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ORIGIN AF-01

INFO LOG-00 OASY-00 TEDE-00 ADS-00 ONY-00 SSO-00 /001R

DRAFTED BY: AF/C: MBLEONARD
APPROVED BY: AF/C: EESVENDSEN

-----E6BA8F 251705Z /38

R 251701Z AUG 95
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 202770

E.O. 12356: DECL: 08/25/05
TAGS: AMGT RW BY CG
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

1. RECENT SITREPS ON ZAIRE REFOULEMENT FOLLOW:
2. AUGUST 24

(C) FORCED REPATRIATIONS WERE HALTED FOR TODAY, BUT WITH NO ASSURANCES THAT THE SUSPENSION WOULD CONTINUE PENDING THE ARRIVAL OF HIGH COMMISSIONER OGATA IN ZAIRE TO DISCUSS A RESOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. NONE OF EMBASSY KINSHASA'S CONTACTS WOULD CONFIRM AN OFFICIAL CHANGE OF GOZ POLICY ON REPATRIATION. THE ONE-DAY SUSPENSION MAY BE A TEST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ZAIRE ADDITIONAL ASSURANCES OF

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RAPID AND MEANINGFUL ACTION ON THE REFUGEE ISSUE, AS PM KENGO REQUESTED OF A/S MOOSE IN THEIR AUGUST 23 TELEPHONE CONVERSATION.

(C) THE ZAIRIAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS GOT AHEAD OF HIS GOVERNMENT, ISSUING A STATEMENT THAT THE REPATRIATIONS WOULD STOP IN LIGHT OF AN AGREEMENT WITH UNCHR. THE ZAIRIAN CHARGE IN WASHINGTON PHONED AF/C TO CONFIRM THAT HIS COUNTERPART IN PARIS HAD SPOKEN OUT OF TURN. REUTER APPARENTLY PICKED UP THE ERRONEOUS REPORT.

(C) UNHCR DELIVERED A FORMAL PROPOSAL EARLY AUGUST 24 FOR MRS. OGATA (CURRENTLY IN JAPAN) TO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER KENGO. THEY HAVE APPARENTLY ARRANGED TO MEET IN GENEVA ON AUGUST 28. NO INTERIM PHONE CALL FROM MRS. OGATA IS PLANNED, BUT UNHCR'S CARROL FAUBERT, WHO IS IN THE REGION, IS REPORTEDLY IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH KENGO.

(C) THE FRENCH DEMARCHED KENGO AUGUST 23 ALONG LINES SIMILAR TO OURS. WHILE THEY CONSIDER MRS. OGATA'S TRIP A POSITIVE STEP, THEY ALSO BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE A REGIONAL CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE REGION'S MANY PROBLEMS. THEY BELIEVE THE REFOULEMENT WAS SPURRED BY ZAIRE'S PERCEPTION OF INATTENTION TO ITS NEEDS, AND BY THE LIFTING OF THE ARMS EMBARGO.

(SBU) THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER ISSUED A STATEMENT AUGUST 23 ASKING THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT TO STOP THE FORCIBLE REPATRIATION AND COORDINATE WITH RWANDA AND THE UNHCR TO ORGANIZE THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES. HE NOTED

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THAT DURING HIS TRIP TO THE REGION IN JULY, HE HAD EMPHASIZED TO THE GOR THE NEED TO CREATE CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO THE RETURN. HARALD GANNS, A/S MOOSE'S GERMAN COUNTERPART, IS IN RWANDA TO ADDRESS THE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND CONDITIONS IN THE PRISONS.

(C) MRS. OGATA AND SYG BOUTROS-GHALI HAVE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE REFUGEE PRESENCE. JAPAN

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IS CANVASSING OTHER DONORS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION PLANS, BUT APPEARS DISPOSED TO PITCH IN FINANCIALLY. ACCORDING TO THE JAPANESE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, NEITHER GERMANY NOR THE UK INTENDS A NEW CONTRIBUTION TO ZAIRE.

3. AUGUST 23

(C) THE FORCED REPATRIATIONS CONTINUED ON AUGUST 23. UNHCR REPORTED APPROXIMATELY 14,000 REFUGEES HAD BEEN RETURNED TO RWANDA AND BURUNDI BY THE EVENING OF AUGUST 22. THEY NOTED THE PACE OF THE REPATRIATION IS SLOWING, BOTH BECAUSE OF POOR ORGANIZATION/LOGISTIC OBSTACLES (FUEL SHORTAGES, VEHICLE BREAKDOWNS) AND BECAUSE SOME REFUGEES ARE FLEEING TO THE HILLS. AN ESTIMATED 130,000 REFUGEES HAVE DONE SO.

