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PAGE 01 STATE 057946 251908Z
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INFO LOG-00 AID-01 AMAD-01 CIAE-00 PFIP-01 C-01 OASY-00
DODE-00 EB-01 EUR-01 HA-09 H-01 INR-00 IO-19
LAB-04 L-03 ADS-00 NEA-01 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02
OMB-01 PA-01 PM-02 PRS-01 P-01 RPCS-01 SIL-00
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APPROVED BY: AF/FO: RGHOUEK

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TO AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 057946 251908Z
CONFIDENTIAL STATE 057946

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: MOPS PREL PHUM RW

SUBJECT: AF DAS HOUEK MEETS WITH RPF REPRESENTATIVE

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: DAS HOUEK CALLED IN RPF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 22 TO REVIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ALLEGATIONS
OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND CONCERNS FOR THE NEARLY ONE
MILLION PERSONS DISPLACED BY THE RECENT FIGHTING.
RUDASINGWA REAFFIRMED RPF WILLINGNESS TO TALK WITH THE
RWANDAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES, BUT STRESSED
HARDLINE RPF POSITIONS THAT HABYARIMANA AND THE FRENCH
PRESENCE ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO PEACE. HE ARDENTLY
DENIED UGANDAN SUPPORT FOR THE RPF. WE HOPE THAT KAGAME
SHOWS MORE FLEXIBILITY AND TAKES A MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior
Reviewer

THAN HIS SPOKESMAN. END SUMMARY.

RECENT EVENTS

3. REVIEWING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN A MEETING FEBRUARY 22 WITH REPRESENTATIVES THEOGEN RUDASINGWA AND CHARLES MURIGANDE, DAS HOUDEK URGED THE RPF TO GET ON WITH THE CEASEFIRE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE BUJUMBURA MEETING WITH THE FIVE POLITICAL PARTIES. HE NOTED THE DEPARTURE OF COLONEL MARLEY TO THE REGION TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO BOTH SIDES IN REESTABLISHING THE CEASEFIRE AND TO PARTICIPATE WHEN THE ARUSHA TALKS RESUME. RUDASINGWA REPLIED THAT THE RPF IS ALWAYS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN TALKS, THAT TITUS
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PAGE 03 STATE 057946 251908Z
RUTAMERARA, THE NUMBER 3 IN THE RPF CHAIN OF COMMMAND, HAS BEEN IN BUJUMBURA FOR A WEEK, AND THAT KANYARENGWE WILL PARTICIPATE DEPENDING UPON THE LEVEL OF PARTY PARTICIPATION.

HUMAN RIGHTS

4. TURNING TO ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY BOTH SIDES IN THE RECENT FIGHTING, HOUDEK URGED THE RPF TO FACILITATE INVESTIGATIONS IN THOSE CASES AND AREAS WHERE IT IS ACCUSED. RUDASINGWA IMMEDIATELY INVOKED STRONG RPF FEELINGS ABOUT THE INADEQUACY OF RESPONSE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN JANUARY, CITING THIS AS AN INCENTIVE FOR THE RPF ATTACKS. EXTENSIVE DISINFORMATION BY THE GOR IS AIMED AT SHIFTING BLAME TO THE RPF TO JUSTIFY BRINGING IN MORE FRENCH TROOPS TO SHORE UP THE REGIME. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE POINTED TO THE REUTERS REPORT OF FEBRUARY 21 THAT AN MRND SPOKESMAN IN BRUSSELS HAD ACCUSED THE RPF OF EXTERMINATING ON THE ORDERS OF PRESIDENT MUSEVENI MORE THAN 1,600 PEOPLE WITH CHEMICAL PRODUCTS BROUGHT FROM THE U.S. AND LIBYA VIA ENGLAND. IN FACT, RUDASINGWA CONTINUED, THE RPF HAD WARNED VILLAGERS, PARTICULARLY IN KINIGI AND KIDAHO, TO FLEE, EVEN TO UGANDA, AS THE FIGHTING BROKE OUT SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE HARMED OR USED AS HUMAN SHIELDS BY THE GOR. HE APOLOGIZED FOR CASES WHERE THE POPULATION MISUNDERSTOOD RPF INTENTIONS AND PANICKED.

5. HOUDEK EMPHASIZED THAT, REGARDLESS OF REASONS FOR THE RPF ATTACKS, UP TO ONE MILLION DISPLACED PERSONS ARE NOW
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 057946 251908Z

SUFFERING AS A RESULT, OVERWHELMING THE ABILITY OF RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS TO FEED THEM. RUDASINGWA AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE DISPLACED MUST BE URGENTLY ADDRESSED AND THAT RESOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM WILL BE MORE PROTRACTED. HE INSISTED THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IS THE ONLY LONG TERM SOLUTION TO RWANDA'S PROBLEMS AND THAT HABYARIMANA IS THE MAJOR OBSTACLE. HE URGED THE USG TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THE NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE WITHOUT RECURRENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

