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Approved For Release 2005/01/11 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001500040032-3

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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# WEEKLY SUMMARY

*Special Report*

*Burundi: The Long, Hot Summer*

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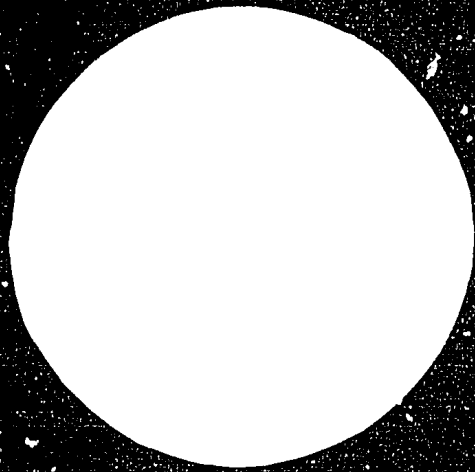
No 653

22 September 1972

No. 0388/72A

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# BURUNDI

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The Long, Hot Summer



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## THINGS FALL APART

*Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

William Butler Yeats

crowded into jerry-built refugee camps in neighboring countries.

Burundi's recovery from this major upheaval—the fourth in a decade—will be slow, painful, and, in all likelihood, temporary. Although the vast majority of Burundi's three million Hutus refused to support the insurrection, the fears of the country's 600,000 Tutsis have not been diminished. Many members of the ruling Tutsi elite continue to call for harsh repression as the only way of staving off a Hutu revolt. The Micombero government is going through the motions of promoting national reconciliation, but in some instances its policies are deliberately obstructive.

## Things Fall Apart

The events in Burundi this summer capped a long history of tribal tensions and political infighting. For over four centuries, the aggressive Tutsis constituted a warrior caste supporting four royal clans that produced Burundi's kings. The Tutsis acted as an instrument of coercion against the country's docile, pastoral Hutu majority. Rival princes of royal blood, competing for the throne, formed alliances with powerful Tutsi chieftains, promoting regional Tutsi factionalism that has survived to the present day. At the same time, however, the royal princes, distrustful of

Throughout the summer, the Republic of Burundi outdid itself in the violence that has been Burundi's trademark since it achieved independence from Belgium in 1962. On 29 April, some 2,000 poorly armed Hutu dissidents quixotically attempted to spark a nationwide revolt against the divided, Tutsi-dominated government of President Michel Micombero. Although the army quickly suppressed the rebels, the insurrection aggravated deep-rooted fears among the minority Tutsis that they would be wiped out by the Hutus. The government whipped up a campaign of reprisals against the Hutu population that lasted all summer. As many as 200,000 Hutus may have perished and perhaps another 100,000 were either left homeless throughout Burundi, or

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Tutsi power, fostered the growth of a countervailing Hutu elite. Four centuries of dynastic conflict eventually brought about the destruction of the royal clans and opened the way for post-independence power struggles between Tutsis and Hutus and between rival factions within these tribes.

A sharpening of Hutu-Tutsi tensions in Burundi was foreshadowed in 1959 by a Hutu revolution in neighboring Rwanda that violently dislodged Rwanda's dominant Tutsi minority. Tens of thousands of Tutsis were killed or forced into exile, and Burundi's Tutsis came face to face with the realization that it could happen to them. The assassination in September 1961 of Burundi's prime minister - designate, Prince Rwagasore, only two weeks after elections were held to select the post-independence government, shattered hopes of future tribal unity and national unity. Although a Tutsi, he was linked to the Hutus by marriage. Upon his death, leaders from the two tribes struggled to establish themselves as his legitimate successor.

Burundi's first four years of independence as a constitutional monarchy thus were marked by a succession of assassinations and attempted assassinations. The attempt on the life of a Hutu prime minister in 1965 provoked Hutu elements in the army and gendarmerie to try a coup. Micombero, a Tutsi and an army captain, quickly put down the attempt, and a bloody repression of the Hutus followed.

