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21 January 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Special Group (CI)

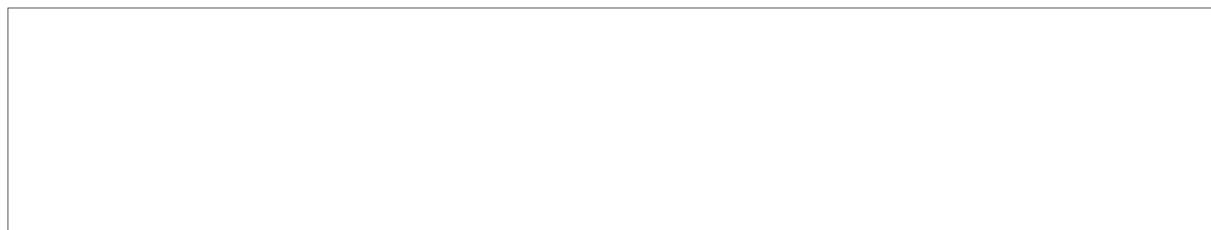
1. This memorandum informs you of CIA views on subjects suitable for discussion at the next Special Group (CI) meeting, and recommends action by the DCI in paragraph 3.

2. Attached as Tab A is our regularly scheduled review of current developments in areas of counterinsurgency concern.

3. I recommend that you call the attention of the Special Group (CI) to the confused and possibly threatening situation in Burundi which has followed the assassination of the prime minister. Attached as Tab B is a memorandum on the situation for your background information.

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RAY S. CLINE
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Attachments



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Tab B
OCI No. 03229/65, dated 21 January 1965
Intelligence Memorandum, The Situation in Burundi

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OCI No. 03229/65

21 January 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in BurundiSummary

1. The assassination on 15 January of Prime Minister Ngendandumwe has heightened political and tribal tensions in the Kingdom of Burundi. Only one week earlier the King had named him to office in an effort to reverse the country's growing foreign policy alignment with Communist China. The latest events highlight the long struggle for power between the minority Tutsi elite and the majority Hutus.

2. The more dynamic Tutsis, although comprising only 15 percent of Burundi's 2.5 million people, have been able to dominate the government since independence in July 1962. At the same time the Hutus, encouraged by the example of the Hutu-dominated republic in neighboring Rwanda, have become a political force to be reckoned with. Although they have so far proved no match for the better educated, more dynamic, and politically adept Tutsis, the Hutus have been represented in all Burundi governments, as the King, although himself a Tutsi, has sought to maintain a balance between the two groups with himself as umpire. The assassinated Ngendandumwe, a Hutu, had served a previous term as prime minister.

3. The Tutsis, in their fight to maintain their centuries-old dominance, have sought support from the radical African states and the Communist bloc. This seeming paradox is explained largely by the Tutsis' suspicions of the West, born of Belgian encouragement of the Hutu takeover in Rwanda just prior to independence.

4. The struggle is reflected in the factional division in the National Assembly. This 64-member legislature is split almost evenly between two groups: the predominantly Tutsi "Casablanca" faction, and the

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predominantly Hutu "Monrovia" faction. Each contains a handful of members of the rival tribe, and the majority of each is basically moderate and generally willing to cooperate with the other. However, extremists in each group seek the total elimination of the other.

Shift to the Left

5. Burundi's shift to the left began under the Ngendandumwe government appointed in June 1963. The Tutsi members of the cabinet were able to press the Prime Minister and the King into recognizing Peiping the following December. They also secured approval to support the Congolese rebels and to encourage the Rwandan refugees to regain their homeland. The Tutsis maneuvered to give the Congolese rebels freedom of political activity in Burundi, and many of them accepted money from the Chinese Communists.

