

5-4-1994

## Kweisi Mfume and Donald M. Payne to President William Clinton, May 4, 1994

Kweisi Mfume

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### Recommended Citation

Mfume, Kweisi, "Kweisi Mfume and Donald M. Payne to President William Clinton, May 4, 1994" (1994).  
*David Rawson Collection on the Rwandan Genocide*. 1.  
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## Congressional Black Caucus Congress of the United States

H2-344 House Annex #2  
The Ford Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202 — 226-7790

May 4, 1994

The Honorable William J. Clinton  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Congressional Black Caucus met today and voiced urgent concern about the terrible situation in Rwanda. We feel it is of such importance that we request your personal attention to this matter.

What we are viewing daily on TV is the swiftest man-made carnage of the century. In less than five weeks the death total in Rwanda already exceeds the 200,000 dead from two years of civil war in Bosnia.

Also of concern is the fact that the media have generally characterized Rwanda's massacres as uncontrollable "tribal violence". The facts indicate that the slaughter in Rwanda was planned and consciously triggered by a privileged clique of extremist political and military leaders who are determined to block political reforms that would loosen their exclusive grip on power. While most of the civilians killed are Tutsi, many Hutu opposition leaders were assassinated by extremist Hutu elements.

UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has made an urgent plea to the Security Council for additional peace keeping forces to be drawn primarily from Africa to re-enforce the 270 UN Peace Keepers still in Rwanda with an expanded mission to protect innocent civilians. Unfortunately, the Security Council has not yet responded. The Secretary General on his own initiative has also requested African countries individually to supply troops. The problem seems to be the lack of advanced logistical capability to rapidly respond, as well as funds to support the effort.

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Melvin Watt, NC '93  
Albert Wynn, MD '93  
Bernie G. Thompson, MS '93  
U.S. Senate  
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Honorable William J. Clinton

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We call on the United States to take aggressive leadership in the Security Council to back the Secretary General's recommendations and to pledge additional funds appropriate for this purpose. We are certain that you are aware of the complexity of our nation urging funds from other countries such as Belgium and France, which should share this burden, when we are more than \$300,000,000 behind in paying our own peace keeping assessment. Therefore, this quick action to pledge funds is most important.

Furthermore, because both Belgium and France are considered partial to the various factions in the Rwanda crisis, it may not be possible to expect military logistical support from them. These factors suggest participation would more appropriately include Canada, the United Kingdom or the United States. If necessary, both military logistical support and funds should be considered.

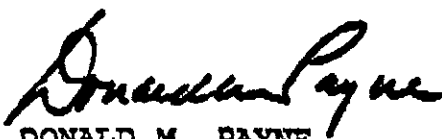
Time is of the essence. Delayed action could cause the violence to spread to Burundi and even Zaire, causing further instability in Africa.

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, we ask that you begin an urgent mobilization of the American people to support this effort. As the most powerful democracy in the world, we are compelled to act.

Sincerely yours,



KWEISI MFUME  
Chairman  
Congressional Black Caucus



DONALD M. PAYNE  
Ranking CBC Member  
House Foreign Affairs  
Committee