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Memo to the Record

To: LP-GWB Archivists

From: Malisa Lewis

Date: 5/19/2014

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568037

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20610-6225

June 30, 2003

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

Your upcoming trip to Africa sends a positive signal to Africans and the world that Africa matters, and that the U.S. government cares at the highest level about what happens to those living on the continent. I commend you for going.

I write regarding the situations in Liberia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I agree wholeheartedly that the paramount goal in our partnership with Africa must be, as you said in your remarks before the Corporate Council on Africa on June 26, "to help establish peace and security across the continent." I believe that we have an opportunity to do so in these two countries.

Earlier this month, I wrote to urge you to take all appropriate actions to fully support the Interim Emergency Multinational Force authorized by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1484. I also expressed my belief that any follow-on force must have the ability to protect UN personnel, humanitarian workers and innocent civilians from attack.

I understand that France has circulated a draft Security Council resolution which would allow Secretary General Kofi Annan to increase the troop ceiling for the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) from 8,700 to 10,800. This increase would allow the deployment of 3,800 peacekeepers to Ituri, in keeping with the recommendations made by the Secretary General in his May 27 report to the Security Council concerning MONUC. I am told that the United States asked for a 30-day extension of the current mandate to allow time to consider whether or not to support the new proposal.

On June 26, Reuters News quoted Ambassador John Negroponte as saying that, "The Congo is just too large a country to be able to hope or think that a large foreign intervention can make that much of a difference over the long-term." This statement could be interpreted to mean that the United States is unwilling to support steps that may be needed to prevent genocide in Ituri province.

Such unwillingness would be a grave mistake, and I urge that you not merely support, but lead efforts in the Security Council to avoid further bloodshed in eastern DRC. Failure to act could result in a tragic repeat of the international community's failure to respond to genocide in Rwanda.

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The President
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In addition to our multilateral efforts, I believe that we must continue to reach out to regional actors who have been involved in the war in DRC. I hope that while you are in Uganda, you will enlist President Yoweri Museveni's assistance in ensuring that ethnic militias are neither armed nor supplied through Uganda, nor aided by any agents operating from Ugandan territory. Although you are not scheduled to travel to Rwanda, a phone call to President Paul Kagame while you are in the region, asking that he stop all support for rebels in eastern DRC, could also have a positive effect.

We must also avoid a repeat of history in Liberia. You have rightly called for Charles Taylor to step down. To help avoid renewed fighting, however we need to do three more things: provide financial and in-kind contributions to support the deployment of the joint verification team and stabilization force called for in the cease-fire agreement reached in Accra, Ghana on June 17 between rebels and the Liberian government; send a representative to serve on the joint verification team without further delay; and seriously consider sending U.S. military personnel to participate in the stabilization force. Without troop contributions from the United States, such a force is unlikely to be effective.

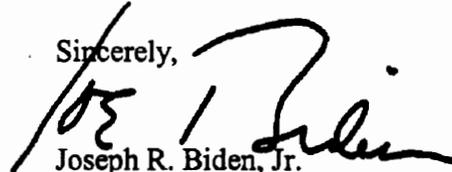
It is essential that the United States show strong and committed leadership to our allies as the international community helps implement the Accra agreement. I am confident that if we do so, they will assist us where possible.

Should the cease-fire resume, we will have a window of opportunity to cement peace – a peace that will have a positive ripple-effect throughout west Africa – in a country that has been racked by war for over a decade.

As you have stated, "this nation is fully engaged in a broad, concerted effort to help Africans find peace, to fight disease, to build prosperity, and to improve their own lives." With your leadership and tangible U.S. contributions, this effort could transform the region.

I look forward to working with you on this effort.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Ranking Minority Member