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FROM: NEW YORK	C04260/NYK	06-Apr-1994
TO: WELLINGTON	WGTN UNSC	Immediate
CC: BEIJING	CANBERRA	Routine
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MFAT (MEA, EUR, UNC, DP1, DSP1, EAB)

**Subject**

SECURITY COUNCIL: RWANDA

**Summary**

- Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi killed, most likely by assassination, in plane crash at Kigali airport.
- Council President asked to make immediate statement to the press, expressing condolences on behalf of Council members.

**Action**

For information only

**Report**

Secretariat (Gharekhan) informed the Council at informals this afternoon of reports of the deaths of Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in a plane crash over Kigali airport today (6 April). He was unable to confirm press reports and had no information about the timing of the incident or any other information. You will have seen AFP and Reuters reports that residents in the center of Kigali (9 miles west of the airport) reported loud explosions followed by sporadic shooting after dark during which a small plane could be heard circling, apparently unable to land.

2 The Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were apparently returning from a one-day regional summit meeting in Dar es Salaam convened by Tanzania's President Ali Hassan Mwinyi and devoted to situation in Rwanda and Burundi.

3 We said that as President we would be willing to make a statement expressing the Council's shock and conveying condolences.

4 French (Merimee) emphasised the significance of the

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incident for the peace process noting that there could well be serious security repercussions in Rwanda. This raised questions about both the safety of UN personnel on the ground and about the mandate of UNAMIR, the UN must "help with the security situation in Kigali", he said. The readiness of fanatics to derail the peace process was particularly disturbing.

5 Rwanda (Bizimana) confirmed that President Habyarimana had been assassinated and that at present the recovery of the burned bodies is being undertaken. He noted that the President was accompanied by close advisers also. No doubt it was carried out by the "enemies of peace" he said. The situation in Kigali will be difficult and he went on to express appreciation to the UN for "standing by" the people of Rwanda to date and said he believed that the UN force in Rwanda would have a "beneficial effect" hoping that it would "take steps to limit the situation" on the ground.

6 The outcome was that the President was asked to convey to the media an immediate statement concerning the incident expressing, on behalf of all Council Members, their shock, their condolences to both the families and people of Rwanda about the incident and expressing their firm hope that the security situation did not deteriorate as an immediate consequence and to appeal for calm. This was done at the conclusion of informals. A more formal statement was also read into the record of the Formal Council meeting which followed (on Bosnia)

End Message