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ACTION AF-01

INFO	LOG-00	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00	EUR-01	HA-09
	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	SNP-01
	SP-01	SS-01	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00	/037W	

-----5B135A 281446Z /40

R 281254Z AUG 92
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1629
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIGALI 03616

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, RW
SUBJECT: MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY TO CHOSE LEADER

1. (C) SUMMARY. RWANDA'S MOST IMPORTANT OPPOSITION PARTY WILL ELECT ITS PRESIDENT AT A PARTY CONGRESS AUGUST 29-30. THE ELECTION WILL HEIGHTEN REGIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES STRAINING PARTY UNITY BUT THE WINNER IS LIKELY TO BECOME A STRONG CONTENDER FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT IN THE COMING ELECTION. WE'RE BETTING ON PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATE FAUSTIN TWAGIRAMUNGU

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WHO STANDS FOR REGIONAL AND ETHNIC RECONCILIATION.
END SUMMARY.

2. (LOU) THE MDR, SUCCESSOR PARTY TO THE PARMEHUTU PARTY OF PRESIDENT KAYIBANDA THAT RULED RWANDA 1962-1973, WILL MEET TO ELECT ITS OFFICERS AUGUST 29-30 IN ITS FIRST PARTY CONGRESS SINCE ITS REVIVAL AND RECOGNITION BY THE GOVERNMENT ONE YEAR AGO. UNTIL NOW, A COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF THE SIX CHAIRMEN OF THE PARTY'S COMMISSIONS HAS MANAGED PARTY POLICY. THIS APPROACH PERMITTED THE PARTY TO DEFER SELECTING

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A SINGLE LEADER FROM THE PARTY'S BROAD IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM AND, THUS, AVOID THE RISK OF SPLITTING THE PARTY.

3. (U) THE PARTY CONGRESS WILL HAVE FOUR KEY CANDIDATES TO CHOOSE FROM:

-- FAUSTIN TWAGIRIMUNGU: CHAIRMAN OF THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF THE PARTY AND KEY SPOKESPERSON AT POLITICAL RALLIES AND PRESS CONFERENCES. A BUSINESSMAN EDUCATED IN PART IN CANADA, HE COMES FROM THE SOUTHWESTERN PREFECTURE OF CYANGUGU AND IS THE SON-IN-LAW OF FORMER PARMEHUTU PRESIDENT KAYIBANDA.

-- DISMAS NSENGIYAREMYE: PRIME MINISTER. FROM THE CENTRAL PREFECTURE OF GITARAMA, THE MDR HEARTLAND.

-- EMMANUEL GAPYISI: ALSO A SON-IN-LAW OF FORMER PRESIDENT KAYIBANDA. FROM THE SOUTHERN PREFECTURE OF GIKONGORO.

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-- DONAT MUREGO: HISTORIAN AND RENOWNED ORATOR. FROM RUHENGERI.

4. (LOU) THE ELECTION WILL TURN IN PART ON THE IDEOLOGY THE CANDIDATES REPRESENT, WHICH RANGES FROM WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED PROGRESSIVE TO CONSERVATIVE. THE PROGRESSIVE WING, LED BY TWAGIRIMUNGU, ADVOCATES DEPARTURE FROM EARLIER HUTU-CENTERED PARMEHUTU POLICY TO A POLICY OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. THE CONSERVATIVE WING WANTS TO RETAIN PARMEHUTU PURITY AND IS FIERCELY CRITICAL OF THE DIRECTION TWAGIRIMUNGU IS CHARTING FOR THE PARTY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONSERVATIVES, LED BY MUREGO, STRONGLY CRITICIZE THE ALLIANCE TWAGIRAMUNGU HAS FORGED, AND HELD TOGETHER, BETWEEN THE MDR AND THE LIBERAL PARTY (PL), WHICH INCLUDES A STRONG TUTSI BASE. NSENGIYAREMYE, NOT CONSIDERED A CONTENDER FOR PARTY LEADERSHIP BEFORE BEING NAMED PRIME MINISTER, REPRESENTS WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED THE MODERATE CENTER BETWEEN THESE TWO POLES. GAPYISI, A RESPECTED PARTY MEMBER, IS ALSO CONSIDERED MORE MODERATE THAN TWAGIRAMUNGU.

5. (LOU) REGIONALISM WILL ALSO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN

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THE PARTY CONGRESS ELECTIONS. NSENGIYAREMYE COMES FROM THE MDR HEARTLAND IN GITARAMA, ABOUT 60 MILES SOUTHWEST OF KIGALI. IT IS HERE WHERE THE 1959 REVOLUTION ORIGINATED AND WHERE THE LEADERS SUFFERED REPRISALS AT THE HANDS OF PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S SUPPORTERS WHEN HE SEIZED POWER IN 1973. THIS REGION, WHICH BELIEVES IT SHOULD RETAIN LEADERSHIP OF

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THE PARTY, WILL SUPPORT THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE ELECTIONS.

6. (LOU) THE PARTY HAS ALSO ALWAYS COUNTED ON SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT CENTERED IN THE NORTHERN TOWN OF RUHENGARI, A FACTOR CREATING BUILT-IN NORTH-SOUTH TENSIONS WITHIN THE PARTY. MUREGO, WHO SPENT TEN YEARS IN PRISON FOR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN A 1980 COUP PLOT, SUCCEEDED IN RECENT LOCAL PARTY ELECTIONS IN SHUTTING OUT ALL MODERATE AND PROGRESSIVE MDR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 KIGALI 03616

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MEMBERS FROM PARTY POSITIONS IN RUHENGERI
PREFECTURE. MUREGO IS LIKELY TO CARRY MUCH OF THE
NORTHERN MDR VOTE AT THE CONGRESS. ELECTION
OBSERVERS CONTEND THAT MANY MDR NORTHERNERS WANT TO
PREVENT THE GITARAMA GROUP FROM DOMINATING PARTY
LEADERSHIP.

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7. (LOU) TWAGIRAMUNGU IS VIEWED AS "REGIONALLY
NEUTRAL" BY VIRTUE OF HIS ORIGINS IN CYANGUGU, AN
AREA THAT HAS HAD LITTLE TO NO SIGNIFICANCE IN PARTY
POLITICS. HE ALSO HAS CONSIDERABLE APPEAL AS THE
PROGRESSIVE LEADER. HE WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY THE
STRONGEST CONTENDER FOR PARTY PRESIDENT UNTIL THE
PRIME MINISTER ENTERED THE FRAY BY VIRTUE OF SUPPORT
FROM GITARAMA. GAPIYISI IS STRONG IN HIS REGION ALONE.

8. (C) RWANDA'S POLITICOS ARE WATCHING THIS
ELECTION CLOSELY BECAUSE OF THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE THE
MDR HAS PLAYED IN SHAPING THE POLITICS OF THE
OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA. MANY PREDICT A
FOUR-WAY RACE INVOLVING THE ABOVE CANDIDATES WILL
TEAR THE PARTY APART. PITTING FAUSTIN AGAINST THE
PRIME MINISTER, WHOM FAUSTIN ESSENTIALLY ELEVATED TO
THE POSITION, WOULD CREATE UNNECESSARY CLEAVAGES.
VICTORY FOR MUREGO WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE MANY OF THE
PROGRESSIVES TO SHIFT TO OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES,
THUS WEAKENING THE CHALLENGE OF THE OPPOSITION TO THE
MRND. (A MUREGO LOSS COULD CAUSE HIM TO BOLT TO THE
HUTU-SUPREMACY PARTY, THE CDR, BUT TWAGIRAMUNGU SAID
PARTY INSIDERS HAD BEEN SUGGESTING MUREGO LEAVE THE
PARTY IF HE OPPOSED ITS POLICIES.)

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9. (C) THE ONLY WAY OUT, OBSERVERS TOLD DCM, IS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO WITHDRAW FROM THE RACE AND THROW HIS SUPPORT TO ANOTHER CANDIDATE, PROBABLY FAUSTIN. THEY NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WOULD BE RISKY POLITICS FOR NSENGIYAREMYE. WITH NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY WITH THE RPF OVER POWER-SHARING, HIS
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POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER MIGHT NOT BE SO SECURE.
IF HE DROPS OUT OF PARTY LEADERSHIP NOW, HE MIGHT BE CUTTING HIMSELF OUT OF CONTENTION FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT AT A LATER DATE.

10. (C) THE DEAL MAY ALREADY HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT, HOWEVER. TWAGIRAMUNGU TOLD DCM THAT HE HAS HAD A SECRET MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO MADE A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE RACE AT THE TIME OF THE ELECTIONS. TWAGIRAMUNGU SAID THEY HAD AGREED IT BEST FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO CONCENTRATE ON ADMINISTERING THE TRANSITION, LEAVING PARTY MATTERS TO OTHERS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, TWAGIRAMUNGU PREDICTS HE WILL WIN THE PARTY PRESIDENCY.

11. (U) THE MEDIA HAS BEEN PLAYING AN INTERESTING PRE-ELECTION ROLE. SEVERAL PRIVATE NEWSPAPERS, ONE SYMPATHETIC TO THE LIBERAL PARTY FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE RUN ARTICLES SUPPORTING TWAGIRAMUNGU. RADIO RWANDA, ON THE OTHER HAND, GAVE TWO HOURS LAST SUNDAY EVENING TO MUREGO.

12. (C) COMMENT. THIS ELECTION WILL GIVE US A FIRST MEASURE OF THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL FORCES IN RWANDA. THE OUTCOME WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES FOR THE COURSE OF RWANDA'S POLITICAL PROCESS. IF PROGRESSIVE, REGIONALLY NEUTRAL TWAGIRAMUNGU WINS, THE MDR WILL REMAIN A STRONG, POSSIBLY EVEN FORMIDIBLE, OPPOSITION FORCE THAT WILL BE ABLE TO BUILD ALLIANCES WITH OTHER PROGRESSIVE OPPOSITION PARTIES. AN NSENGIYAREMYE
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VICTORY WOULD PROBABLY DILUTE THIS STRENGTH, BUT ONLY SLIGHTLY. A MUREGO WIN WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE THE PARTY TO SPLINTER AND LEAVE A VACUUM, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, AMONG THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. IF NSENGIYAREMYE KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO TWAGIRAMUNGU, WE PREDICT TWAGIRAMUNGU WILL WIN.

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