

*Ambassador of France
In Charge of Mission
from the President of the Republic*

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for

the President of the Republic

PRESIDENT OF RWANDA'S VISIT (MONDAY APRIL 2)

President Habyarymana's visit follows your stopover in Kigali in 1984 (during the Franco-African summit in Bujumbura) and your interview in Dakar last May; it precedes the conference that will take place in La Baule on June 19-21, and which your host will no doubt attend, as he has attended all the preceding meetings since 1975.

"Land of a thousand hills," Rwanda, which President Habyarymana, supported by the "National Revolutionary Movement," which he created, has led since 1973, is relatively stable. His primary problem is overpopulation (7 million inhabitants for 26,000 km), with a 3.7% growth rate. Alimentary quasi-self-sufficiency, long maintained, is less and less sure. The falling price of coffee, its principal product, makes the situation even more serious than the PMAs say. At least the ethnic tensions (Hutus, who hold power, at 85% of the population, and Tutsis at 15%) have not been manifested since the serious troubles in 1973, even though Rwanda was adversely affected by the bloody events in neighboring Burundi in 1988, provoking the exodus to its territory of 63,000 refugees, mostly repatriated since then. In the opposite direction, Tutsi refugees from Rwanda have been living in Uganda for a long time, which sometimes makes relations between the two countries delicate.

Your visitor will be able to focus on these different problems.

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President Habyarimana's primary request in Dakar was concerning the replacement of the presidential Caravelle that G. Pompidou allocated to him.

Presidential airplane – Following your instructions, arrangements have been made to offer him a **Falcon 50**. The crew can be trained as soon as it is available (that is to say, in a few weeks) and can leave with the machine.

This act represents a significant financial effort (10 million dollars) and so it will result that, on other points, we will no doubt be obliged to defer taking certain other Rwandan requests into consideration, especially when they concern military equipment whose necessity is not evident to us.

Military questions – This is, in particular, for an **anti-aircraft weapons system**, which does not correspond to the country's needs.

Likewise, it is not possible to consider delivering a **Transall airplane**, considering the cost of the machine and its maintenance, as well as the necessary number of technicians.

Concerning the replacement of the **radar** system, a study of the problem of security at the airport should be undertaken before we can decide.

Our cooperation in the reorganization of the **gendarmerie** has already started and will be continued.

Civil cooperation – Kigali has complained about the lowering of the **FAC** from 1982 to 1986. Since then, there has been recovery. This Fund, anyway, represents only a third of our cooperation (25 million France in 1989).

On their part, the contributions of the **Caisse Centrale de Cooperation Economique** have significantly increased: almost 140 million Francs in 1990 (irrigation schemes, rural electrification).

One significant project concerns **television**, which does not yet exist in Kigali: Rwanda is ready to take on a part of the costs and has asked us to provide 140 million Francs. We are studying a financial package combining FAC donations with CCCE loans.

Lastly, we have just unfrozen 500,000 French Francs for food aid, which puts us at the head of the donators.

Financial relations – Until now, Rwanda has not called on the IMF and has followed its own policy of structural adjustment to maintain the parity of its currency. But the situation has deteriorated to the point that it is now considering negotiating with the institutions of the Bretton Woods system. Your host could ask for our support, and there is no reason not to promise it to him.

Please note that, in connection to the proceedings at Dakar, the annulment of the debt, for Rwanda, is about 449 million Francs in principal and 157 million Francs in interest (12% of the country's public debt)/.

Claude Arnaud

P.S. President Habyarimana, after visiting Paris, will go to Aisne, Loiret, and Monaco.