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Summary of Government's New Africa Policy Memorandum

US Embassy Rwanda

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ACTION INR-00

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WARNING: ATTN C1FM

SERIAL: BR0702153195

COUNTRY: BELGIUM

SUBJ: SUMMARY OF GOVERNMENT'S NEW AFRICA POLICY MEMORANDUM

SOURCE: BRUSSELS LA LIBRE BELGIQUE IN FRENCH 4-5 FEB 95 PP 5,6
TEXT:

// ((ARTICLE BY MARIE-FRANCE CROS: "NEW DIALOGUE WITH AFRICA"))

((FBIS TRANSLATED TEXT)) ON FRIDAY ((3 FEBRUARY)), THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS APPROVED THE POLICY REPORT DRAWN UP BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER FRANK VANDENBROUCKE ((SP ((FLEMISH SOCIALIST PARTY))) AND FELLOW PARTY MEMBER AND STATE SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ERIK DERYCKE. THE REPORT IS ENTITLED: "BELGIUM AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: AN AGENDA FOR A NEW DIALOGUE AND NEW COOPERATION."

THE REPORT EXPLAINS THAT THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA, THE POLITICAL STALEMATE IN ZAIRE, AND EVENTS IN BURUNDI HAVE DEMONSTRATED "THE NEED TO SUBMIT OUR AFRICA POLICY TO A NEW EXAMINATION." WE MUST "TURN THE PAGE" WHICH ALSO "OPENS UP NEW PERSPECTIVES" "THE TIME

HAS COME TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF AN UNAMBIGUOUS UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO CONTINENTS, AN UNDERSTANDING BASED ON MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA."

MORE THAN SIMPLY TURNING THE PAGE, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY REPORT SEEMS TO SET THE SEAL ON THE POLITICAL APPROACH ADOPTED OVER RECENT YEARS IN FAVOR OF PROCESSES OF DEMOCRATIZATION WHICH HAVE MET WITH MIXED SUCCESS. IT IS, HOWEVER, CLEARLY STATED THAT "IT IS UP TO THE AFRICANS TO CREATE THEIR OWN SOCIETY, IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO DEVELOP AND PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT THEM."

BELGIUM AND EUROPE, AND BRUSSELS INTENDS TO ACT 'IN UNISON WITH EUROPE MORE THAN EVER BEFORE IN PLAYING THE ROLE OF "DYNAMIC CATALYST," MUST "ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE MADE A NEW BEGINNING OR WHICH ARE PREPARING TO DO SO." SUCH SUPPORT IS "NECESSARY TO AVOID AFRICA BECOMING A ZONE OF FUNDAMENTAL INSECURITY." ALSO, "THE CONTINENT'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY MUST FORGE NEW LINKS WITH EUROPE." BELGIUM WANTS TO CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN AFRICA, AT BOTH THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVEL. FURTHERMORE, BELGIUM WANTS TO MAKE THE RETURN OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY A PRIORITY MATTER THESE REFUGEES HAVE DOUBLED IN NUMBER OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA WILL, HOWEVER, BE "A LONG JOB" AND THE REPORT WARNS THAT "TO GET TO GRIPS WITH IT, AFRICA WILL NEED WHAT IT HAS NEVER HAD: TIME."

A NEW COOPERATION ((SUBHEAD))

ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS SINCE 1960, THE FACT REMAINS THAT "THERE HAS BEEN NO LASTING DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA," CONCLUDES THE REPORT ON BELGIAN POLICY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA ADOPTED AT FRIDAY'S COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. BUT THERE ARE "SIGNS OF A NEW POLITICAL CLIMATE," INCLUDING "DEMOCRATIZATION AND RENEWED INTEREST IN COOPERATION" BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

THE PRIORITY FOR BELGIUM'S AFRICA POLICY REMAINS CENTRAL AFRICA WHERE IT WANTS TO "PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE." THIS IS FOLLOWED BY

SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND SOUTH AFRICA IN PARTICULAR, WHILE BELGIUM ALSO "INTENDS TO MAINTAIN" ITS ACTIVITY IN WEST AFRICA WHERE IT HAS BEEN PRESENT FOR 25 YEARS.

BELGIUM WILL "ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN SETTING UP AND STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS AND STRUCTURES DESIGNED TO PRESERVE PEACE, SEEK RECONCILIATION, AND ACHIEVE LASTING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GOOD MANAGEMENT." IT WILL HELP REINFORCE COOPERATION BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND "THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE WHICH IS FAVORABLE TO AFRICAN ECONOMIES."

