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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, ASEC, AMGT, PREF, BY, RW

SUBJECT: BURUNDI COUP: RWANDAN REACTION

REF: KIGALI 03818

- CONFIDENTIAL ENTIRE TEXT.
- 2. SUMMARY: THE BURUNDI COUP IS THE PREOCCUPATION OF ALL RWANDANS. PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA SUMMONED

Classification Extended on: 03/31/2014 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~ Authority: DSCG 11-1 ~ Declassify on: 10/25/2023

WESTERN DIPLOMATS TO A MEETING ON THE FIRST DAY, OCTOBER 21. HE ASKED FOR FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY IN BURUNDI AND RECEIVED A FORMAL TURNDOWN FROM THE FRENCH AND REJECTION BY THE OTHERS. HE THEN ASKED IF THE ISSUE COULD BE TAKEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL. THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING THE COUP, BUT CALLING ON RWANDANS TO RESPOND WITH CALM AND VIGILANCE. THE RWANDAN PRESS HAS PUBLISHED THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMUNIQUES CALLING FOR CALM, BUT ALSO READ IN TOTA 5#3:9..7,8173 |49. THE SO-CALLED GOVERNMENT IN EXILE AND THE MINISTERS IN HIDING IN BURUNDI. THE CDR RADIO STATION HAS BEEN OUTRAGEOUS IN TRYING TO INCITE VIOLENCE. ALL THE

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POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE PUBLISHED COMMUNIQUES
CONDEMNING THE COUP, INCLUDING THASRPFFROM ITS RADIO
STATION MUHUBURA. KIGALI IS NOW CALM, BUT RENEWED
FEARS OF COHABITATION WITH THE TUTSIS WILL MAKE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARUSHA ACCORD MORE DIFFICULT.
END SUMMARY.

3. A COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE AT THE EMBASSY HAS PREVENTED US FROM PROVIDING REGULAR REPORTS ON THE RWANDAN REACTION TO THE EVENTS IN NEIGHBORING BURUNDI SINCE REFTEL OCTOBER 21.

THE PRESIDENT

4. PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA SUMMONED WESTERN DIPLOMATS LATE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, TO MAKE AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR WESTERN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY IN BUJUMBURA. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PRIME MINISTER AGATHE UWILINGIYIMANA. HE HAD ALREADY SENT A MESSAGE REQUESTING MILITARY INTERVENTION BY THE FRENCH, AND HAD HIS STAFF POSE THE QUESTION TO THE GERMANS AND THE AMERICANS. WE INFORMED THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA THAT A REQUEST FOR U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION WOULD NOT BE WELCOME. THE FRENCH RECEIVED THE REQUEST FORMALLY. AMBASSADOR MARLAUD MET WITH THE PRESDENT JUST BEYOIEIOZD REST OF US ON OCTOBER 21 AND FORMALLY DECLINED THE RWANDAN REQUEST FOR FRENCH INTERVENTION. HE WENT ON TO TELL THE PRESIDENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE FELT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA NOT TO STIR UP ETHNIC HATREDS BUT RATHER TO URGE CALM IN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRY. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. IN REFQHHWFFYTHE PRESIDENT READ TO THESDIPLOMATS THE COMMUNIQUE THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT, SIGNED BY THE PRIME MINISTER. HE THEN ASKED IF UNSC MEMBERS WOULD BE WILLING TO RAISE THE ISSUE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

FURGED THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER	R TO
MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO HAVE THE RPF AS	SSOCIATED
WITH THEIR COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING THE COUP I	N BURUNDI,
NOTING THAT THE RPF HAS PUBLICLY BEEN A GREAT	CHAMPION
OF DEMOCRACY.	
	THE

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PRIME MINISTER SAID THE CABINET HAD TRIED TO FIND A WAY TO ASSOCIATE THE RPF WITH THEIR STATEMENT BUT LACK TACTICAL MEANS TO COMMUNICATE. (IN THE END, THE RPF ISSUED ITS OWN CONDEMNATION OF THE BURUNDI COUP ON RADIO MUHUBURA THURSDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 21.)

