

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE BELOW

FROM: Donald K. Steinberg
(STEINBERG)

SUBJECT: Update on Rwanda/Burundi (1:30 pm)

Update on Rwanda :

The situation in Rwanda continues to deteriorate. There is open fighting in the streets of Kigali; cannons and gunfire can be heard regularly. There is also communal violence in the countryside. The former government forces (RPF) have taken up arms and is fighting with government troops. Belgian troops tried to secure the airport, and were unsuccessful. Apparently, two Belgians have been killed, 10 have been taken hostage, five platoons are trapped near the airport. Another two Ghanaian peacekeepers have apparently been killed by government forces.

The Belgians and French are considering their next actions. The Belgians at least are contemplating bringing in substantial numbers of troops from a mobile force elsewhere in central Africa to pacify the situation. The United Nations will hold a special session this afternoon on the situation and next steps.

The good news -- so far -- is that all Americans (205, including about 60 outside of Kigali) have been in communication and are safe at their homes.

State has set up a task force and has made a basic determination to evacuate our personnel. They are now meeting with DOD to determine how we would do it. One possibility is to contact the military in Rwanda to arrange for safe passage for expatriates to leave. This may be very difficult. Indeed, given the random violence now occurring and the fact that foreigners have not been targeted so far, it may be best for the Americans to continue to hunker down. I'll keep you posted.

So far, Burundi remains calm, but we are already urging voluntary departure of Americans (there are 177), and considering the question of going beyond that soon.

I spoke at length with Kristie Kenney on this, who will brief the President. I discussed with her the situation with Monique.

Distribution:

