

Supporting Darfur candidacy of Rwandan General Patrick Nyamvumba

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SUBJECT: SUPPORTING DARFUR CANDIDACY OF RWANDAN GENERAL
PATRICK NYAMVUMBA

REF: A. 08 KIGALI 292

B. 07 STATE 22976

Classified By: Ambassador Symington for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

1. (C) Summary/Introduction: The Rwandan government (GOR) has nominated Lieutenant General Patrick Nyamvumba to be the Commander of the United Nations peacekeeping force (UNAMID) in Darfur, replacing current Commander, Nigerian General Martin Agwai. Nyamvumba is currently the J4 (Logistics Chief) of the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF), as well as the President of the Military High Court. He is a hardworking, effective and combat-experienced officer well-suited to lead UN troops in Sudan. General Nyamvumba is a valued Embassy and DAO contact; we have worked most closely with him on logistics issues pertaining to the USG's training, equipping and transport of Rwandan infantry battalions for service in Darfur under the ACOTA program. Rwanda now self-trains under ACOTA mentoring, and it is building extensive logistics capability with Nyamvumba's close participation. In his current capacity, Nyamvumba has gained extensive experience dealing with the DPKO bureaucracy. He also is fully conversant on Sudanese efforts to limit UNAMID's effectiveness.

2. (C) Based on the number of RDF forces (3,200) and their stellar performance in Darfur, the GOR believes Rwanda has a stronger case for a qualified RDF officer to hold the commander position than other troop contributing countries. Rwanda is generally considered to be the most effective peace-keeping participant in Darfur, its troop contingent setting a high standard for other nations to meet. We expect the GOR to press heavily for Nyamvumba's selection. Ambassador strongly urges the USG to support Nyamvumba's appointment to this critical position. End summary/introduction.

3. (C) Unlike many of his RDF contemporaries, Nyamvumba does not appear on either the French or Spanish indictments. There is passing reference to Nyamvumba in the Spanish indictment of 40 senior Rwandan military officers. The citation notes an anonymous witness "made reference" to Nyamvumba in regard to alleged massacres in April 1994 (see below). The Spanish judge makes no accusation against Nyamvumba, which given the judge's extensive series of alleged crimes by virtually the entire RDF leadership, indicates the judge found nothing against Nyamvumba that could stand up to serious scrutiny. (Note: see ref B for the full measure of the judge's outlandish charges -- including the specious claim that, under close U.S. direction, the RPA conducted its own genocidal campaign to establish a regional Tutsi overlordship. End note). The GOR is concerned that once the nomination becomes public, Hutu extremist organizations/supporters and other GOR critics will attempt to block his appointment by asserting false and defamatory information that Nyamvumba is guilty of war crimes. They are also concerned that other nations, less deserving of the command slot, will out-manuever Rwanda's candidate.

4. (C) We have reviewed available materials on Nyamvumba's service in the RDF (and its predecessor, the Rwandan Patriotic Army - the RPA), particularly his service before and during the 1994 genocide, and later in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during Rwanda's second intervention in the late 1990s. We have found three incidents that critics will likely try to use to scuttle the appointment. First, an Qwill likely try to use to scuttle the appointment. First, an accusation, traceable to a single and now entirely discredited source, of war crimes committed in the beginning month of the 1994 genocide, in eastern Rwanda. Secondly, his

service as local commander of Rwandan troops in and around the Congolese city of Kisangani in August of 1999, when artillery and small arms exchanges between warring Rwandan and Ugandan troops allegedly resulted in civilian deaths. Third, some historical speculation that Nyamvumba was somehow involved in the death of two senior RPA commanders at the very start of the war against the Habyarimana regime in 1990, when the RPA took up arms to win for hundreds of thousands of refugees the right to return to Rwanda.

