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DTG

221925Z OCT 90

FROM

FM DIA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):10 USC 424

TO

(b)(3):10 USC 424;(b)(3):50 USC 403-1(i)

RUSNNOA/USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE (b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

CONTROLS

~~SECRET NOFORN~~ SECTION 01 OF 02

(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

SUBJ: MILITARY ASSESSMENT OF **RWANDA** (U)

REF: KIGALI 04051 DTG 091402Z OCT 90

1. (b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

2. (~~SNF~~) MILITARY SITUATION. ON 1 OCTOBER 90, A REBEL FORCE CONSISTING OF UP TO SEVERAL THOUSAND WELL ARMED RWANDAN EXILES ASSOCIATED WITH THE **RWANDA** PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF) CROSSED THE UGANDA/**RWANDA** FRONTIER AT KAGITUMBA AND OVERRAN THE AIRFIELD, WHICH WAS PROTECTED BY A SMALL RWANDAN MILITARY ELEMENT. ON 2 OCTOBER THE REBELS AMBUSHED A SMALL RWANDAN ARMY (FAR) ARMORED ELEMENT WHICH WAS RESPONDING TO THE KAGITUMBA ATTACK, CAPTURING FOUR VEHICLES. THE REBELS CONTINUED THEIR ATTACK SOUTH ALONG THE MAIN ROADS TO GABIRO AND THROUGH THE MAVUMBA RIVER VALLEY, CAPTURING THE AIRFIELDS AT GABIRO AND NYAGATARE, AND OVERRUNNING THE FAR INFANTRY COMPANY BASED IN GABIRO. ON 3 OCTOBER, THE RPF ADVANCE WAS HALTED AT GABIRO BY RESPONDING FAR UNITS, WHICH INCLUDED FOUR MANEUVER BATTALIONS: TWO INFANTRY, AN AIRBORNE, AND A PARACOMMANDO BATTALION. THESE

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REPRESENTED NEARLY ALL OF THE AVAILABLE FAR GROUND MANEUVER UNITS. THE RWANDANS APPARENTLY USED THEIR SMALL FORCE OF ARMED HELICOPTERS WITH CONSIDERABLE EFFECTIVENESS IN ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST REBEL CONCENTRATIONS.

3. (~~S/NF~~) BY 4 OCTOBER THE RPF ATTACK HAD BOGGED DOWN IN THE NORTHEAST, AND THE **RWANDA** GOVERNMENT PULLED ITS PARACOMMANDO AND ONE INFANTRY BATTALION, NOW LOW ON MUNITIONS, BACK TO THE CAPITAL OF KIGALI. (b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

HOWEVER, AT 0200 ON 5

OCTOBER, INFILTRATED RPF ELEMENTS CONDUCTED A COORDINATED NIGHT ATTACK IN KIGALI AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, GENERAL STAFF, PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, THE AIRPORT AND THE OTHER STRATEGIC POINTS. THE FAR RESECURED THE CAPITAL AFTER 4 HOURS OF HEAVY FIGHTING, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF NEARLY ALL THE ATTACKING RPF FORCES. THE MAIN RPF COLUMN, REPORTEDLY PLANNING TO ARRIVE IN KIGALI BY 6 OCTOBER, WAS EFFECTIVELY BLOCKED AT GABIRO BY THE REMAINING FAR ELEMENTS, REINFORCED BY A HASTILY DEPLOYED BATTALION OF THE ZAIRIAN PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY DIVISION (DSP). AFTER 5 OCTOBER, MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINED CONFINED TO A SMALL AREA OF NORTHERN **RWANDA**, AND HAD DEVELOPED INTO A STALEMATE, WITH RPF FORCES FACING A BATTALION OF FAR PARACOMMANDOS IN THE MUVUMBA VALLEY, AND A BATTALION OF FAR INFANTRY AND (UNTIL 15 OCTOBER) A BATTALION OF ZAIROIS NEAR GABIRO. SMALL RPF ELEMENTS APPEARED TO BE OPERATING IN THE VICINITY OF BYUMBA. BY 17 OCTOBER, THE RPF EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED ALL RWANDAN TERRITORY NORTH AND EAST OF GABIRO AND NYAGATARE, GABIRO HAVING CHANGED HANDS SEVERAL TIMES. ALSO BY THAT DATE, THE ZAIRIAN CONTINGENT WAS WITHDRAWN AND REPLACED BY A NEWLY FORMED FAR INFANTRY BATTALION.