(C) THE SECURITY COUNCIL APPROVED A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON THE REFUGEE REPATRIATION. ZAIRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KAMANDA ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE REGRETTING THAT THIS STATEMENT DID NOT MORE EXPLICITLY TAKE ZAIRE'S EFFORTS TO ACCOMMODATE THE REFUGEES INTO ACCOUNT. A/S MOOSE PHONED PM KENGO, POINTING OUT THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF ZAIRE'S
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CONCERNS (BURDEN IMPOSED ON REFUGEES, NEED FOR MORE PROACTIVE RWANDAN STANCE TO ENCOURAGE RETURN, ASSISTANCE TO CARE FOR REFUGEES) WAS IN FACT ADDRESSED IN THE UNSC STATEMENT. KENGO WAS NOT ENTIRELY MOLLIFIED, BUT APPEARED TO BE SEEKING FURTHER ASSURANCE THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO DECLARE A SUSPENSION TO THE REPATRIATION. AF/C WILL EXPLORE WITH PRM AVENUES TO INVOLVE THE UNHCR AND MRS. OGATA IN THIS REASSURANCE EXERCISE. AS OF TODAY, HOWEVER, KENGO GAVE NO ASSURANCE OF AN IMMEDIATE HALT TO THE REFOULEMENT.

(C) BOTH THE BELGIAN EMBASSY AFRICA WATCHER AND AID KIGALI NOTED THAT SOME OF THE REPATRIATIONS ARE BEING CALLED VOLUNTARY. WITH THE ZAIRIAN LOGISTIC DISARRAY, SOME REFUGEES HAVE WALKED HOME, AND COULD HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO FLEE TO THE HILLS INSTEAD OF HEADING EAST. ALSO, WITH THE HUTU MILITIA FLEEING, REFUGEES CAN MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICE ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT TO RETURN.

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(C) IN KIGALI, THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH WELCOMED THE LIFTING OF THE ARMS EMBARGO, REGRETTING IT HAD BEEN A TEMPORARY LIFT INSTEAD OF A TOTAL ONE. THE GOR EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT'S ANGRY REACTION TO THE LIFTING, AND DEPLORED CERTAIN "INDIGNITIES" VISITED ON THE REFUGEES AS THEY RETURNED IN THE GOZ-ORGANIZED REPATRIATION. THE GOR NOTED THAT THE RETURN OF REFUGEES IS THE PRIMARY ELEMENT OF ITS POLITICAL PROGRAM. IT LAUNCHED AN APPEAL TO RWANDAN REFUGEES TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REFOULEMENT AND TO COME HOME TO THEIR "MOTHER COUNTRY," WHERE THEY WOULD BE WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS.

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(C) OAU SYG SALIM MAY TRAVEL TO KINSHASA AUGUST 24. THE ACTING SYG PASCAL GAYAMA HAS CONTACTED THE ZAIRIAN AMBASSADOR IN ADDIS TO ENCOURAGE THE GOZ TO REFRAIN FROM ACTS WHICH WOULD WORSEN THE SITUATION. HE FURTHER NOTED THAT ANY ACTION WITH REGARD TO REFUGEES SHOULD BE TAKEN JOINTLY WITH UNHCR, RWANDA, AND BURUNDI, NOT UNILATERALLY.

(C) THE EUROPEAN UNION IS CONTEMPLATING A STATEMENT AND DEMARCHES CONDEMNING ZAIRE'S ACTION, ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFER OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE POPULATION IN THE AFFECTED AREAS IN ZAIRE. BELGIUM ANNOUNCED AN EMERGENCY AID PACKAGE FOR RWANDAN REFUGEES. THE USD 1.6 MILLION WILL BE DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES TO RWANDA AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION STRUCTURES IN ZAIRE.

