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FROM: FBIS RESTON VA
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WARNING: TOPIC: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL, LEADER, MILITARY, TERRORISM

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COUNTRY: AFGHANISTAN, UGANDA, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES

SUBJ: BRITISH AL-QA'IDA SUSPECT LINKED TO UGANDA BOMBS

SOURCE: LONDON THE TIMES (INTERNET VERSION-WWW) IN ENGLISH 30 JAN 02

TEXT:

[ARTICLE BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR: BRITISH AL-QA'IDA SUSPECT LINKED TO UGANDA BOMBS"]

[FBIS TRANSCRIBED TEXT] ONE OF THE BRITISH TERROR SUSPECTS BEING HELD AT CAMP X-RAY, THE AMERICAN MILITARY DETENTION CENTRE AT GUANTANAMO BAY IN CUBA, IS BEING INVESTIGATED BY UGANDAN POLICE IN CONNECTION WITH A SERIES OF BOMB EXPLOSIONS IN KAMPALA TWO YEARS AGO.

---FEROZ ---ABASSI, 22, A UGANDAN-BORN BRITON FROM CROYDON IN SOUTH LONDON, IS ONE OF THREE BRITISH NATIONALS AT CAMP X-RAY.

UGANDAN POLICE HAVE BEGUN INVESTIGATING POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN MR ABASSI AND THE BOMBING INCIDENTS THAT KILLED MORE THAN 80 PEOPLE BETWEEN 1997 AND 1999.

MAJOR-GENERAL KATUMBA WAMALA, KAMPALA'S POLICE CHIEF, SAID THAT MR ABASSI WAS KNOWN TO HAVE SPENT SOME TIME IN UGANDA DURING THE

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BOMB ATTACKS IN THE CAPITAL AND IN OTHER AREAS.

THE POLICE CHIEF SAID: "WE WANT TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH HIS (UGANDAN) PARENTS AND FIND OUT WHICH PEOPLE HE TALKED TO WHILE HE WAS HERE. WE SHALL DIG BACK AND FIND OUT WHAT HE WAS DOING AND WHETHER HIS VISIT IN 1999 WAS LINKED TO SOME TERRORIST ACTIVITIES."

GENERAL WAMALA SAID HIS INVESTIGATION HAD NOT BEEN REQUESTED BY THE FBI. NOR HAVE THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES BEEN MADE AWARE OF THE MOVES BY THE KAMPALA POLICE, ALTHOUGH MR ABASSI IS KNOWN TO HAVE RELATIVES IN UGANDA. "HE HAS FAMILY IN KAMPALA BUT WHAT HIS ACTIVITIES THERE MAY HAVE BEEN, WE DON'T KNOW," A BRITISH SECURITY SOURCE SAID.

THE UGANDAN AUTHORITIES HAVE CLAIMED THAT GROUPS IN UGANDA LINKED TO AL-QA'IDA CARRIED OUT THE ATTACKS, WHICH INVOLVED 43 BOMB EXPLOSIONS OVER TWO YEARS, CLAIMED 81 LIVES AND INJURED 262 PEOPLE.

THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR WARNED AMERICAN CITIZENS LIVING IN OR PLANNING TO VISIT UGANDA THAT THEY SHOULD BE WARY OF THREATS TO THEIR SAFETY FROM INSURGENT GROUPS ORIGINATING BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.

POLICE IN KAMPALA FOILED A PLOT TO BOMB THE US EMBASSY IN 1998, A MONTH AFTER LORRIES LOADED WITH BOMBS EXPLODED AT THE US EMBASSIES IN NAIROBI, KENYA, AND DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, KILLING A TOTAL OF 224 PEOPLE. USAMA BIN LADIN WAS ACCUSED BY THE AMERICANS OF MASTERMINDING THE ATTACKS.

THE BOMBINGS IN UGANDA WERE BLAMED ON THE ALLIED DEMOCRATIC FORCES REBEL GROUP, BASED IN WESTERN UGANDA AND ACROSS THE BORDER IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, WHICH HAD BEEN FIGHTING THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT MUSEVENI SINCE 1996.

MR ABASSI IS A UGANDAN ASIAN WHO CAME TO BRITAIN AT THE AGE OF EIGHT. HIS MOTHER, ZUMRATI JUMA, LAST SAW HIM IN DECEMBER 2000 WHEN HE ARRIVED AT THE FAMILY HOME IN CROYDON AND ANNOUNCED HE WAS GOING TO AFGHANISTAN.

HE WAS CAPTURED BY US FORCES IN KUNDUZ IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN LAST MONTH AND WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO BE SENT TO CAMP X-RAY.

AFGHAN LEADERS WILL BE IN LONDON TOMORROW TO DISCUSS THE

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BRITISH-LED PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN AND TO SEEK HELP IN BUILDING A UNIFIED ARMY FOR THE COUNTRY. HAMID KARZAI, THE INTERIM PRIME MINISTER, WILL SEE TONY BLAIR, WHO HAS PLEDGED TO HELP AFGHANISTAN OVER THE LONG TERM. QASIM FAHIM, HIS DEFENCE MINISTER, IS DUE TO SEE GEOFF HOON, HIS BRITISH COUNTERPART. BRITAIN IS NOT EXPECTED TO TAKE ON A LEADING ROLE IN TRAINING AN AFGHAN ARMY.

YESTERDAY, AS PART OF AN ATTEMPT TO GET TO KNOW THE TRIBAL WARLORDS IN AFGHANISTAN, MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN MCCOLL, THE BRITISH COMMANDER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF) IN KABUL, VISITED HERAT IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN, WHERE HE MET ISMAIL KHAN, THE GOVERNOR OF THE CITY. GENERAL MCCOLL, GUARDED BY BRITISH SPECIAL FORCES, SAID THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO THE GOVERNOR ABOUT SECURITY IN THE REGION. ISAF'S MANDATE COVERS ONLY KABUL.

[DESCRIPTION OF SOURCE: LONDON THE TIMES (INTERNET VERSION-WWW) IN ENGLISH -- INFLUENTIAL CENTER-RIGHT DAILY]

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