

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Rwandan Refugee Crisis (C)

1. The nearly 2 million Rwandan refugees in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi show no signs of returning to Rwanda under present circumstances, according to a wide variety of sources. Their continued presence in the camps poses the following risks:

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- **Regional Stability.** Elements of the former Rwandan regime, Army, and Interahamwe militia--the forces that spearheaded the genocide--control the refugee camps and use them as bases to launch raids back into Rwanda. These raids provoke the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Army to lash out at the Hutu population inside Rwanda. Kigali has almost certainly sent small reconnaissance patrols into Zaire and has repeatedly told US officials that it does not rule out attacking the camps. Hutu fighters have also fueled growing ethnic violence in the Masisi region of eastern Zaire. Burundi's Tutsi-dominated Army suspects that the Rwandan refugee camps in Burundi, Zaire, and Tanzania support Burundian Hutu insurgent groups; the Burundi Army has attacked refugee camps in Burundi and sent troops into Tanzania and possibly Zaire.
- **Saps Scarce Resources.** The international community spends upwards of \$2 million a day to provide assistance to the refugee camps in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi. The US Government has spent approximately \$400 million on refugee relief since the outbreak of the crisis in July 1994.
- **Hinders Other US Political Goals.** Kigali points to the attacks emanating from the camps to deflect criticism of its human rights record. Zairian President Mobutu has used the refugees to break out of his diplomatic isolation and some Zairians fear he will use the crisis to postpone national elections. []

2. Efforts by the International Community to cut assistance to the camps and resettle refugees to Rwanda or other areas of the host countries could spark one of the following negative scenarios:

- **Violent Confrontation.** Rwandan refugee leaders probably will violently resist attempts to move refugees from the camps. Hutu fighters would attack Western relief officials and any security forces meant to guard them. Zairian troops would take advantage of camp closures to loot the refugees and their camps. In the confusion, refugees might head to other refugee camps. Alternatively, camp leaders might order their followers to passively resist efforts to move them, calculating that the international relief community--under pressure from the international media--will resume aid if refugees begin to die.
- **Masisi Squared.** In our judgment, Rwandan refugees will probably scatter to urban and rural areas in eastern Zaire and western Tanzania to establish new ethnic strongholds, as they have done in the Masisi area. They would likely engage in ethnic cleansing of indigenous Zairians and Tanzanians, cause large-scale

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displacement, and create a severe humanitarian need in hard-to-reach interior areas of Zaire and Tanzania.

- Human Wave Return. There is a 30 percent possibility, in our judgment, that the Rwandan refugee leadership could successfully organize a mass return to Rwanda, using hundreds of thousands of civilian returnees to shield a Hutu invasion force. Such a return would be forcibly resisted by the Rwandan Army and could spark violence on par with the 1994 civil war. ☐

3. In our judgment, impairing the ability of the refugee leadership to organize resistance to resettlement is a key variable that could increase chances for success. In the past, swift unexpected actions have successfully disrupted the control of refugee leaders. The Zairian Army's destructive looting of several refugee camps last August forced leaders to flee the camps and persuaded some 14,000 mostly women and children refugees to return to Rwanda. Similar unexpected, coercive actions by the Burundi Army have sparked spikes in repatriation. A sudden and total assistance cutoff--especially for the camps north of Goma that are totally dependent on aid agencies for water--coupled with inducements to move to Rwanda or new camps in host countries might so disorient camp leaders that they would be malleable to working with humanitarian workers toward resettlement. Refugee leaders, however, would be certain to swiftly exploit any delays or hesitations in a resettlement campaign to rally widespread Hutu resistance. ☐

4. Prospects for a successful resettlement program would also increase if a large, well trained, heavily armed security force could be mobilized to:

- Protect Western humanitarian workers from hostile refugees and ill-disciplined Zairian troops.
- Demine roads that aid workers take to the camps and that would carry refugees back to Rwanda or to new camps in host countries.
- Perform crowd control. Such a force should also be equipped and trained to perform riot control operations.
- Perform police functions to detain troublemakers.
- Confiscate arms that refugees attempt to smuggle from existing camps to new camps or back into Rwanda.
- Block refugees from moving toward other camps or non-designated resettlement areas.

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