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Comment: The SNA's recent assertion of control over access to the capital's airport and port probably was a bid both to profit financially and to alter substantially the local military balance. But Aideed's command and control over his forces, as well as the SNA's ability to prevent operations by well-armed criminal elements, are questionable. Impulsive or accidental engagements between well-armed and increasingly apprehensive Abgal and Habr Gedir combatants could easily spin out of control and lead to a resumption of hostilities comparable to those that devastated Mogadishu in early 1992.

The fatalism expressed by some Somali clan faction leaders regarding new, and more lethal, rounds of fighting indicates an inability to follow through on commitments to what many observers now believe is Somalia's last chance for a negotiated settlement. Faction leaders have constantly spoken of the need for holding peace talks in Mogadishu; the change in venue does not bode well for further progress on reconciliation.

(SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)

Rwanda: Genocide and Partition

Heavy fighting yesterday continued in Kigali after the government failed to show up for weekend peace talks in Tanzania and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) did not appear in Zaire for separate talks to which it apparently was not invited, according to press reports. Both sides announced unilateral, conditional cease-fire declarations that were to take effect yesterday.

The ICRC delegate for Africa is certain at least 100,000 Rwandans have been killed since April 6, believes the actual number is closer to 300,000, and notes ICRC personnel in country think the toll could be 500,000, according to Mission Geneva. The ICRC is concerned that the situation could worsen, citing some Hutu extremists who speak of a "final solution" to eliminate all Tutsis. The ICRC and other NGOs have withdrawn all their workers from the country, except for a small number in Kigali.

Comment: The butchery shows no sign of ending. The inability of either side to conquer the other – and the intensity of the ethnic slaughter – make it increasingly probable Rwanda will divide into zones controlled by the RPF in the north and east and by Hutu forces linked to the interim government in the northwest, the south and most of Kigali. Though a cease-fire may be possible in the days ahead, Hutu hard-liners ascendant behind government lines totally distrust the RPF and will reject any interim political settlement based on sharing power with the rebels.

(CONFIDENTIAL)

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.

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