When Micombero finally seized power and abolished the monarchy in 1966, he felt a need for national unity. He sought a reconciliation with the Hutu elite. He allowed Hutus back into the country's only political party, the civil service, and the government—although important positions were reserved for Tutsis. In suppressing the monarchy, Micombero created a political void that was quickly filled by a horde of Tutsi opportunists whose pursuit of power and aggrandizement has few rivals in Africa. It led to a bitter rivalry between a strongly anti-Western and anti-Hutu extremist faction concentrated in southern Burundi, and a pro-Western, technocratic, north-

ern faction that also harbors fears of Hutu revolution but prefers conciliation to repression.

The see-saw political struggle between these two groups continued until the fall of 1971. The southern faction, using its control of the justice and foreign affairs ministries and its influence within the army and bureaucracy, successfully engineered the downfall of a number of ranking moderates within the cabinet on charges of plotting against the government. At the same time, the foreign minister, who himself had spent time in prison in 1967 for allegedly plotting against the government, overrode moderate opposition and pushed through a resumption of diplomatic relations with Peking, suspended since the alleged Chinese involvement in the coup plot of 1964.

Micombero, caught as usual between the extremes, sought to replace the shattered moderate faction by setting up an army-dominated Supreme Revolutionary Council. But the army was also caught up in the factional disputes and the council quickly slipped into nothingness. By early 1972, the Micombero government was all but paralyzed; disunity within the Tutsi oligarchy was on public display.

On 29 April 1972, Micombero tried to regain political momentum by dismissing his entire cabinet along with a number of other high-ranking government officials. He only went halfway, however, and failed to name any replacements. His move was immediately eclipsed when a Hutu insurrection broke out in southern Burundi.

#### In Cold Blood

The rebels doubtless hoped to take advantage of the growing disunity within the Tutsi oligarchy.

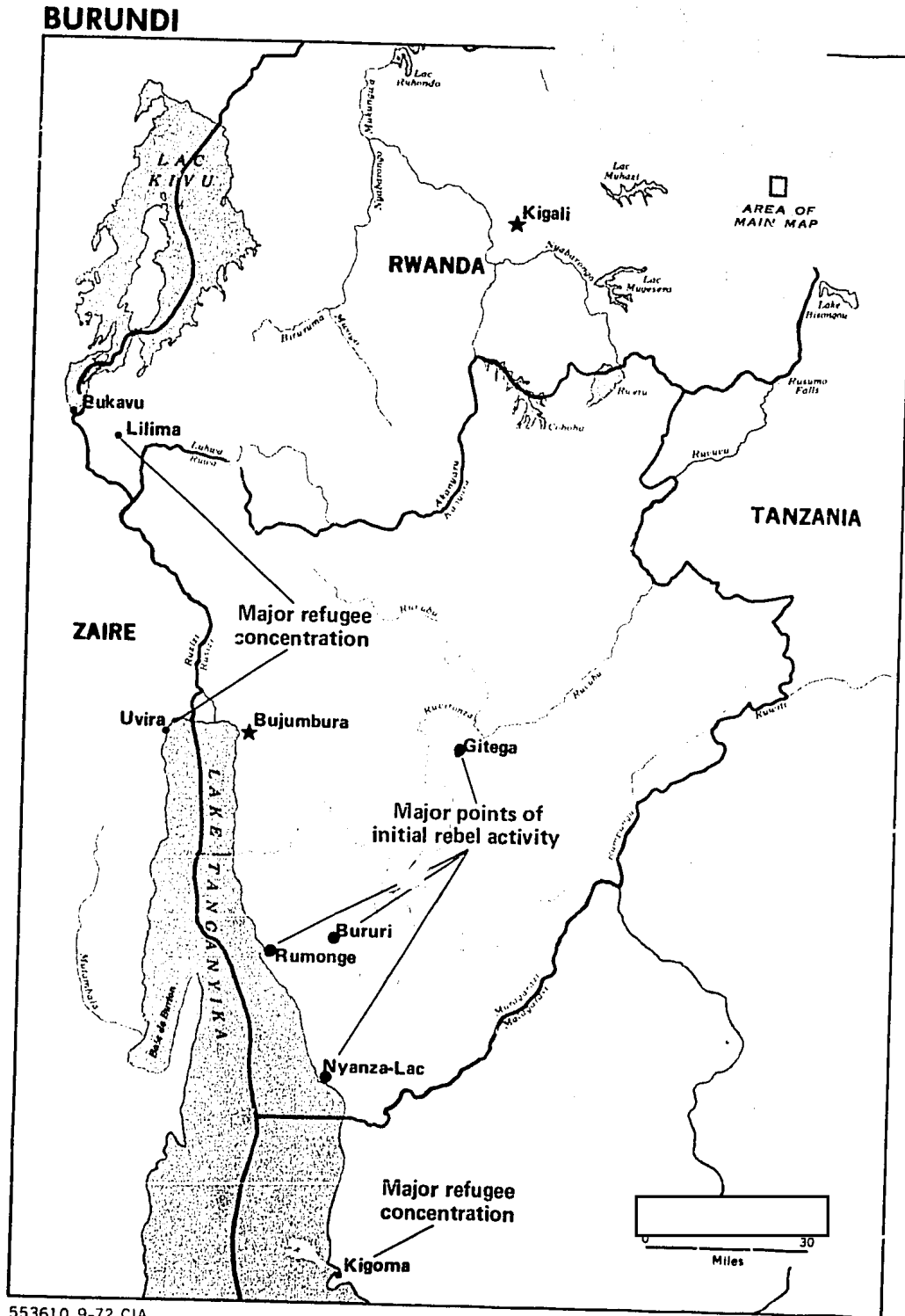
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The rebels, perhaps 2,000 strong, struck in a series of attacks against major population centers and army garrisons in southern Burundi. Among

