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Washington, D.C. 20520

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May 15, 1973 ~~www~~

To: The Honorable
David D. Newsom
Bureau of African Affairs

AT/C - WS

From: Thomas Patrick Melady *TPM*
Ambassador

Subject: Comments on Recent Disturbances in Burundi

1. I would like to pass on to you and your colleagues in AFC my own feelings on the week end indications that there may be new possibilities of strife in Burundi. It may be the incidents reported over the past week end will not be the prelude to another major confrontation. Let's hope so!

2. I feel that the factors in the ethnic Hutu-Tutsi ethnic equation are such to almost guarantee another serious confrontation. In the 1962-71 period there were some signs of reconciliation and a diminishment of historical ethnic alienation but the individuals and institutions advocating moderation were able to do little in the Burundi conflict of April-July 1972. In my personal opinion, the ethnic fears and hatred are so deep that attempts at reconciliation and dialogue must be preceded by more pragmatic arrangements. If not, I fear another blood bath.

3. When I returned in May 1972 I recommended the "Cyprus solution." On the island of Cyprus, Turks and Greeks have been physically segregated under the protective shield of a neutral police force. While there have been occasional clashes since this was initiated, serious confrontations involving the loss of many lives have been prevented. I feel, therefore, that unless something like the Cyprus solution is imposed on Burundi it is guaranteed that sometime in the not too distant future another ethnic confrontation similar to the one in Burundi of 1972 or to the early 1960s in Ruanda will take place.

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4. I know this raises many questions as to who will propose such a solution and what organization will impose it. While we are all very much disappointed in the lack of African response to the 1972 Burundi crisis, I would suggest that, in view of President Nixon's grave concern about the Burundi developments as expressed in his 1973 report to the Congress, consideration be given to suggesting the possibility of the "Cyprus solution" to several select members of the Organization of African Unity. If this is done in time we may be able to prevent another inevitable ethnic clash in Burundi.

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