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NAIROBI 012009/01

RELEASED IN FULL

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DE RUBENR #2809/01 201 **

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201430Z JUL 94

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0289

BT

CLASS: LIMITED OFFICIAL
CHREF: PROG 07/28/94
APPRV: CHARGF:ESCHENBER
DATE: DART:CDGERSONY
CL:JEMAKSTADT
CLEAR: USAIDDP:JBATWOOD
RAI TRAFF
ART:JESSETER
DISTR: CPA POL PART
AID REFSO TCON
OPFIN: OOR

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DEPT FOR AF, AF/C, AND RP

DEPT ALSO PASS AID, OFDA AND MSC

E.O. 12358: N/A

TACS: PREL, PAID, PREF, UN

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATOR ATWOOD'S PROPOSAL FOR
DEMARCHE TO DONORS CONCERNING COMA REFUGEE SITUATION

*Outgoing alarm
Rwanda*

1. [REDACTED]

2. SUMMARY: POST PASSES ON ADMINISTRATOR ATWOOD'S
REQUEST FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER A DEMARCHE BY
POSTS IN DONOR COUNTRIES CONCERNING THE URGENT NEED
FOR THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR THE
CATASTROPHIC AND VOLATILE SITUATION IN COMA, ZAIRE
WITH THE OUTPOURING OF MORE THAN ONE MILLION RWANDAN
REFUGEES. THIS OUTFLOW HAS MAJOR HUMANITARIAN AND
POLITICAL CHALLENGES, SOME OF WHICH ARE DESCRIBED
BELOW. THE ADMINISTRATOR BELIEVES SUCH A DEMARCHE TO
BE A USEFUL STEP TOWARD IMPROVING THE SITUATION. END
SUMMARY.

3. ADMINISTRATOR ATWOOD AND OFDA DIRECTOR BORTON
TRAVELED TO COMA, ZAIRE ON JULY 18. THE SITUATION
THEY SAW WAS EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND THE NEEDS VAST.
UNHCR HAS IDENTIFIED FOUR SITES, AND REFUGEES HAVE
BEGUN MOVING TO THEM. HOWEVER, COMA TOWN REMAINS
COMPLETELY CLOGGED WITH REFUGEES, TREES ARE BEING
CHOPPED DOWN AT AN ALARMING RATE, AND SANITARY
CONDITIONS ARE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING. UNHCR, OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NGO'S ARE GEARING UP
BUT ARE STRETCHED BEYOND CAPACITY. A MASSIVE
MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES AND CONCRETE ACTIONS ON THE
GROUND ARE NEEDED IMMEDIATELY TO AVERT A HUMAN
CATASTROPHE OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS AND TO STABILIZE
GROWING REGIONAL INSECURITY.

4. MANY OF THE REFUGEES IN NORTH KIVU HAVE BEEN ON
THE MOVE FOR DAYS. MSF/HOLLAND CONSERVATIVELY
ESTIMATES THAT ABOUT 20-30 PER 200,000 ARE DYING PER
DAY, DUE TO DEHYDRATION AND EXHAUSTION. MALARIA AND
DYSINTARY ARE THE MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEMS BEING SEEN AT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF SI
REVIEW AUTHORITY: EDWARD W. H
DATE/CASE ID: 24 JUN 1998 199500645

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THE MOMENT.

5. CRITICAL AND EXTREMELY URGENT NEEDS INCLUDE WATER, FOOD, TRANSPORT, PLASTIC SHEETING AND OTHER SHELTER MATERIAL, LATRINES, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND EQUIPMENT, BLANKETS AND OTHER ITEMS. THE US\$ IS AIRLIFTING FOOD AND OTHER URGENT SUPPLIES FOR THE ICRC AND UNHCR, HAS PROVIDED 19 MILLION USDOLS TO UNHCR, AND IS CONSIDERING ASSISTANCE FOR AIRPORT OPERATIONS. OTHER DONORS HAVE ALSO STARTED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, BUT MUCH MORE IS NEEDED.

6. LOCATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL CAMPS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM. MUCH OF THE AREA IS VOLCANIC AND MOUNTAINOUS, WITH LITTLE WATER SUPPLY. AN AREA IN THE REGION WHICH WOULD OFFER MORE SPACE FOR REFUGEE CAMPS WAS UNFORTUNATELY THE SCENE OF ETHNIC CONFLICT LAST YEAR; LOCATING A LARGE HUTU POPULATION THERE COULD CAUSE FURTHER CLASHES.

7. THE COMA REFUGEE SITUATION IS VERY UNSTABLE AND NOT SECURE. AMONG THE MILLION REFUGEES ARE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HUTU MILITIA AND RWANDAN MILITARY SOLDIERS. MOST BUT NOT ALL HAVE BEEN DISARMED BY THE ZAIRIAN MILITARY. MANY OF THE RWANDAN MILITARY ARRIVED BY VEHICLES, INCLUDING LARGE BUSES DONATED BY JAPAN, STOLEN UN AND OTHER DONORS' CARS, AND STOLEN TRUCKS. THIS DISGRUNTLED AND IDLE ARMY COULD HAVE A FURTHER DESTABILIZING EFFECT IN THE NORTH KIVU AREA AS WELL AS EVENTUALLY POSE A SECURITY THREAT IN NORTHWESTERN RWANDA. IN ADDITION, SOME OF THE RWANDAN MILITARY ARE BEING MOVED TO AN AREA WHICH BRINGS THEM CLOSE TO A PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED TUTSI CAMP.

8. FINALLY, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW REFUGEES MOVING TO THE SOUTH KIVU REGION OF ZAIRE AND TO NORTHERN BURUNDI, A FLOW WHICH STARTED JULY 19, WILL CREATE IMMENSE NEW PROBLEMS. IT COULD ADD TWO NEW AREAS OF INSTABILITY, AND THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY'S CAPACITY IS ALREADY STRETCHED VERY THIN BY THE FLOOD OF REFUGEES TO COMA AND ONGOING OPERATIONS IN TANZANIA.

PROPOSED DEMARCHE

9. ADMINISTRATOR ATWOOD PROPOSES A DEMARCHE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO

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THE OTHER PRESENT OR POTENTIAL DONORS.

BEGIN POINTS:

THE HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS OF A MILLION REFUGEES IN GOMA ARE ENORMOUS. THE USG ALREADY HAS PROVIDED RESOURCES, AND PLANS TO PROVIDE MORE, BUT A MASSIVE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE IS NEEDED.

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL AND/OR MATERIAL ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED TO SAVE LIVES, TO REDUCE REGIONAL TENSIONS, AND TO RELIEVE THE TERRIBLE BURDENS ON LOCAL RESOURCES POSED BY SUCH A HUGE INFUX.

MATERIAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE COORDINATED THROUGH UNHCR TO ENSURE ITS APPROPRIATE USE AND PRIORITIZED ARRIVAL.

POLITICAL SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR A RETURN OF REFUGEES TO RWANDA SHOULD BE EXPEDITIOUSLY PURSUED.

END POINTS. SCHUNTER

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