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the areas hardest hit was Bururi Province, the home area of President Micombero and the stronghold of the southern extremist faction. Virtually all Bururi provincial authorities, who were gathered for a political rally near the provincial capital, were assassinated. The rebels failed, however, to kill the justice and information ministers, who had gone to Bururi to investigate reports of local unrest.

The rebels failed to gain any popular support, despite appeals for Hutu unity, forced conscription, and liberal doses of black magic. Burundi's 3,000-man army struck back hard and, after several weeks of fighting, pushed the rebels into isolated pockets along the coast of Lake Tanganyika. Despite the crisis, Micombero took no steps to name a new government, and the extremist members of his previous cabinet apparently continued to act in their former capacities and to use their influence to direct much of the anti-rebel and later anti-Hutu campaigns.

even students in the capital were arrested, "interrogated," executed, and buried in mass graves outside the city. Although the government claimed it uncovered evidence of an extensive Hutu plot, probably no more than a handful of the victims were actually involved.

The systematic purge of Hutus in the capital quickly spread throughout the country, particularly in the south. The army, under the pretext of searching out rebel survivors, began a campaign of open liquidation of the Hutus. Regional officials, the party—particularly its headstrong youth organization—and, finally, the Tutsi population in general all took their cue from the central authorities, and the extermination became wholesale. Despite the ferocity of the pogrom, the Hutus fought back on only a few occasions, exhibiting a fatalism born of four centuries of feudal subservience to Tutsi authority. It left foreign observers stunned.

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The Tutsi elite was divided over where to place the blame for the insurrection

Officially, the government claimed that the rebellion was the work of imperialist agents from neighboring countries in league with monarchists intent on restoring the former king. The king had been lured back from Uganda in early April on assurances of amnesty. He was immediately arrested on charges of planning a mercenary invasion and was executed on orders from Micombero on the eve of the insurrection. Extremist Tutsis within the government also attempted to place blame for the insurrection on Westerners, particularly the Belgians.