5. (C) Alleged war crimes in April of 1994: In his 2005 book "Rwanda, l'Histoire Secrete," Abdul Joshua Ruzibiza, formerly a lieutenant in the RPA, alleges that then Lieutenant Colonel Nyamvumba "supervised" a military unit called "Mobile Simba," which under the direct command of two captains organized mass killings, burning of cadavers and their burial in common graves in several locations near Lake Muhazi in eastern Rwanda. These charges were republished word-for-word in 2007 on a Hutu supremacist website, Iwacu.com, and again in 2008 on a separate extremist website set up by Gaspar Musabyimana (at musabyimana.be). Musabyimana, a former intelligence officer in the Habyarimana regime and bitter critic of the present government, asserts 82,000 persons were killed by "Mobile Simba." He claims this was done in an effort to create a "Tutsiland" Rwanda devoid of ethnic Hutus -- a particularly obnoxious slander of the efforts by the RPA to defeat the genocidal rump-government of Hutu extremists and end the genocide.

6. (C) Ruzibiza was a principal witness for French judge Jean Louis Bruguiere's indictment of nine senior Rwandans for allegedly shooting down Habyarimana's plane in April 1994. Ruzibiza has now several times publicly repudiated his entire testimony, saying he was misled and manipulated by French intelligence officers who crafted his book and testimony. The Department has previously questioned Ruzibuza's credibility as an information source (ref B); this public repudiation of his own testimony should end any citation of his book as a credible source of information. Ruzibiza and the Hutu supremacist websites are the only sources of these accusations. We found no press reports or NGO reports substantiating these charges. To our knowledge no human rights organizations have taken them up or have information regarding them. Under the circumstances, there is no credible information linking Nyamvumba to these alleged acts.

7. (C) Fighting Between Rwandan and Ugandan troops in August 1999: Nyamvumba commanded Rwandan troops in Kisangani in August 1999, when Rwandan and Ugandan troops fought for control of sections of the city, and artillery and small arms fire in the urban area allegedly resulted in civilian deaths, by most estimates several dozen. There is no evidence that civilians were targeted by either Rwanda or Uganda. Of the three rounds of fighting between Rwandan and Ugandan troops in Kisangani in August 1999 and in May and June 2000, the August exchanges apparently resulted in the least loss of civilian lives and destruction of the city. In October 1999, Nyamvumba was reassigned to other duties outside the Congo.

8. (C) Deaths of Senior RPA commanders in 1990: Finally, we found using search engines a regional website, radiokatwe.com, a well-known rumor-mongering site based in Uganda, that has one or two items insinuating that Nyamvumba was somehow involved in the deaths of RPA Majors Bayingana and Bunyenyezi who were killed at the very beginning of the 1990 war, a short time after the battlefield death of the RPA commander-in-chief Fred Rwigyema. One excerpted "letter" on the site suggests that Nyamvumba must have been involved in the two majors' deaths, as he supposedly traveled with the men that day, and allegedly emerged unscathed from the armed attack on their vehicle. Much speculation has swirled for years around these deaths, and many unfounded accusations have been made against various individuals.

9. (C) Comment: By all accounts and our own observations General Nyamvumba is a gifted, experienced, and hard-working officer, perfectly suited for the senior command slot at UNAMID. He has acquitted himself well as the RDF J4 logistics chief, and has served honorably as President of the Qlogistics chief, and has served honorably as President of the Military High Court. He is largely untouched by the mountains of unsubstantiated and often scurrilous accusations that attach to other senior Rwandan commanders. His acceptance by the UN would mean an experienced and knowledgeable combat officer would lead a peacekeeping mission facing very serious security challenges. Finally, derailment of his candidacy could generate a serious reaction on the part of President Kagame, the GOR and the Rwandan public. All Rwandans are rightfully proud of the RDF's performance in Darfur. The RDF believe in the mission of safeguarding the lives of innocent Darfuris. RDF does this

through its disciplined approach and commitment to the mission. I strongly urge the Department to support Nyamvumba's appointment as UNAMID Force Commander. It would be good for that force, for our cooperation with Rwanda, and, I am convinced, for U.S. efforts to strengthen UN peacekeeping. End comment.

SYMINGTON