

Item Subject: hill testimony

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TESTIMONY OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
PRUDENCE BUSHNELL
BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
ON
THE CRISIS IN RWANDA

MAY 4, 1994

Mr. Chairman, Members of the House Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa:

On April 6, the private plane of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana crashed outside Kigali under suspicious circumstances, killing President Habyarimana and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi and sparking massive violence on two levels. First, elements of the Hutu-dominated Rwandan military, hardline party militias, and Hutu extremist gangs began killing Hutu opposition politicians (including Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana) and Tutsi opposition leaders and civilians. The killings began in Kigali, but eventually spread throughout the country. Second, fighting quickly broke out between Rwandan government forces and the Tutsi-dominated rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), effectively resuming the civil war that began in October 1990 and was to have ended on August 4, 1993, with the signing of the Arusha Peace Accord.

Both the fighting and the violence continue. The RPF has pushed government forces to the south and west and controls much of the capital of Kigali. The violence has left at least 100,000 dead and displaced hundreds of thousands of Rwandans. Over 300,000 Rwandans have fled to neighboring countries, most to Tanzania. The Rwandan government and the RPF agreed to meet in Arusha, Tanzania on May 3. (update this last sentence)

The U.S. Response to the Crisis

Since the crisis began, the U.S. has pursued an aggressive strategy with five main goals:

- Stop the killings.
- Achieve a durable cease-fire.
- Return the parties to the negotiating table.
- Contain the conflict.
- Address humanitarian relief needs.

We have taken several actions designed to achieve these goals.

First, we have put diplomatic pressure on the parties themselves. I and other U.S. officials have spoken directly to

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Rwandan government officials, the Rwandan military, and the RPF, in Washington, via diplomatic channels in other locations, and by telephone to Rwanda. Our message has been simple and direct: we want an immediate end to the killings, a cease-fire

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in place, the resumption of peace talks, and complete cooperation with relief efforts. We have reinforced these private contacts with high-level public appeals and statements by the President and the State Department.

Second, we have worked to mobilize the international community. We encouraged and support the efforts of the Tanzanian Government, as Facilitator of the Arusha process, to reconvene peace talks. As in the past, the U.S. will be represented at any substantive talks. We have encouraged the Organization of African Unity, other regional states, and our European allies to join us in urging the Rwandans to agree to a cease-fire and resume talks. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs John Shattuck and our Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, will be traveling to the region to continue these efforts. Our diplomatic contacts confirm that all major players agree with and support our goals and strategy.

Third, we have been pursuing an active policy in the UN Security Council. We pushed for approval of a strong Security Council presidential statement, issued April 29, which demands that the interim government of Rwanda and the RPF take effective measures to prevent attacks on civilians. The statement condemns the breaches of international humanitarian law that have occurred and calls on party-states to cease shipments of arms to Rwanda.

Fourth, the State Department is chairing regular interagency meetings to coordinate an effective response to the humanitarian crisis in the sub-region. We have undertaken contingency planning to provide humanitarian relief and have identified several million dollars from various sources that we intend to tap for the crisis. The U.S. government has already contributed approximately \$28 million in food, relief items, and earmarked funds to organizations assisting Burundi refugees and persons displaced following last October's coup attempt and subsequent widespread violence. We will build on these efforts in responding to the increased needs resulting from the fighting in Rwanda.

Fifth, we are continuing to monitor the situation in Burundi very closely. We have sent high-level visitors to the country to show our support for Burundi's fragile nascent democracy and are continuing humanitarian relief efforts. We have also provided support to the 47-member monitoring force that the OAU is in the process of deploying in Burundi.

The efforts outlined above are a continuation of the longstanding U.S. support for the Rwandan peace process. We were active observers throughout the year-long Arusha peace talks and provided \$1 million in assistance to support the talks and help the OAU field cease-fire monitors. The U.S.

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supported deployment of UN peacekeepers once a peace accord was reached, paying our 30 percent assessed share of the 2500-person UN operation. It must be recognized, however, that the influence of the international community in an internal politico-ethnic conflict of this type is limited. In the end, only the Rwandans can bring peace to their country, and no outside effort can succeed without a commitment to peace by the combatants themselves.

Future Policy Options

At the same time that we are pursuing the policies outlined above, we are examining further measures to ratchet up the pressure. First among these is a formal UN arms embargo against Rwanda, which we intend to pursue this week. We would also like to increase the involvement of the UN Human Rights Commissioner, who could launch an investigation into human rights abuses and perhaps become involved in mediation efforts. In addition, we are exploring the possibility, if necessary, of having the UN or OAU establish protected areas for refugees and displaced persons around border areas.

Assessment of the UN Mission

From the start, the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was a peacekeeping, not a peace-making, operation. It was deployed only after a cease-fire was in place and both sides had signed a peace accord. The force had the limited mandate of monitoring and facilitating implementation of the accord, as the parties had requested.

Circumstances have changed drastically since the April 6 plane crash. Heavy fighting and widespread violence have resumed, UNAMIR troops were attacked and at least 12 UN peacekeepers were killed, and there was serious doubt in the early stages whether the lightly armed UNAMIR troops had the capability to defend themselves in such circumstances. As a result, the U.S. supported withdrawal of the bulk of the force for reasons of safety, provided satisfactory arrangements were made to ensure the safety of Rwandans under direct UNAMIR protection.

It appears now that at least some portion of the force has been able to remain safely in Rwanda. Under such circumstances we strongly supported the Security Council decision to maintain a small force to help broker a new cease-fire, facilitate humanitarian relief efforts, and help ensure the safety of

those Rwandans already under UNAMIR's direct protection.

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