

4.A.10. TD Kigali, December 14, 1990, President
Habyarimana's
Meeting with General Varret

Declassified

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S MEETING WITH GENERAL VARRET. –

GENERAL VARRET MET WITH PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA THIS MORNING AT 9:00. AT THE MEETING WERE: ON THE RWANDAN SIDE, COLONEL RUSATIRA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BRUSSELS; ON THE FRENCH SIDE, THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, COLONEL DU PLESSIS AND COLONEL GALINIE.

QUESTIONS OF TECHNICAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE REPORT.

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 PAGE TWO

ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL, AFTER HAVING ASKED GENERAL VARRET TO PASS ON HIS RECOGNITION OF FRANCE'S SUPPORT IN RWANDA TO PRESIDENT MITTERAND AND MR. PELLETIER, THE PRESIDENT WORKED THROUGH THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

1/ HE TOOK BACK UP HIS HABITUAL ANALYSIS OF THE "EXTERIOR" AGGRESSION TO WHICH HIS COUNTRY IS SUBJECTED AND WHICH MANIFESTS ITSELF TODAY IN NEW INCURSIONS INTO KANIGA AND MUVUMBA. THE PRESIDENT SAYS THAT THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT CAN NO LONGER CONTINUE TO SAY THAT THE PROBLEM IS AN INTERNAL RWANDAN ONE. THE REBELS HAVE THEIR GENERAL HEADQUARTERS IN UGANDAN TERRITORY AND RESUPPLY ARMS AND MUNITIONS IF NOT FROM, THEN AT LEAST WITH THE HELP OF, THE UGANDAN ARMY.

2/ THIS AGGRESSION JUSTIFIES NOT ONLY INCREASED AID IN PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT FROM FRANCE, BUT ALSO DIPLOMATIC ACTION, WHICH THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE TO BE MORE THREATENING THAN WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE. HE THINKS THAT THE EUROPEANS, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE FRENCH, HAVE THE MEANS TO, FIRSTLY, USE THEIR INTELLIGENCE SERVICES TO EVALUATE WHETHER PRESIDENT MUSEVENI IS REALLY INVOLVED IN AN ANNEXATION PLAN (PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA SPOKE OF A CENTRAL AFRICAN "KUWAIT") AND THEN TO "BREAK" ANY SUCH PROJECT.

3/ IN THIS CONTEXT, AND WHILE WAITING TO SEE THE UGANDAN ATTITUDE MORE CLEARLY, THE HEAD OF STATE ASKS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF A FRENCH CONTINGENT //////////// HAVING OBTAINED THE AGREEMENT BY TELEPHONE OF ADMIRAL LANXADE FOR A TWO-MONTH EXTENSION AFTER DECEMBER 15.

ON THIS POINT, GENERAL VARRET, AFTER HAVING AGREED THAT AN IMMEDIATE RETREAT WAS NOT DESIRABLE, ANNOUNCED OUR INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH SUCH A RETREAT AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT JANUARY, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE DEPARTURE OF SOME OF THE FRENCH PARACHUTISTS WOULD NOT ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR RETURN IF NEEDED. ALSO, THE DECISION WOULD BE REVIEWED IF THE SITUATION DETERIORATES SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS. ... / ...

 PAGE THREE

4/ THE PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA CALLED THE FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE WAR TO OUR ATTENTION (REFER TO MY TD 719 FROM DECEMBER 7 AND 727 FROM DECEMBER 13). EXPERTS FROM THE IBRD AND THE IMF REPORTED TO HIM OF A SITUATION FROM WHICH HE THINKS RWANDA CAN ONLY ESCAPE WITH THE SPECIAL HELP OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES TO COVER THE HARMFUL ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT AND THE PURCHASE OF ARMS WHICH ARISE THEREFROM.

IN THIS REGARD, IN ADDITION TO THE PROGRAMMED ASSISTANCE, WHICH GENERAL VARRET EXPLAINED TO HIM IN DETAIL, THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE FRANCE TO AT LEAST REPLACE, FREE OF CHARGE, THE GAZELLE HELICOPTER THAT RWANDA LOST IN COMBAT LAST OCTOBER.

GENERAL VARRET PROMISED TO PASS ALONG THIS REQUEST TO THE MINISTER OF COOPERATION. IN FACT, IT EXCEEDS, IN ITS MAGNITUDE, THE NORMAL MEANS OF THE MILITARY MISSION.

=== ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION === :

THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT SEEM PANICKED THAT KANIGA, WHICH IS SITUATED ALONG THE PART OF THE UGANDAN BORDER NEAREST TO KIGALI, HAS BEEN TAKEN. AS USUAL, HE HAS BROUGHT UP THE PROSPECT OF A STRONGER ATTACK IN THE FUTURE WITH INCREASED INVOLVEMENT FROM THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT. WITHOUT A DOUBT, IT IS THIS PROSPECT THAT HAS THE RWANDAN GENERAL STAFF KEEPING ITS MOST HEAVY MEANS IN RESERVE AND MEETING THE ASSAILANTS ONLY WITH INFANTRY. BUT IF THE RESULT OF THE RECENT ENGAGEMENTS HAD NOT BEEN FAVORABLE, CONSIDERING THEIR PROXIMITY TO KIGALI, OUR PARTNERS WOULD QUICKLY HAVE MOVED FROM CALM TO PANIC, WITH ALL THE ATTENDANT IMPACT THAT SUCH PANIC HAS HAD, ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, ON THE STATE OF MIND OF THE POPULATION, BOTH RWANDAN AND EXPATRIATE. 141145 ./.

MARTRES