THE FRENCH PRESENCE

6. RUDASINGWA THEN SOUNDED THE HARDLINE RPF THEME THAT THE PRESENCE OF FRENCH TROOPS SUPPORTS AND EMBOLDENS HABYARIMANA. REMINDING HIM THAT THE USG WELCOMES THE FRENCH PRESENCE TO PROTECT THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY, HOUDEK STRESSED THAT, BUT FOR THEIR PRESENCE, THE U.S. MISSION MIGHT HAVE BEEN CLOSED, OR AT LEAST REDUCED DRASTICALLY, IN THE FACE OF THE RECENT FIGHTING. MOREOVER, THE USG HAS NO EVIDENCE OF FRENCH INVOLVEMENT IN FIGHTING AGAINST THE RPF. EXPRESSING IRRITATION, RUDASINGWA INSISTED THAT THE RPF HAS SEEN SUCH EVIDENCE AND ASKED IF IT WAS NECESSARY TO SHOW THE USG FRENCH BODIES KILLED IN THE FIGHTING. SHOULD THE RPF WANT TO TAKE KIGALI, NO DEPLOYMENT OF FRENCH TROOPS WOULD STOP THEM. BUT THE RPF HAS NO PLANS TO DO SO, BECAUSE TAKING KIGALI IS NOT THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

7. DESPITE WHAT THE RPF SEES AS FRANCE'S BELLIGERENT, HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM, THE RPF HAS NOT HARMED ANY
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PAGE 05 STATE 057946 251908Z

FRENCH CITIZENS TRAPPED BY RECENT FIGHTING IN RUHENGERI OR BYUMBA. ASKED IF HE HAD FOLLOWED UP ON USG URGING TO MEET WITH THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, RUDASINGWA SAID NO AND INSISTED HE SAW NO VALUE IN LISTENING TO FRENCH "LECTURES." IN HIS VIEW, UNTIL THE FRENCH SEE THE RPF AS A PERMANENT FORCE, THE RELATIONSHIP WILL NOT IMPROVE.

UGANDAN SUPPORT

8. AF/C DIRECTOR PRINGLE REMINDED RUDASINGWA THAT DURING AN EXCHANGE WITH FRENCH EMASSY PERSONNEL AT DOS MEETINGS LAST SUMMER, KAGAME HIMSELF HAD TAKEN A MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO FRENCH PRESENCE. THE FRENCH, FOR THEIR PART, CITE NRA AND UGANDAN INVOLVEMENT IN RPF EFFORTS. RUDASINGWA CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE PRESENCE OF UGANDAN TROOPS ALONGSIDE RPF SOLDIERS, RPF SANCTUARY IN UGANDA, AND UGANDAN LOGISTICAL SUPPORT. INSTEAD, HE BOASTED OF

LARGE-SCALE RECRUITMENT AMONG ZAIRIANS, TANZANIANS, AND BURUNDIANS AND OF WEAPONS PURCHASED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SHIPPED IN THROUGH A VARIETY OF ROUTES. PROUDLY, HE NOTED THAT THE RPF HAD REBUILT ITS MILITARY AND POLITICAL CAPACITY IN RECENT MONTHS WHILE THE FRENCH AND GOR WERE CLAIMING THEY WERE INSTEAD A "SPENT FORCE." THE RESULT WAS THAT THE FAR HAD LOST WITHIN DAYS, EVEN HOURS, SIGNIFICANT TERRITORY, ARMS, AND WEAPONS. PRINGLE INDICATED THAT WE SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT RPF ACCESS TO THE UGANDAN SANCTUARY (WITH ALL THAT THIS ENTAILS) HAS CEASED.

COMMENT

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PAGE 06 STATE 057946 251908Z

9. RUDASINGWA HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A WEEKEND TRIP TO CALIFORNIA AND WAS NOT YET FAMILIAR WITH THE MOST RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. HIS HARDLINE TENDENCIES, KEPT IN CHECK DURING THE MEETING FEBRUARY 9 WITH A/S COHEN, RESURFACED IN HIS STRONG ATTACK AGAINST THE FRENCH PRESENCE AND HABYARIMANA'S ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES. AFTER THE MEETING, HE REITERATED THE NEED FOR THE USG TO PRESSURE HABYARIMANA INTO CONCLUDING THE NEGOTIATIONS. AGAIN, HE STATED THAT THE RPF WAS RECONSIDERING THE WISDOM OF ALLOWING SUCH AN INTRANSIGENT FIGURE TO REMAIN IN HIS POSITION.

10. ALTHOUGH RUDASINGWA HAS GROWN SMOOTH AND PERSUASIVE IN MUCH OF HIS PRESENTATIONS, SINCE LAST JUNE, HIS BLIND SPOTS SHOWED CLEARLY IN THIS MEETING AND AT TIMES HE APPEARED COCKY. WE WILL READ TO AWAIT THE REPORT OF AF/RA MILITARY ADVISER MARLEY TO KNOW IF KAGAME NOW EXHIBITS THE SAME INTRANSIGENCE.
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