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ACTION AF-00

NAIROBI 12809 00 OF 02 201443Z

SHB5393

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PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, BUT MUCH MORE IS NEEDED.

R SHB

INFO LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	OAS-00	DODE-00	OIGO-01	FDRE-01
H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-16	L-00	ADS-00	NSAE-00
NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0289

NAIROBI 12809

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DEPT FOR AF, AF/G, AND RP

DEPT ALSO PASS AID, OFDA AND NSC

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PREL, EAID, PREF, UN

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

1. ENTIRE TEXT.

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 GOMA, 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, GOMA 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 DYSENTERY ARE THE MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEMS BEING SEEN AT 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 USG 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

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 18, 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

THE OTHER PRESENT OR POTENTIAL DONORS.

BEGIN POINTS:

-- THE HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS OF A MILLION REFUGEES IN COMA 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 INFLUX.

-- 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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