from Egypt.

31. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, October 29, 1996, S/1996/887, p. 9. UN officials detailed particular country responses.

32. See Thomas W. Lippmann, "U.S. to Back Burundi Peace," *Washington Post*, March 3, 1996, p. A28; and *Africa Research Bulletin*, January 1–31, 1996, pp. 12125–12126.

33. On Dallaire's view, see Government of Canada, *Toward a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations*, September 1995, p. 5. Regarding Liberia, see references in note 3 above. O'Hanlon's analysis for the International Crisis Group Board was not published.

34. "Cairo Declaration on the Great Lakes Region," November 29, 1995; "Tunis Declaration on the Great Lakes Region," March 18, 1996, p. 7.

35. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Burundi*, August 15, 1996, p. 2; *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1–31, 1996, p. 12270; *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-Africa*, 96–1151, Central Africa, June 13, 1996, pp. 1–4.

36. "Press Communiqué of the Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi," June 27, 1996.

37. "Joint Communiqué of the Second Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi," July 31, 1996.

38. "Joint Communiqué of the Third Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi," October 12, 1996.

39. "Joint Communiqué of the Fourth Arusha Summit on the Burundi Conflict," April 16, 1997.

40. Statement of the Government of Burundi, "The reasons that justify a postponement," August 28, 1997.

41. American Embassy, Dar es Salaam, to Secretary of State, "Dar Summit Lays Down Conditions for Renewed Peace Talks," September 4, 1997.

42. UN Security Council, *Resolution 1072 (1996)*, August 30, 1996, S/Res/1072 (1996).
43. This “sensitive” but unclassified Western government analysis was provided to me on a background, not for attribution basis.
44. This analysis is generally consistent with information from other newspaper and periodical sources through the summer of 1997.
45. “Accord entre le Gouvernement en place au Burundi et le Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD),” and “Procès-Verbal,” Rome, Italy, March 10, 1997.
46. See, for example, CNDD Communiqué no. 69, “Mise au point concernant les négociations,” September 27, 1996; and “Leonard Nyangoma: L’homme avec qui il faut négocier,” *Africa Now* (October 1996), pp. 24–27.
47. Richard A. Sollom and Darren Kew, “Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Prevention in Burundi,” in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Vigilance and Vengeance: NGOs Preventing Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1996), pp. 252–253. See pp. 253–254 for a brief discussion of London-based International Alert’s smaller-scale but more policy-oriented network among European NGOs.
48. Lionel Rosenblatt, “The Burundi Policy Forum,” in Winston Foundation for World Peace, *Tenth Annual Report 1996*, p. 11.
49. Sollom and Kew, “Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Prevention in Burundi,” p. 253.
50. Letter from Andrew W. Natsios, co-chair, Interaction Disaster Response Committee, to President William J. Clinton, January 19, 1996.
51. Rosenblatt, “The Burundi Policy Forum,” pp. 11–12. Sollom and Kew, “Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Prevention in Burundi,” p. 259; interview with a U.S. official, January 21, 1998.

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