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FROM

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

TO

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CONTROLS

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(b)(3):10 USC 424;(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

SERIAL: DODID 249-18A

BODY

SUBJ: **RWANDA**: REBEL ATTACK. (U)

DOI: 6 SEP 91 (AS OF 1815 EDT)

TEXT: 1. ~~(CONF)~~ **RWANDA** BLAMES REBELS FOR THE REPORTED DESTRUCTION OF GATUNA BRIDGE, WHICH MAY MAR THE 7 SEPTEMBER OAU SUMMIT AND PROSPECTS FOR PEACE.

2. ~~(CONF)~~ A RWANDAN FOREIGN MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE AND EMBASSY KIGALI'S RWANDAN MILITARY SOURCES CLAIM THAT 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 TO 3 SEPTEMBER. **RWANDA** SAYS RPF REBELS ATTACKED THE RWANDAN ARMY BUT WERE REPULSED, AND THAT REBELS THEN DYNAMITED THE BRIDGE AND MINED THE ROADWAY TO COVER THEIR RETREAT INTO UGANDA. RWANDAN OFFICIALS TERMED THE ALLEGED RPF ATTACK A REBEL ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY RWANDAN TERRITORY IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE REBELS' HAND IN THE PEACE PROCESS. HOWEVER, RWANDAN OFFICIALS OFFERED NO EVIDENCE OF REBEL RESPONSIBILITY. THE NEARBY BORDER POST WAS AN ENTRY POINT FOR THE REBELS' OCTOBER 1990 INVASION, AND GATUNA REGION HAS SINCE BEEN THE SITE OF NUMEROUS CLASHES.

3. ~~(CONF)~~ AN OAU MINI-SUMMIT OF REGIONAL HEADS OF STATE APPEARS TO REMAIN SET TO OPEN 7 SEPTEMBER, AFTER REPEATED POSTPONEMENTS, THOUGH CLASHES BETWEEN **RWANDA** AND THE RPF CONTINUE TO OCCUR IN VIOLATION OF THE MARCH CEASE-FIRE. THE IMMINENT REOPENING OF THE CORRIDOR COMPRISING THE ROADWAY AND THE BRIDGE WAS MEANT TO BE A COMPLEMENTARY CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURE TO DEFUSE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TENSIONS BETWEEN **RWANDA** AND NEIGHBORING STATES. RWANDAN MILITARY SOURCES SAID THE REOPENING OF THE CORRIDOR, A MAJOR

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REGIONAL COMMERCE ROUTE UNTIL RENDERED UNSAFE BY THE CONFLICT, IS NOW DELAYED INDEFINITELY.

4. (~~C/NF~~) COMMENT: ALL INFORMATION ON THE ALLEGED INCIDENT HAS SO FAR COME SOLELY FROM RWANDAN OFFICIAL SOURCES AND IS SKETCHY. THE RPF HAS FOCUSED DURING THE ELEVEN-MONTH CONFLICT ON UPSETTING **RWANDA'S** ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND FORCING THE CLOSING OF KEY ROADS. RPF TACTICS, HOWEVER, ARE TYPICALLY TO SHELL TROOPS FROM SOME DISTANCE AWAY OR TO HARASS THEM WITH SPORADIC HIT-AND-RUN ATTACKS, AND NOT TO USE MINES OR DESTROY BRIDGES.

5. (~~C/NF~~) INCONSISTENCIES AND THE ABSENCE OF HARD EVIDENCE DO NOT PRECLUDE THE RPF FROM HAVING DONE THE DAMAGE THE RWANDANS ALLEGE. THE RPF MAY POSSESS MINES, OR THE REPORT MAY SIMPLY CONTAIN ERRORS. BECAUSE THE RPF IS EXCLUDED FROM THE 7 SEPTEMBER SUMMIT, THE REBELS MAY HAVE WANTED TO REMIND SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE THEM. THE OFTEN VOCAL RPF, HOWEVER, HAS NOT CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY. DELAYING THE ROADWAY'S OPENING ALSO RISKS ALIENATING THOSE SYMPATHETIC REGIONAL ACTORS WHOSE ECONOMIES SUFFER BY ITS CONTINUED CLOSURE.

6. (~~C/NF~~) WHILE UNLIKELY TO HAVE DESTROYED A RWANDAN BRIDGE, THE RWANDAN ARMY COULD ACCIDENTALLY HAVE SET OFF ITS OWN MINES ON THE ROADWAY: IT USES THEM OFTEN AND SOMETIMES FORGETS WHERE IT LAID THEM.

7. (~~C/NF~~) REAL PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS WILL PLACE STRAINS ON THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT; AMONG THE ISSUES TO BE FACED ARE THE RETURN OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES AND POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION THAT REBELS SAY SHOULD INCLUDE THE PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION AND MORE ETHNIC POWERSHARING.

ADMIN

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