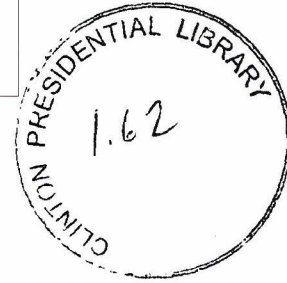


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DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2013-040, document no. 26
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: March 18, 2014



August 2, 1996

Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaire

Purpose: To decide whether to pursue a strategy to obtain the closure of refugee camps near the Rwandan border.

Background: In July 1994, more than two million Rwandans fled ahead of the victorious Tutsi-dominated rebel army into eastern Zaire and northwestern Tanzania. The United States led *Operation Support Hope* in an effort to stabilize the humanitarian situation and, today, more than 1.7 million refugees remain in Zaire and Tanzania. The current cost of maintaining the camps is about one million dollars per day, of which the United States provides more than 30%.

Status quo: While at least 300,000 of those who fled have returned to Rwanda voluntarily, the remainder (about one million in Zaire and 700,000 in Tanzania) live largely under the authority of the former government, its military forces (the ex-FAR) and militia (Interahamwe). Many of those in the camps participated in the genocide and would likely never return to Rwanda voluntarily. Many others who might return are forced (by threat and intimidation) to remain in the camps by the leadership of the former government. We believe that many would go home if they could make that decision freely; conditions in Rwanda are far from ideal, but the situation has stabilized sufficiently to permit large scale voluntary return.

Problems with the status quo: The camps pose a security threat for the Government of Rwanda and for the countries in which they are located. Most of the camps in Zaire and Tanzania are near the border, and ex-FAR and Interahamwe use the camps in Zaire as bases of operation from which to launch attacks into western Rwanda. In fact, the political/military structures in the camps appear to be forming a nascent ethnic parastate, mobilizing the Rwandan Hutu population through an ethnic nationalist creed. The risks to U.S. objectives are many: increasing attacks into Rwanda from the camps as the ex-FAR strengthen their position, retaliation by the Government of Rwanda in the form of attacks on the camps, increasing collaboration between ex-FAR and Hutu extremists in Burundi, and neighboring states being drawn into increased conflict.

U.S. Proposal: As a result of these concerns, U.S. Rwanda/Burundi Special Coordinator Richard Bogosian broached the concept of selected camp closure during the June Rwanda

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Classified by: Eric Schwartz

Reason: 1.5(d)

Declassify On: 1.6X

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Operational Support Group Meeting in Geneva. Our allies are awaiting a formal proposal from us on this issue.

Interagency agreement on this issue: At an Assistant Secretary-level meeting held at the National Security Council last month, agencies reached a general consensus on the following points:

- The United States should seek to lead an international effort to stimulate voluntary return and relocation of remaining displaced persons;
- The plan should envision a phase out of assistance to the camps over a 180 day period, beginning with those camps which pose the greatest immediate regional security threat;
- That those individuals who choose not to return to Rwanda should be relocated in camps further from the border.

Factors to Consider: It is important to recognize that such a strategy will be difficult to implement -- if that were not the case, it would have already been effected. In particular, a detailed strategy and operations plan will have to take account of the following factors, all of which concern political and security issues:

Coordination with the EU and with UNHCR: while the U.S. is the largest donor, this is an international effort, and decision-making on camp strategy will have to be collective.

Security concerns in the camps: we can expect vigorous efforts by ex-FAR and Interahamwe to thwart any relocation/repatriation plan. If there is no effort to neutralize this threat, the plan will, at best, fail and, at worst, result in chaos and violence.

Actions by the Government of Rwanda: we will need to encourage actions by the GOR to improve the climate for return, by providing at least a semblance of due process for the 80,000 detainees in Rwanda, ending reprisal killings, etc.