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MEETING WITH RWANDAN VICE PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME

CONTEXT OF MEETING

Vice President, Minister of Defense and pre-eminent Rwanda politician Paul Kagame, a Tutsi and member of the (mainly Tutsi) RPF has been in office since the then-guerrilla RPA took Kigali in July, 1994. Kagame is one of the "59ers" who grew up as a refugee in Uganda and served in Museveni's army. He led the RPA to victory, but ceded the top spot to President Pasteur Bizimungu, a moderate Hutu.

Kagame can be expected to seek further development aid and diplomatic/political support from the USG. He has indicated an interest in obtaining non-lethal military equipment from DOD stocks. Vice President Kagame will have met with Undersecretary of State Tim Wirth and Assistant Secretary of State George Moose on August 6, and Defense Secretary Perry on August 7.

The RPF-led coalition government has brought a large measure of stability to the country, while also encountering several formidable problems since taking power. The judicial system and administrative state were decimated in 1994. There are over 75,000 prisoners in Rwandan jails in horrific conditions, most arrested since Kagame took office. Members of Congress, NGOs and the international community are concerned about this problem, and the GOR's apparent lack of response to it. There are delays in putting a new law in place to handle this huge case load. There are 1.7 million Rwandan refugees, most of them in eastern Zaire and some of them armed. Most of the refugees receive international assistance and are under the control of the government and militia responsible for the genocide. Armed attacks back into Rwanda from this population have increased. Rwandan troops have committed atrocities since Kagame took office. There is a sense that guerrillas linked to the former genocidist regime now launch attacks in western Rwanda, as well as assassinations throughout the country, at will. This fuels the RPF's feeling of insecurity, which in turn makes it unwilling to release prisoners.

The USG has supported the current government. We have given over \$750 million in emergency and humanitarian aid to the sub-region (much more than development aid for Rwanda, a sore

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point with Kagame); AID has given substantial sums in development aid, DOD has provided humanitarian assistance and IMET training; various agencies have contributed money and personnel to efforts to ready the International Tribunal and Rwandan court system to try those suspected of crimes against humanity, including genocide. We have also supported the Rwandan government at the UN, including support for lifting the arms embargo against Rwanda. European governments believe that the USG is especially credible with the GOR.

OBJECTIVES

- o To assure Vice President Kagame that the USG supports the Government of Rwanda and its goals of repatriation, reconciliation, reconstruction and bringing those guilty of genocide to justice.
- o To reaffirm to the President that we are very interested in seeing a successful voluntary repatriation of Rwanda refugees, and note that a key step towards this goal would be reducing the prison population so that refugees feel less of a threat of arrest and imprisonment. The genocide bill currently before Rwanda's Parliament is a good first step.
- o To impress upon the Vice President the U.S. interest in working with Rwanda to end arms flows to Burundi and press, with the regional leadership, for talks between the Burundi government and Hutu insurgents.

TALKING POINTS

- o We wish to reaffirm our support for your government's objectives. The situation in Rwanda has not been easy. Despite the very difficult problems you have had to face, you have brought a measure of stability to your country, and we wish to continue to work with you.
- o We feel that the only long-term solution for Rwanda will be a power-sharing arrangement in which all non-genocidist elements of Rwanda can participate. It must be up to Rwandans to develop this arrangement, since no amount of outside assistance can replace consensus among the Rwandan people. This may be your government's biggest challenge.
- o The continued presence of 1.7 million Rwandan refugees in Zaire and Tanzania is destabilizing and untenable. It is in neither the Rwandan government's nor the international community's interest to continue with the status quo. It

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is critical that there be an expeditious and successful voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees in Zaire. The USG is discussing with the international community relocation of camps away from the border and resulting closure of those that have been most problematic, and taking steps to encourage voluntary repatriation. Rwanda would have serious responsibilities if such a strategy is adopted, including being prepared to receive large numbers of returnees and moving the Petit Barriere camp deeper into Rwanda.

- o At the same time, we are deeply concerned by the actions taken several weeks ago by Burundi authorities in expelling thousands of Rwandans from refugee camps against their will. We were equally disturbed by reports that this action, which contravenes Burundi's obligations under the Refugee Convention and established international practice, may have enjoyed the support of your government.
- o In order to encourage voluntary repatriation, it is essential that conditions be created inside Rwanda which will encourage refugees to return. There has been progress, but it is particularly important that the prison population be reduced significantly, that there be security for those who repatriate to their homes, and that abuses at the hands of security forces be minimized. This is of grave concern to us all.
- o The large numbers of prisoners in Rwanda, and their conditions, are being used by the extremist Hutus to make refugees fear for their safety upon return. The same is true of reports of killings of military-age Hutu men and other civilians.
- o We share your concern that the Rwanda Tribunal has not moved as quickly as we all would like. We hope your government will cooperate to the fullest extent with the Tribunal, including by providing access to witnesses and documents. It is in all of our interest to see perpetrators brought to justice.
- o We were pleased that your government ceased its participation in the recent forced repatriation of Rwandan refugees from Burundi. Ignoring internationally accepted humanitarian principles not only leads to further regional instability, but also undermines the credibility of the GOR's policy of welcoming refugees home in safety and dignity.

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- o Your visit comes in the wake of the Buyoya coup and the Arusha II summit of regional leaders, including Rwanda, that called for extensive sanctions as a "shock therapy" for the Bujumbura regime. We would be very interested in your views. As sanctions come into force, we will count very much on your government's key role in enforcing them.

If Asked:

- o Military Equipment: We will consider requests for acquisition of non-lethal U.S. military equipment by Rwanda on a case-by-case basis. However, we note that our concern about prisons, especially on Capitol Hill, could limit our ability to act.

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