4. (~~S/NF~~) THE ATTACKERS: WELL-ARMED AND LED. THE REBEL FORCE CONSISTS OF FOUR THOUSAND RWANDAN EXILES (MAINLY OF TUTSI ETHNICITY) MOST OF WHOM RECENTLY DESERTED FROM THE UGANDAN NATIONAL RESISTANCE ARMY (NRA) IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ATTACK. THE BALANCE ARE COMPRISED OF CIVILIAN RWANDAN TUTSI PREVIOUSLY IN EXILE IN UGANDA AND (POSSIBLY) OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. SOME OF THE NRA DESERTERS HAVE SEEN CONSIDERABLE COMBAT IN UGANDA'S CIVIL WARS OVER THE PAST DECADE. DIA ESTIMATES THAT REBEL COMBATANTS ACTUALLY DEPLOYED IN NORTHERN **RWANDA** ARE A CORE FORCE OF APPROXIMATELY 2,000. THIS FORCE IS WELL-ARMED WITH WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT TAKEN UPON DESERTION FROM THE NRA, INCLUDING AK ASSAULT RIFLES, MACHINE GUNS, GRENADES, SEVERAL LIGHT MORTARS, LIGHT AND HEAVY ANTITANK WEAPONS, AIR DEFENSE

WEAPONS, ARTILLERY, AND AT LEAST 60 MILITARY VEHICLES. THIS LATTER CATEGORY INCLUDES AT LEAST TWO FUEL TRUCKS, AND SEVERAL LIGHT ARMORED VEHICLES. THE REBELS ARE ORGANIZED INTO THREE OR MORE MANEUVER BATTALIONS, AND ARE LED BY FRED RWIGYEMA AND OTHER FORMER NRA OFFICERS. (RWIGYEMA HAS HELD THE RANK OF MAJOR GENERAL IN THE NRA.) THE CAREFULLY PLANNED AND ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN APPEARS TO BE THE WORK OF RWIGYEMA AND OTHER TUTSI UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF), AN EXILED RWANDAN TUTSI MOVEMENT BASED IN KAMPALA. THE FACT THAT THE RPF WAS ABLE TO PLAN THE MASS DESERTION, STEAL LARGE AMOUNTS OF NRA ARMS/EQUIPMENT, AND STILL CATCH THE FAR BY SURPRISE TESTIFIES TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES OF RWIGYEMA AND THE RPF.

5. (~~S/NF~~) THE DEFENDERS. EVEN THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT LOST AN INFANTRY COMPANY AND AN ARMORED CAR ELEMENT IN THE INITIAL TWO DAYS OF CONTACT, THE FAR HAS SUFFICIENT FORCE TO MEET THE THREAT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS A REGULAR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WHICH NUMBERED ABOUT 5,200 PRIOR TO THE INCURSION, AND A GENDARMERIE OF SOME 2,400 PERSONNEL. GOVERNMENT MANEUVER FORCES ARE ORGANIZED INTO TWO INFANTRY BATTALIONS, AN AIRBORNE BATTALION, A PARACOMMANDO BATTALION, AND EIGHT INDEPENDENT (PREFECTURAL) INFANTRY COMPANIES' BY 18 OCTOBER, IT APPEARED THAT THE FAR HAD ORRANIZED A FIFTH MANEUVER BATTALION OUT OF SCHOOL CADRE AND NEWLY TRAINED TROOPS. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS AN AVIATION COMPANY CONTAINING SEVERAL LIGHT FIXED-WING TRANSPORTS AND SEVERAL HELICOPTERS. FAR TROOPS ARE WELL-TRAINED AND LED (AFRICAN STANDARDS), BUT LACK THE COMBAT EXPERIENCE POSSESSED BY MANY OF THE REBEL TROOPS. FAR EQUIPMENT IS LIKEWISE BETTER MAINTAINED THAN THE STOLEN NRA ITEMS. THE FAR, LIKE THE REBELS, LACKS DEPTH FOR A PROTRACTED CONFLICT, DUE TO LIMITED FUEL AND AMMO STOCKS. IN ADDITION TO THE FIVE COMBAT MANEUVER BATTALIONS, THE FAR HAS COMMITTED ITS ENGINEER COMPANY, ITS TRANSPRTATION COMPANY, AND ITS AVIATION COMPANY TO THE CONFLICT. DESPITE THE LOSS OF AN ARMED GAZELLE HELICOPTER AND A TWIN OTTER LIGHT TRANSPDRT AIRCRAFT TO REBEL GROUND FIRE, THE FAR'S AVIATION COMPANY CONTINUED AIR ATTACKS WITH ITS THREE REMAINING GAZELLES AGAINST A REBEL UNITS, RESUPPLY CONVOYS, AND COMMAND AND CONTROL ELEMENTS UNTIL RUNNING OUT OF ROCKETS ON 11 OCTOBER. FRANCE DELIVERED A SMALL QUANTITY OF ADDITIONAL ROCKETS ON 16 OCTOBER.