Foremost in the Tutsi mind, however, was the specter of a nationwide Hutu uprising, reminiscent of the 1959 bloodbath in Rwanda, and what it thought of as narrow escapes in Burundi itself following the coup attempts of 1965 and 1969. These fears led the government to embark upon a systematic purge of the Hutu elite. Civil servants, party functionaries, army personnel,

#### The Cost of the Violence

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By the end of May, after a month of killing, [redacted] estimated that about 100,000 Hutus had been murdered or left homeless. Large areas of southern Burundi had been devastated. By late August, when the repression had begun to run its course, perhaps as many as 200,000 Hutus had been killed. In addition, international relief workers estimate that 50,000 had fled to Zaire, 20,000 to Tanzania, and 5,000 to Rwanda, and that the number of Hutu refugees is still rising. By way of comparison, the abortive insurrection that sparked the devastation killed an estimated 1,000-2,000 Tutsis.

The economic loss to Burundi has been incidental. Although thousands of Hutu peasants were driven off, their crops and homes burned, they were mostly subsistence farmers who made little contribution to the national economy. Bujumbura, the capital and major commercial center, was hardly affected by the violence; business continued without interruption. Coffee, Burundi's major cash crop, is grown in the north, which was little affected by the violence. The harvesting and processing of this year's crop has

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been hindered somewhat by disruption of transportation and storage facilities and by the loss of many Hutu workers in the coffee industry.

#### Covering Up

The political costs have been extensive. Despite fervent appeals from the diplomatic community in Bujumbura, outraged editorials in the Western press, and private pressure from Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko and Tanzanian President Nyerere, Micombero steadfastly refused to curtail the anti-Hutu repression. In the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, he insisted on portraying events in Burundi as a desperate stand by an embattled Tutsi minority to stave off extinction. He argued that at least 20,000 rebels had initiated the insurrection and that their ranks had been swelled by extensive Hutu support. Micombero railed against the foreign press, particularly Belgian, for playing up the repression of Hutus and ignoring Tutsi claims of self-defense.

While Western observers were appalled by the violence, most African leaders were apathetic, and Micombero has been able to use this apathy to advantage. He has openly expressed gratitude for short-lived support provided by Zaire and Tanzania in the early weeks of the summer, implying that both countries accept his version of events. Following the outbreak of the insurrection, Mobutu answered a request for assistance from Micombero by temporarily supplying a battalion of paratroops for guard duty in the capital and several jet fighters for aerial reconnaissance.

Later, when the extent of Tutsi reprisals became obvious, Mobutu refused to supply the Burundi Army with much-needed ammunition. Tanzania also initially made some small arms and ammunition available to the Burundi Army, but later refused further aid. Nevertheless, Micombero has openly pointed to both early arrangements as examples of African support for his position. 25X1

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The failure of the Organization of African Unity to take up the issue of repression in Burundi during or after its summit meeting in Rabat last June also gave Micombero a psychological boost. Although some African leaders have privately expressed dismay at what happened, they have failed to involve themselves, individually or collectively, in any way, preferring to view the affair as an internal Burundian matter.

In late June, Micombero accepted a mission from the UN sent to investigate the possibilities of assistance. Again, the Burundi Government played up the visit as a gesture of international support. Although the mission's subsequent report presented an objective account of the horrors there, it failed to gain widespread attention. Secretary General Waldheim has been vainly trying to get Burundi to accept a permanent UN representative.

The government has placed restrictions on international relief efforts. These restrictions affect primarily the Hutus and are part of the government effort to play down the extent of Hutu need. The supplies are being diverted to the Tutsis. In late August, the International Red Cross threatened to withdraw from the country rather than submit to this sort of treatment. At present the Red Cross is continuing its operations, but only in heavily populated Tutsi areas in the south.

### New Faces of 1972

On 14 July, more than ten weeks after the slaughter began, President Micombero announced the formation of a new cabinet. Its broad nature stood in sharp contrast to the repression then taking place. As a conciliatory gesture and to counter Western charges of anti-Hutu policies, Micombero weighted his new cabinet in favor of the moderates and included several token Hutus who apparently had been saved by the government for just this purpose. The bureaucracy remains dominated by Tutsis, and no Hutu minister will have any real power.

