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SERIAL: DODID 36-10A

BODY

SUBJ: **RWANDA**: REBEL ATTACKS. (~~C/NF~~)

DOI: 5 FEB 91 (AS OF 1654 EST)

TEXT: 1. (~~C/NF~~) RWANDAN REBELS HAVE RENEWED ATTACKS AGAINST NORTHERN TOWNS.

2. (~~C/NF~~) ON 2 FEBRUARY, THE DAY AFTER ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY GENERAL SECRETARY SALIM VISITED RUHENGARI, THE RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF) LAUNCHED ANOTHER ATTACK ON THE TOWN. IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, RPF TROOPS CONVERGED ON RUHENGARI IN A THREE-PRONGED ASSAULT FROM THE NORTH, WEST, AND EAST BUT WERE REPULSED BY RWANDAN GOVERNMENT FORCES. THIS INCIDENT IS IN CONTRAST TO THE 23 JANUARY RPF ATTACK, IN WHICH THE REBELS OVERRAN RUHENGARI. AS OF 3 FEBRUARY, THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMED THAT ALL WAS QUIET, BUT RESIDENTS REPORTED CONTINUED SPORADIC SHOOTING AND A GRENADE ATTACK ON THE FRENCH HOSPITAL.

3. (~~C/NF~~) ALTHOUGH NO SPECIFIC INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE STRENGTH OF THE ATTACKING REBELS, THE FORCE MOST LIKELY CONSISTED OF SEVERAL BATTALIONS. GOVERNMENT FORCES, WHICH INCLUDED THE HUYE AND RUHENGARI BATTALIONS, AS WELL AS THE PARACOMMANDO BATTALION, PROBABLY HAD 2,000 TROOPS. THIS NUMBER IS ABOUT DOUBLE THE NORMAL STRENGTH FOR THE GARRISON.

4. (~~C/NF~~) ON 4 FEBRUARY THE RPF CONDUCTED TWO SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS IN THE GISENYI PREFECTURE, SOUTHWEST OF RUHENGARI. THE FIRST WAS

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DIRECTED AT THE BIGOGWE COMMANDO TRAINING CENTER, AND THE SECOND APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE JUST SOUTH OF GISENYI NEAR THE BRALIRWA BREWERY. IN ADDITION TO THE TRAINING UNIT AT BIGOGWE, THE ONLY OTHER RWANDAN MILITARY UNIT USUALLY STATIONED IN THE AREA IS A BATTALION IN GISENYI.

5. (~~C/NF~~) THE REBELS CONTINUE TO OCCUPY A SMALL SECTION OF FORESTED LAND IN **RWANDA'S** VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK. THUS FAR, GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO REESTABLISH CONTROL OVER THAT AREA.

6. (~~C/NF~~) COMMENT: AT LEAST ONE MOTIVE FOR THESE LATEST ATTACKS COULD BE THE RPF'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION BEFORE TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO THE US EMBASSY IN KAMPALA, THE RWANDAN AMBASSADOR TO UGANDA HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RPF AND IS JUST WAITING TO MEET WITH A REBEL REPRESENTATIVE.

7. (~~C/NF~~) EXPANDING THE TERRITORY UNDER ITS CONTROL IN THE NORTH OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, REDUCING THE RWANDAN ARMED FORCES' ABILITY TO EXERCISE TERRITORIAL CONTROL, WOULD MOST LIKELY GIVE THE RPF MORE LEVERAGE AGAINST PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S ADMINISTRATION. IN ADDITION, CONTINUED GOVERNMENT MILITARY OPERATIONS AND THE DISRUPTION OF PRIMARY CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LOGS WILL STRAIN THE RWANDAN ECONOMY, FURTHER REDUCING HABYARIMANA'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN A HARD LINE IN NEGOTIATIONS.

ADMIN

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