- 7. ON OCTOBER 24, HABYARIMANA FLEW TO GBADOLITE TO DISCUSS WITH MOBUTU THE "MEANS OF REESTABLISHING DEMOCRACY IN BURUNDI".
- 8. THE PRESIDENCY WAS APPARENTLY BEHIND THE DECISION OF THE BURUNDI MINISTER OF HEALTH TO DECLARE A GOVERNMENT IN EXILE. THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET, ENOCH RUHIGIRA, MADE THE PHONE CALLS TO THIS EMBASSY AND TO OTHER EMBASSIES TO ENCOURAGE AMBASSADORS TO TALK WITH MINISTER MINANI ON THURSDAY, THEN SAW TO IT THAT RADIO RWANDA GAVE HIM ADEQUATE TIME ON THE AIR ON FRIDAY. SINCE SATURDAY, WE HAVE HEARD LITTLE FROM MR. MINANI, BECAUSE TELEPHONE LINES OPENED UP AGAIN TO BUJUMBURA, AND RWANDANS BEGAN TO CONFIDENTIAL

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TALK WITH AND RECEIVE COMMUNIQUES FROM MORE SENIOR MINISTERS IN HIDING IN BUJUMBURA.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE

THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED ON OCTOBER 21 STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE ACTION OF THE BURUNDI MILITARY, BUT CALLS ON THE RWANDAN PEOPLE TO REACT TO THE CRISIS WITH "CALM AND VIGILANCE". THE COMMUNIQUE RESULTED FROM A CABINET MEETING ON THE 21ST WHICH WAS CHAIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER WHO BROKE AWAY FRBM A MEETING WITH THE RPF IN KINIHIRA IN ORDER TO RETURN TO THE CABINET SESSION. THE SECURITY COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET MET ON FRIDAY AND AGAIN ON SUNDAY TO DISCUSS BURUNDI. THE WHOLE CABINET MET AGAIN ON SATURDAY. COMMUNIQUES FROM THE CABINET SESSIONS CONTINUED TO CALL ON RWADANS FOR CALM AND APPEALED TO THEM NOT TO LET EVENTS IN BURUNDI STAND IN THE WAY OF RWANDA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARUSHA PEACE ACCORD. THEY URGED RWANDANS TO RESPOND WITH GENEROSITY AND TO WELCOME THE REFUGEES WHO WERE REPORTED TO BE ARRIVING IN GREAT NUMBERS FROM BURUNDI.

10. DURING THE FRIDAY SESSION MINISTERS SOUGHT MEANS TO CONTAIN THE VIOLENT REACTIONS OF RWANDANS AND PREVENT THE VIOLENCE IN BURUNDI FROM SPILLING INTO RWADA. THE FRIDAY SESSION WAS PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO THE VIOLENCE PERPETUATED BY CDR YOUTH FRIDAY MORNING, VIOLENCE WHICH WAS QUITE QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY PUT DOWN BY THE GENDARMERIE. NEVERTHELESS, IN SPITE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 KIGALI 03854 02 OF 04 251711Z MAJOR GENDARME EFFORTS, ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AGAIN FOLLOWED THE MDR/MRND RALLY ON SATURDAY AND THE CDR "RALLY" ON SUNDAY MORNING.

PRESS TREATMENT OF THE COUP

11. THE BURUNDI COUP HAS BEEN ALMOST THE SOLE PREOCCUPATION OF GOVERNMENT RADIO RWANDA AND OF THE RIGHT-WING RTLM RADIO IN KIGALI. RWANDA RADIO HAS PLAYED ALL GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUES CALLING FOR CALM, BUT HAS ALSO PLAYED VERBATIM THE TEXTS OF POLITICAL PARTY DECLARATIONS FROM BURUNDI, THE STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH FOLLOWING HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT IN EXILE HERE, AND STATEMENTS FROM THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MINISTER OF

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DEFENSE IN BURUNDI WHOSE SOURCE WAS NEVER REVEALED.
RADIO RWANDA'S COVERAGE OF THE COUP WAS BOTH ALARMIST
AND SUBJECT TO INTERPRETATION OF INCITEMENT OF THE
HUTU MAJORITY, IN SPITE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS

TO CALM THE POPULATION.

12. BUT RADIO RWANDA WAS THE ESSENCE OF CALM COMPARED TO THE RTLM (RADIO TELEVISION LIBRE DES MILLE COLLINES), THE CDR VOICE FROM KIGALI. THE RTLM CALLED ON ALL RWANDANS TO RESIST THE THREAT TO DEMOCRACY BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS, AND REPORTED THAT BOTH RPF COMMANDER PAUL KAGAME AND MDR PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE TWAGIRAMUNGU HAD BEEN IN BUJUMBURA TO HELP PLOT THE COUP. AFTER A FLOOD OF PROTEST FROM OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES, THE RTLM RETRACTED THE ACCUSATION AGAINST TWAGIRAMUNGU, BUT AS OF SUNDAY, MUCH OF RWANDA, INCLUDING THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, BELIEVED THAT KAGAME WAS PARTY TO THE TUTSI COUP IN BUJUMBURA.

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13. RWANDAN TELEVISION COVERED PICTURES OF THE BODIES FLOWING IN THE NYABARONGO RIVER, COVERAGE CLEARLY TAKEN FROM MILITARY HELICOPTERS (THE ONLY ONES IN THE COUNTRY), HYPING THE BRUTALITY OF THE COUP IN BUJUMBURA.