Shortly after the new cabinet was announced, Micombero also shuffled the army com-



Micombero

mand. This curtailed, if only temporarily, a factionalism almost as intense as that plaguing the government. Among those dismissed was the deputy army commander, who had directed the army's campaign against Hutu civilians and had also led a purge of moderate Tutsi troops. He was replaced by a northern moderate.

### Plus ce change...

Though the killings have slowed down and Micombero has made some cosmetic alterations, not much has really changed. All the elements of further tragedy are still there. President Micombero is caught in the middle, preoccupied with perpetuating himself in office. He presides over a government which, despite its relatively moderate bent, seems headed for the same violent fate as its predecessor. Micombero must go on trying to balance rival factions intent on destroying each other regardless of the consequences.

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The Tutsi oligarchy continues to be obsessed with the specter of its own destruction and is incapable of recognizing that it may indeed be engineering conditions in which the prophecy will be fulfilled. The new prime minister, stumping the countryside immediately after his appointment, kept old fears and hatreds alive. He told his predominantly Tutsi audiences that peace had been restored, but virtually in the same breath, reminded them that "traitors" continued in their midst. Extremists have kept up appeals to anti-Hutu sentiment, and isolated incidents are continuing throughout the countryside.

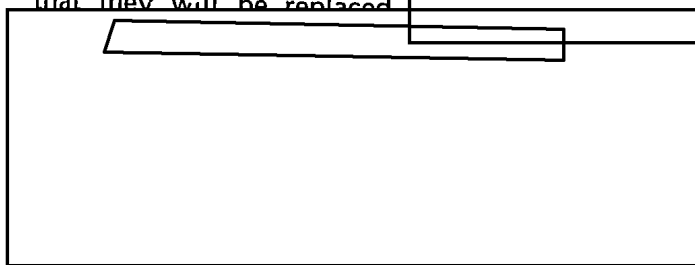
ever. Moderate Tutsis belatedly recognize that the extremists took advantage of the anti-Hutu repression to thin moderate ranks within the army and bureaucracy. The extremists, already influential within the army and the bureaucracy, are attempting to pack both with still more of their supporters. The new cabinet cannot be expected to pull together on many issues.

Although international relief efforts are getting under way, the Burundi Government continues to restrict distribution of relief supplies and to requisition internationally donated supplies for its own use, no doubt for distribution to Tutsis.

The Belgian Government, appalled by the violence, has been reappraising its role as Burundi's major foreign supporter. Brussels does not wish to be further identified with a repressive government; this, together with political disagreement in Burundi, has brought about a deadlock in renegotiations on Belgian aid, particularly educational and military assistance. This situation is not likely to change.

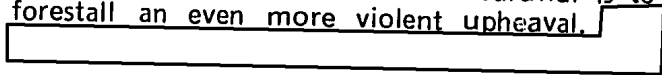
Micombero so far has taken only stopgap measures to patch up the country's divisions, and indeed that may be as far as he can go. Given the deep-rooted tribal tensions and political rivalries, seriously aggravated by recent events, the government may never be able to move toward a genuine reconciliation between Tutsis and Hutus or between extremist and moderate Tutsis. These must somehow be reconciled if Burundi is to forestall an even more violent upheaval.

25X1 Virtually all Hutus with any degree of education have been wiped out, and Tutsi control of education is likely to make it virtually impossible that they will be replaced.



thousands of refugees have settled in an eastern area of the country where Zairian rebels linger. Moreover, both Zaire and Tanzania harbor large numbers of Tutsi refugees from Rwanda who did not go to Burundi following the bloodbath of 1959. This raises the possibility of clashes between the two tribes in their host countries.

Although the Tutsis in Burundi have managed a sort of unity in the face of a common threat, political factionalism seems as strong as



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