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**FROM**

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**CONTROLS**

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SERIAL: DODID 252-16A

**BODY**

SUBJ: **RWANDA**: REBEL ATTACK AND OAU SUMMIT. (U)**RWANDA**: REBEL  
ATTACK AND OAU SUMMIT. (U)

DOI: 9 SEP 91 (AS OF 1858 EDT)

TEXT: 1. (~~C/NF~~) KIGALI BLAMES THE REBELS FOR THE REPORTED  
DESTRUCTION OF GATUNA BRIDGE, AND THE 7 SEPTEMBER OAU SUMMIT TOOK  
LIMITED STEPS TOWARD PEACE.

2. (~~C/NF~~) ACCORDING TO A FOREIGN MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE AND RWANDAN  
MILITARY SOURCES, RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF) REBELS DYNAMITED THE  
GATUNA BRIDGE NEAR THE UGANDAN BORDER AND MINED THE ROADWAY ON  
EITHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE ON THE NIGHT OF 2 SEPTEMBER. THE  
GOVERNMENT CLAIMS THE REBELS HAD ATTACKED ARMY TROOPS, BUT WERE  
REPULSED AND THEN DYNAMITED THE BRIDGE AND MINED THE ROADWAY TO  
COVER THEIR RETREAT INTO UGANDA. OFFICIALS SAID THE ALLEGED RPF  
ATTACK WAS AN ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY RWANDAN TERRITORY TO STRENGTHEN THE  
REBELS' HAND IN THE PEACE PROCESS. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS  
OFFERED NO EVIDENCE OF REBEL RESPONSIBILITY.

3. (~~C/NF~~) A NEARBY BORDER POST WAS THE ENTRY POINT FOR THE REBELS'  
OCTOBER 1990 INVASION. THE GATUNA REGION HAS SINCE BEEN THE SITE OF  
NUMERDUS CLASHES.

4. (~~C/NF~~) MEANWHILE, A 3-HOUR ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY  
MINISUMMIT CONVENED IN ZAIRE ON 7 SEPTEMBER AFTER REPEATED  
POSTPONEMENTS. THE REGIONAL HEADS OF STATE AGREED TO RECONSTITUTE  
THE MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP UNDER NIGERIAN COMMAND AND TO OPEN A  
LONG-AWAITED PEACE DIALOGUE ON THE 14TH.

5. (~~C/NF~~) THE RWANDANS HAD PLANNED TO REOPEN THE ROADWAY AND  
BRIDGE AS A CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURE TO EASE POLITICAL AND

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ECONOMIC TENSION BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRY AND NEIGHBORING STATES. RWANDAN MILITARY SOURCES SAID THE REOPENING OF THE CORRIDOR, A MAJOR REGIONAL TRADE ROUTE UNTIL RENDERED UNSAFE BY THE CONFLICT, WILL NOW BE DELAYED INDEFINITELY.

6. ~~(CONF)~~ COMMENT: INFORMATION ON THE BRIDGE'S DESTRUCTION HAS THUS FAR COME MOSTLY FROM RWANDAN OFFICIAL SOURCES AND HAS BEEN SKETCHY. DURING THE 11-MONTH CONFLICT, THE RPF HAS FOCUSED ON DISRUPTING **RWANDA'S** ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE BY FORCING THE CLOSURE OF KEY ROADS. RPF TACTICS, HOWEVER, ARE TYPICALLY TO SHELL TROOPS OR TO HARASS THEM WITH SPORADIC HIT-AND-RUN ATTACKS, NOT TO USE MINES OR DESTROY BRIDGES.

7. ~~(CONF)~~ THE ABSENCE OF HARD EVIDENCE DOES NOT PRECLUDE AN RPF ATTACK AS THE GOVERNMENT ALLEGES. BECAUSE THE REBELS WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE 7 SEPTEMBER SUMMIT, THEY MAY HAVE WANTED TO REMIND PARTICIPANTS NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE THEM. THE RPF, HOWEVER, DENIES INVOLVEMENT.

8. ~~(CONF)~~ THE RWANDAN ARMY IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE DESTROYED THE BRIDGE INTENTIONALLY, ALTHOUGH IT COULD HAVE ACCIDENTALLY SET OFF ITS OWN MINES ON THE ROADWAY. IT SOMETIMES LOSES THE MAPS DESIGNATING WHERE THE MINES HAVE BEEN LAID. NONETHELESS, DELAYING THE ROADWAY'S OPENING RISKS ALIENATING THOSE COUNTRIES SYMPATHETIC TO THE RPF WHOSE ECONOMIES WILL SUFFER FROM ITS CONTINUED CLOSURE.

9. ~~(CONF)~~ REAL PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS WOULD PLACE STRAINS ON THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT. AMONG THE ISSUES TO BE FACED ARE THE RETURN OF SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND REFUGEES AND POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION, WHICH THE REBELS SAY SHOULD INCLUDE PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S RESIGNATION AND MORE ETHNIC POWERSHARING. THE REBELS ALSO DEMAND THEY BE INCORPORATED INTO THE MILITARY. HABYARIMANA WILL NEED A CREDIBLE EXCUSE TO DELAY THE DIALOGUE ON THE 14TH. THE PEOPLE ARE TIRED OF THE CONFLICT, AND DEMANDS BY OPPOSITION POLITICIANS TO JOIN THE PEACE DIALOGUE ARE GROWING LOUDER.

~~ADMIN~~

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