DEMOCRATIZATION ((SUBHEAD))

BELGIUM WILL BACK POLICIES WHICH PLACE "THE INDIVIDUAL AT THE CENTER OF DEVELOPMENT" IN AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH CARE, FAMILY PLANNING, AVAILABILITY OF FOOD, TEACHING, AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY. "RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIZATION ARE AN INHERENT PART OF BELGIUM'S AFRICA POLICY," AND COULD BE IMPOSED BY INCLUDING CLAUSES ON THE SUBJECT "WHEN SIGNING AGREEMENTS," BY SUPPORTING "THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STATE OF LAW AND CIVIL SOCIETY," BY CHARGING ITS DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES WITH REPORTING BACK REGULARLY ON DEVELOPMENTS, AND "IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN UNION," APPLYING "SPECIFIC SANCTIONS WHERE THE SITUATION DEMANDS IT."

MOVING ON TO AN ANALYSIS OF BELGIUM'S PRESENT AFRICA POLICY, THE REPORT STRESSES THE "CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS" BELGIUM IS MAKING TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN RWANDA, BURUNDI, AND ZAIRE. BRUSSELS WANTS TO "ORGANIZE THE RETURN OF REFUGEES, ENCOURAGE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, AND ESTABLISH A STATE OF LAW IN RWANDA, SUPPORT STABILITY IN BURUNDI, AND PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION." FOR THIS, BELGIUM CALLS FOR EUROPEAN PROJECTS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES IN HOST COUNTRIES AND

THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, BEFORE REPATRIATING THE REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS. ON THE SUBJECT OF

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SECURITY IN THE CAMPS THE REPORT REFERS TO THE NEED TO "PAY ATTENTION TO THE DAMAGING EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AND PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE FIELD."

ZAIRE COULD DO BETTER ((SUBHEAD))

AGAIN POINTING OUT THAT BRUSSELS WILL JUDGE THE KENGO GOVERNMENT ON ITS ACTS RATHER THAN ON ITS INTENTIONS, THE REPORT NOTES THAT "THE SECURITY OF THE POPULATION REMAINS INSUFFICIENT, EVEN IF PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS." THE REPORT ALSO MAKES THE POINT THAT "DEMOCRATIZATION IS PROGRESSING WITH DIFFICULTY," WHETHER BECAUSE "THE INCLUSION OF THE OPPOSITION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PROPOSED BY KENGO BUT REFUSED BY TSHISEKE", "BECAUSE LAWS CONCERNING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS "MUST STILL BE ADOPTED," OR BECAUSE OF THE DELAY IN THE PRE-ELECTION POPULATION CENSUS.

IN THE AREA OF ADMINISTRATION, "THE LAW ON THE REFORM OF THE BANK OF ZAIRE MUST STILL BE APPROVED. UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDS THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW GOVERNOR AND DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF THE NATIONAL BANK, WHICH CONFIRMS THAT KENGO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BANK," THE REPORT CONCLUDES, AFTER HAVING BEEN UPDATED JUST HOURS BEFORE BEING SUBMITTED, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PRESS SERVICE INFORMED US. IN REPLY TO OUR QUESTIONS -- WE THOUGHT THE BANK OF ZAIRE APPOINTMENTS HAD BEEN SETTLED IN JANUARY -- THE PRESS SERVICE INDICATED THAT THE MINISTRY "DID NOT POSSESS ALL THE ASSURANCES REGARDING THE LEGALITY OF THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED." WE WERE UNABLE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

"THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS ALSO RETAINING ITS INITIAL POLICY:

RENEWED COOPERATION" BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS "DEPENDS UPON THE REAL AND CONCRETE PROGRESS WHICH ZAIRE MAKES " BRUSSELS IS ALSO EXPECTING "PROGRESS" ON "THE QUESTION OF THE RWANDAN REFUGEE CAMPS" IN KIVU. "AT THIS STAGE, DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD ARE INSUFFICIENT" FOR RENEWED COOPERATION. "BELGIUM WILL CONTINUE TO ATTACH THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO COORDINATED ACTION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW ZAIRE UNDERTAKEN BY ZAIRIAN SOCIETY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE."

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((ENDALL)) 4-5 FEB MC/ROBBROECKX/DV 07/1530Z FEB WC 1060

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