4. AUGUST 22

(C) THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE CONTINUED TO FORCIBLY REPATRIATE REFUGEES ON AUGUST 22, EXPELLING SOME 5,000 ACCORDING TO UNHCR INFORMATION GIVEN IN THE UNSC. THIS IS ABOVE THE 2,000-3,000 FIGURE REPORTEDLY TARGETED BY THE ZAIRIAN MILITARY AS A DAILY GOAL. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE DEFENDING THE ZAIRIAN DECISION TO EXPEL THE REFUGEES. EMBASSY KINSHASA REPORTS

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ITS VARIOUS DEMARCHES CONTINUED TO MEET SHRILL RESPONSE WITH GOZ OFFICIALS. CHARGE YATES MET WITH THE ACTING INTERIOR MINISTER, WHO DISPLAYED NO HINT OF GOZ WILLINGNESS TO CEASE THE EXPULSIONS. YATES SEES PM KENGO
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WEDNESDAY MORNING, WHERE HE EXPECTS TO HEAR THAT ZAIRIANS WANT FIRM COMMITMENTS FROM THE UN AND TALK INSTEAD OF THREATS FROM RWANDA.

(C) UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES OGATA PLANS TO TRAVEL SOON TO ZAIRE TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU. AT DAY'S END, UNHCR GENEVA HAD INDICATIONS THAT PM KENGO WOULD STAND DOWN THE REPATRIATION EFFORT IF THE UN ARRANGES A TRIPARTITE COMMISSION (RWANDA, ZAIRE, UNHCR) TO ADDRESS THE REFUGEE SITUATION.

(SBU) THE U.S. ISSUED A STATEMENT ACKNOWLEDGING THE BURDEN THE REFUGEES IMPOSE ON ZAIRE, ASKING ZAIRE TO HALT THE REFOULEMENT, AND ASKING ALL PARTIES TO WORK TOWARD VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THE BELGIANS MADE A SIMILAR STATEMENT; THE SECURITY COUNCIL WAS CONSIDERING A STATEMENT.

5. AUGUST 21

(C) THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE HAS BEGUN FORCIBLY EXPELLING RWANDAN AND BURUNDIAN REFUGEES FROM GOMA. IN A FORCED BUT PEACEFUL ACTION ON AUGUST 19, THE GOZ MILITARY, ACCOMPANIED BY UNHCR REPRESENTATIVES, ENTERED CAMPS IN GOMA, BUKUVU, AND UVIRA. SOME 300 REFUGEES WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED FOR EXPULSION. A FURTHER 180 WERE RETURNED ON SUNDAY, AND 1,400 FROM THE MUGUNGA CAMP ON AUGUST 21. SOME FIRING, PANIC, AND BURNING OF TENTS ACCOMPANIED TODAY'S ACTION, BUT CALM WAS EVENTUALLY RESTORED. THE RETURNED REFUGEES INCLUDE RWANDANS, BURUNDIANS, SOME LONG-TIME RWANDAN RESIDENTS OF ZAIRE, AND A SPRINKLING OF
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EX-FAR.

(C) THE REFUGEES ARE BEING RECEIVED BY UNHCR AND THE RWANDAN ARMY (RPA) ON THE RWANDAN SIDE OF THE BORDER. THERE IS CURRENTLY DISCUSSION OF CREATING A TRANSIENT FACILITY AT GISENYI (IN RWANDA) TO SCREEN THE "RETURNEES." THE RPA, ACCOMPANIED BY THE RWANDAN MINISTERS OF DEFENSE AND THE INTERIOR IS SENDING A MISSION TO THE AREA IN COOPERATION WITH UNHCR AND UNAMIR COMMANDER KHAN. OTHER IMMEDIATE CONCERNS INCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF FIREFIGHTS BETWEEN GOZ MILITARY AND EX-FAR FORCES IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS, AS THE EX-FAR HAVE NOW HAD 72 HOURS TO PLAN A RESPONSE.

(C) EMBASSY KINSHASA IS ACTIVELY WORKING TO CONTACT PRIME MINISTER KENGO AND ANY OTHER SENIOR GOZ REPS THEY CAN REACH TO GET THEM TO CALL OFF THE MILITARY AND SUSPEND THE OPERATION. KENGO AND HIS GOVERNMENT, WHATEVER THEIR FEELINGS OF ANGER, BETRAYAL, OR ABANDONMENT OVER THE UNSC LIFTING OF THE RWANDAN ARMS EMBARGO, KNOW THAT THE SYG WOULD NOT HAVE HAD TIME TO REACT TO THE GOZ'S LETTER ON FINDING AN ALTERNATIVE SITE FOR THE REFUGEES. A POLITICAL OFFICER FROM EMBASSY KINSHASA IS EN ROUTE TO GOMA. EMBASSY KIGALI IS SENDING OFFICERS TO GISENYI AND BUKAVU.

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