SUBJ: RWANDA: DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY DEADLOCK. (CINF)

1. (CINF) A DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY IMPASSE PERSISTS IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE REBELS AND THE GOVERNMENT IN RWANDA, DESPITE THE POSITIVE SIGNS THAT APPEARED IN LATE FEBRUARY.

2. (C/N) ON 20 FEBRUARY PARTICIPANTS IN THE DAR ES SALAM CONFERENCE AGREED TO HELP THE RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF) AND THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATE A FORMAL CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT, WHICH WAS TO BE SIGNED WITHIN 2 WEEKS. HOWEVER, IN THE 14 DAYS SINCE THE CONFERENCE, FIGHTING HAS CONTINUED IN NORTHERN RWANDA, AND NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD ACHIEVING A CEASE-FIRE AND DIRECT RPF-RWANDAN GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

3. (C/N) MOST OF THE CLASHES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE HAVE BEEN SMALL SKIRMISHES INVOLVING RPF AND RWANDAN ARMED FORCES (FAR) PATROLS. THE RPF, HOWEVER, HAS ALSO STAGED A FEW BATTALION-SIZE ASSAULTS ON FAR POSITIONS. ON THE 22D THE FAR REPULSED AN ATTACK BY 300 TO 400 RPF TROOPS ON ITS OUTPOST SOUTH OF VOLCANO PARK.

4. (C/NF) KIGALI'S DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE TO THESE EVENTS HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY. ONE MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY SAID ON THE 4TH THAT THE CONTINUED FIGHTING PRECLUDES DIRECT DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT AND THE RPF. IN CONTRAST, ANOTHER MINISTER
OF THE PRESIDENCY ASKED US OFFICIALS TO PERSUADE UGANDAN PRESIDENT
MUSEVENI TO HELP BEGIN A DIALOGUE BETWEEN KIGALI AND THE RPF.
5. (CONF) THE RPF HAS CLAIMED THAT IT WAS WILLING TO ABIDE BY A
PREVIOUS CEASE-FIRE BUT THAT THE FAR VIOLATED IT IMMEDIATELY
PREVENTING IT FROM EVER BEGINNING. IN ADDITION, AN RPF EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE HAS SAID THAT THE RPF ACCEPTS ZAIRIAN
PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)
SECRETARY GENERAL AS MEDIATORS AND THAT IT IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE
IN DIRECT TALKS AT "ANYTIME IN ANYPLACE."
6. (CONF) COMMENT: THE FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT THE CEASE-FIRE IS
MOST LIKELY THE RESULT OF A LACK OF RESOLVE BY THE RPF LEADERSHIP
AND KIGALI RATHER THAN A BLATANT ATTEMPT BY EITHER SIDE TO TORPEDO
THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. NONETHELESS, THE DEADLOCK AT THE
NEGOTIATING TABLE AND ON THE BATTLEFIELD IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR
THE SHORT TERM, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE OAU HAS, THUS FAR, FAILED TO
ACCEPT A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN RESOLVING THE PROBLEM. AT PRESENT,
NEITHER SIDE APPEARS TO FEEL THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE FORCING IT TO
THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, AND EACH SIDE IS TRYING TO GUARANTEE THAT IT
WILL BE IN A STRONG POSITION WHEN TALKS BEGIN.