POLITICAL PARTIES

- 14. BY FRIDAY, ALL THE MAJOR AND MOST OF THE SMALL POLITICAL PARTIES HAD PUT OUT COMMUNIQUES CONDEMNING THE RAPE OF DEMOCRACY IN BURUNDI. EVEN THE RPF ANNOUNCED ITS CONDEMNATION OF THE COUP, ALTHOUGH RWANDAN OPINION SEEMS NOT TO TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY.
- 15. THE MDR HARDLINE GROUP TRIED TO SCHEDULE A RALLY ON FRIDAY, THEN POSTPONED IT UNTIL SATURDAY AND MARCHED FROM THE CENTER OF TOWN TO THE REGIONAL STADIUM WITH SEVERAL THOUSAND ADHERENTS. ALSO PRESENT ON THE STAGE AT THE STADIUM WERE MRND AND CDR LEADERS. A SIMILAR BUT SMALLER RALLY WAS SPONSORED BY THE CDR ON SUNDAY. THE SAME THREE PARTY FACTIONS PARTICIPATED. THIS IS A CURIOUS COALITION, OF THE MDR, MRND AND CDR. IT SEEMS TO HAVE BROUGHT TOGETHER THE HUTU SUPREMIST FACTIONS OF THE THREE PARTIES, WHEREAS THE FORMAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MDR AND THE MRND IS WITH THE TWAGIRAMUNGU FACTION AND THE PRESIDENT'S FACTION OF THE PARTY WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN THE NEXT TRANSITION GOVERNMENT. MOST TROUBLING IS THE FACT THAT THE ETHNICALLY INSPIRED COUP IN BUJUMBURA GIVES RENEWED CREDIBILITY TO THE CDR PARTY AND HAS FORCED OR ENCOURAGED OTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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MAINSTREAM PARTIES OR FACTIONS OF OTHER MAINSTREAM
PARTIES TO ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH THE PREVIOUSLY
DISCREDITED CDR.

16. FOLLOWING BOTH RALLIES, THERE WERE INCIDENTS OF ETHNICALLY INSPIRED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING HOSPITALIZATION OF ABOUT A DOZEN VICTIMS. THERE WERE NO KNOWN DEATHS, BUT CONSIDERABLE PROPERTY DAMAGE BY YOUNG THUGS SUPPORTING THE CDR AND THE RIGHT WINGS OF THE MRND AND MDR.

17. COMMANT: A SNEEZE IN BUJUMBURA BRINGS PNEUMONIA TO KIGALI. INSECURITY IN THE TUTSI COMMUNITY WAS EXACERBATED BY A COUPLE OF WILD CDR TYPES CALLING ON

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THEIR COLLEAGUES TO MURDER TUTSIS WHEREVER THEY FOUND THEM, AND POSTING SUCH THREATS ON TREES AND TELEPHONE POLES THROUGHOUT THE TOWN. GOVERNMENT LEADERS WERE AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE, BUT SOMEHOW RELUCTANT TO CENSOR THE MOST TROUBLING REPORTS ON RADIO RWANDA, ALTHOUGH THEY DID PUT THE GENDARMERIE OUT IN FORCE AND KEEP THEM IN AREAS WHICH WERE KNOWN TO BE TROUBLED. THE WILLINGNESS OF RWANDANS TO ACCEPT WITH EQUANIMITY THE ARRIVAL OF THE RPF INTO KIGALI HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY THREATENED BY THE BURUNDI COUP AND THE TENSION AND VIOLENCE THAT HAS ACCOMPANIED IT HERE.

18. IN HIS OPENING REMARKS TO DIPLOMATS, PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA NOTED THAT THE MOVEMENT FORWARD TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN BURUNDI HAD BEEN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN AFRICA. HE SAID THAT HE AND OTHERS BELIEVED THAT WITH ANOTHER FEW, PERHAPS A TOTAL OF TEN REALLY FREE ELECTIONS IN AFRICA, THE WHOLE AFRICAN CONTINENT COULD TURN AROUND. HE ADDED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT THE BURUNDI ELECTIONS HAD BEEN ONE OF THE
STABILIZING EVENTS WHICH HAD MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR
RWANDA TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE RPF IN ARUSHA, IMPLYING
THAT THE TUTSI COUP IN BURUNDI REOPENED IN HIS MIND
HIS WILLINGNESS TO FULFILL THE CONDITIONS OF THE

RUSHA ACCORD.				
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19. BY MONDAY MORNING, KIGALI IS CALM, BUT RWANDANS WHO BELIEVE IN RECONCILIATION FEEL THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED A SERIOUS SHOCK. END COMMENT. FLATEN

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