6. This policy trend accelerated last April when the Tutsis managed to bring down Ngendandumwe in favor of one of their own, Nyamoya. The new prime minister openly followed policies similar to those of the radical African states and the Communists. He gave active support to the Congolese rebels and encouraged the Chinese to give support to the Rwanda exiles including the provision of some military training. A wide circle of Burundi leaders accepted cash handouts from the Chinese and frequently received Chinese embassy personnel at their homes. The Chinese subsidized the country's principal trade union (the Federation of Burundi Workers) and youth movement (Rwagasore Youth Group). Although no popular Chinese aid program has been started, in November 1964 Burundi signed a trade and payments agreement with Peiping. Several individuals and delegations of both a political and economic nature have traveled to Peiping since diplomatic relations were established.

7. At the same time Burundi's relations with the West suffered. Prodded by the radical Africans and Communists, the normally suspicious Tutsis early last year attacked the West and particularly the US for "interference" in Burundi affairs. The US refusal to hand over a Chinese Communist defector last May increased Tutsi hostility and exacerbated relations. At one point last August US and Belgian nationals were forbidden to

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take refuge in Burundi from the fighting in the eastern Congo. Tight travel restrictions are applied to US Embassy personnel, but none to Soviet or Chinese diplomats.

Moves to Reverse Trend

8. When the Congolese rebel fortunes declined toward the end of the year, Hutu leaders, backed by the Catholic Church, began to rally against Communist influence and against what they considered the needless alienation of the Congo and Rwanda. The generally pro-Western King, Mwami Mwambutsa IV, felt that the balance had been tipped too far in favor of the extremist Tutsis, and he began to support the Hutus. On 7 January he dismissed the Nyamoya government for "grave errors and failures as much in its domestic as in its foreign policy."

9. The new appointee, Ngendandumwe, was out to reverse the trend. He told the US Embassy privately he was absolutely opposed to direct involvement of Burundi in Congo affairs, and that permitting the transit of arms and even soldiers was "going to far." He said the Congo problem must be settled by the OAU or the UN, and not by actions of individual states. Ngendandumwe reportedly was disgusted with the blatant propaganda activities of the Chinese Communists in Burundi, alarmed by their use of Burundi as a base for meddling in the Congo, and critical of Nyamoya for not following a policy of "true nonalignment."

Aftermath of Assassination

10. Although the Chinese had a clear interest in preventing such a change in Burundi's policy, the US Embassy in Bujumbura does not believe that Chinese diplomats were directly involved in the assassination. A Tutsi refugee from Rwanda employed by the US Embassy has confessed to the deed and has said he had accomplices but has not yet identified them. The US Embassy had previously said that if the assassin turned out to be a Rwandan, bloody Hutu reprisals against the 150,000 Tutsi refugees in Burundi might be provoked. No public announcement has yet been made regarding the assassin.

11. The government nevertheless immediately imposed strict security measures in anticipation of possible

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trouble. The Chinese-subsidized labor and youth groups have been banned, and the King has asked Belgium to make troops available to be brought into Burundi in the event of a threat against the throne or the new government. The Tutsi commander of the gendarmerie was replaced by a Hutu. Burundi's own security forces might not be able to cope with concerted and widespread Hutu disturbances. The army and gendarmerie have about 950 officers and men each, including a small contingent of Belgian officers.

12. The King apparently plans to carry on with the same government that Ngendandumwe had announced a few hours before he was shot. To lead it he has named another Hutu, Joseph Bamina, the president of the leading UPRONA party. According to the embassy, this is a much better cabinet than it had hoped for. Several of the Tutsi extremists in the Nyamoya government were not held over. The embassy believe this should result in an improvement in relations with Rwanda, and establishment of a "correct" posture toward the Congo Government. The new government, nevertheless, balances about evenly the number of ministries as between Hutus and Tutsis, and still includes at least four Tutsis clearly identifiable as followers of the extremist pro-Congolese rebel, pro - Chinese Communist, anti-Rwanda line. These are the vice premier and the ministers of foreign affairs, social affairs, and telecommunications. The latter was arrested for questioning in the assassination.

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