4. (U) CRITICAL FACTORS.

-- (~~S/NF/NOFORN~~) AMMUNITION' THE REBELS APPEAR TO HAVE SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES DESPITE HEAVY ACTION AGAINST FAR ELEMENTS, /***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/
INDICATING A SOURCE OF RESUPPLY, PROBABLY FROM UGANDA' THE REBELS

MAY ALSO HAVE REPOSITIONED SOME STOCKS OF AMMO AND OTHER SUPPLIES IN NORTHERN **RWANDA**. THE FAR HAS RECEIVED TWO C-130 LOADS OF SMALL ARMS AND MORTAR AMMO (b)(1);1.4 (c) AND HAS BEEN PROMISED MORE AMMUNITION

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c) AMMO SUPPLIES WILL DETERMINE THE TEMPO OF THE WAR, AND POSSIBLY THE OUTCOME.

-- (~~S/NF~~) FUEL. THE GOR WAS CRITICALLY SHORT BEFORE THE REBELS CUT THE OVERLAND SUPPLY ROUTE FROM UGANDA; AND NOW PRACTICALLY ALL STOCKS HAVE BEEN DEPLETED. A NEW SUPPLY ROUTE VIA TANZANIA HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, BUT SHOULD FUEL RUN OUT BEFORE THE REBELS ARE DEFEATED, THE FAR WILL LOSE ITS ADVANTAGES OF MOBILITY AND AIR POWER. FUEL RESUPPLY IS LESS CRITICAL TO THE REBELS, WHO HAVE SHORTER SUPPLY LINES.

-- (~~S/NF~~) INDIGENOUS SUPPORT. **RWANDA'S** POPULATION IS 85 PERCENT ETHNIC HUTU, AND UNLIKELY TO GIVE WILLING SUPPORT TO THE (LARGELY) TUTSI REBELS. ALSO UNLIKELY IS THAT THE INVASION WILL PRECIPITATE DISUNITY IN THE NEAR TERM AMONG THE VARIOUS HUTU CLANS, OR AMONG SIGNIFICANT INFLUENTIAL URBAN-BASED GROUPS, CAUSING PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S GOVERNMENT TO FALL. SHOULD MG RWIGYEMA RESORT TO STRICTLY GUERILLA WARFARE, HE WILL PROBABLY FIND LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT AND FIND IT DIFFICULT TO HIDE IN THE DENSELY INHABITED, AND PREDOMINATELY HUTU, RWANDAN COUNTRYSIDE'

-- (~~S/NF~~) FOREIGN SUPPORT. BURUNDI AND UGANDA OFFICIALLY CLAIMED TO HAVE CLOSED THEIR BORDERS WITH **RWANDA**, THEORETICALLY CUTTING OFF SUPPLIES AND MANPOWER FROM THE REBELS. SOME RPF MOVEMENT CONTINUES OVER THE UGANDA BORDER AND GOU ACTION IN POLITICAL FORA TENDS TO FAVOR RPF INTERESTS. (b)(1);1.4 (c)

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

DEPLOYED FORCES TO **RWANDA** IN EARLY OCTOBER, BUT WITHDREW THEM IN MID OCTOBER.

-- (~~S/NF~~) LEADERSHIP. **RWANDA'S** SMALL ARMY HAS GENERALLY IN THE PAST DRAWN PRAISE FOR ITS DISCIPLINE AND TRAINING; AND THE BATTLEFIELD CUALITIES OF ITS SENIOR COMMANDERS HAVE PROVEN ADEQUATE TO DATE. EVEN SO, ALMOST ALL THE RPF LEADERS (PARTICULARLY MG RWIGYEMA) HAVE EXTENSIVE COMBAT EXPERIENCE. RWIGYEMA HIMSELF IS A CHARISMATIC AND HIGHLY CAPABLE COMMANDER.

7. (~~S/NF~~) OF THE FIVE CRITICAL FACTORS NOTED ABOVE, THE GOR HOLDS

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AT LEAST A SMALL ADVANTAGE OVER THE REBELS IN ALL EXCEPT LEADERSHIP
AND FUEL SUPPLIES.

ADMIN

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