

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: FEB 2005

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National Intelligence Council

NIC 01075/90
22 October 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: Walter L. Barrows
National Intelligence Officer for Africa

SUBJECT: Special Warning and Forecast Report: Rwanda (U)

At a special meeting held on 19 October, Intelligence Community analysts warned that the fighting in Rwanda holds growing potential for grave domestic and regional consequences.

- Following the 1 October incursion by Tutsi exiles based in neighboring Uganda, the military situation appears headed for a prolonged stalemate that will progressively weaken the regime of Rwandan President Habyarimana.
- Ethnic tensions are rising, and large-scale reprisals against Tutsis (about 15% of the population) would ensue if Habyarimana is no longer able to restrain his Hutu majority.
- Over 500,000 Tutsi refugees in neighboring countries are vulnerable to expulsion and constitute a potential source of manpower for the rebellion. Moreover, refugee burdens would increase manyfold were widespread communal violence in Rwanda to erupt.
- Spillover from Rwanda could destabilize the regimes in neighboring Burundi and Uganda.
- Libya may be attempting to play both sides of the conflict in Rwanda.

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Military Standoff. The Tutsi-dominated rebel force that invaded Rwanda from Uganda early this month now seems well entrenched in the northern part of the country. Roughly 4,000 strong, it includes about 2,000 combatants, many of whom suddenly defected from the Ugandan army and are capable soldiers. They are well-led and appear to have a logistics chain that leads back across the Ugandan border.

Facing them are about 5,000 members of the Rwandan army and a 2,000-man gendarmerie. As long as deliveries of supplies from foreign patrons continue, the security forces will be capable of preventing the rebels from threatening the capital city, Kigali.

Government forces are tiring, however. Zairian troops sent to bolster them performed poorly and have been withdrawn. In contrast, the rebels seem capable of holding on as long as the Ugandan border is not sealed. Moreover, their numbers may swell as Tutsi exiles in the region join their cause.

FOREIGN TROOPS IN RWANDA	
French:	Paracommandos (one company) Légionnaires (one company)
Belgian:	Paracommandos (one company)

French and Belgian troops deployed to Rwanda almost certainly will not operate beyond the Kigali area. Their role is primarily to protect their respective citizens as well as the main airport. Belgium in particular is wary of prolonged involvement and would withdraw if widespread reprisals against Tutsis flared up. Brussels is urging a cease-fire, hoping the requirement for its troops will be removed.

Habyarimana Under the Gun. The incursion has magnified the President's already serious problems. Weakened by a worsening economy and factionalism among the majority Hutus, his regime is now under serious challenge from Hutu militants seeking reprisals against Tutsis. Habyarimana has little room for maneuver:

- o Meeting the rebel demand for repatriation of refugees would be extremely difficult given Rwanda's high population density and consequent land pressures.

- o Prolongation of the rebellion would strengthen his domestic opponents and raise chances for ethnically based atrocities, which in turn would seriously jeopardize external support.

Regional Ramifications. Neighboring states are anxious to unburden themselves of

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Tutsi refugees who arrived in waves following successive ethnic upheavals in Rwanda since the late 1950's. On the other hand, a fresh outbreak of communal violence would see these political and economic burdens snowball.

the northern or eastern parts of Uganda could test his leadership. Moreover, his international credibility (especially as Chairman of the OAU) may have been tarnished.

RWANDAN REFUGEES IN THE REGION pre-Incursion	
Burundi	247,000
Uganda	225,000
Tanzania	22,000
Zaire	12,000
Unclassified	

Moreover, renewed civil conflagration in Rwanda would have serious political repercussions elsewhere in the region, particularly:

o Burundi, where the ethnic makeup is identical to Rwanda's, albeit with the minority Tutsis in control of the regime. President Buyoya's efforts to restrain Tutsi hardliners will be undermined the longer the Rwandan crisis persists.

o Uganda, where there is strong suspicion that President Museveni turned a blind eye to the incursion despite losing roughly 1,500 soldiers as deserters, among them some of his best. Further defections of key officers coupled with an upsurge of insurgency in

Libyan Meddling? Tripoli may be seeking to exploit Habyarimana's desperation by offering military assistance, although the Rwandan government denies making any overtures. Libya has in recent years noticeably increased its presence in Kigali. It has also long provided assistance to the Ugandan armed forces and may well have contacts with the Tutsi rebels. In short, Qadhafi may attempt to play both sides of the conflict.

Collection Notes [REDACTED]

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Walter L. Barrows

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