

UNITED NATIONS
ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR RWANDA



UNAMIR - KIGALI

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MISSION POUR L'ASSISTANCE AU RWANDA

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SUBJECT: MEETINGS WITH FRENCH AND RUSSIAN AMBASSADORS

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1. At their requests, I met separately today at UNAMIR headquarters with Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud of France and Ambassador Anatoli Smirnov of Russia. Both meetings dwelt to a large extent on the forthcoming Security Council consideration of the situation in Rwanda.
2. The French Ambassador indicated that, according to his country's delegation at the UN in New York, the Council would probably examine several options ranging from withdrawal of the mission to maintaining UNAMIR as it is, if the present impasse persists. He made it very clear that his Government did not support the withdrawal of UNAMIR despite the frustrations with the very limited achievements realized so far. France believed, he stressed, that the consequences of a complete withdrawal would be too costly, not only for Rwanda, but for the international community as a whole. Nevertheless, he underlined it was necessary to put pressure on Rwandese political leaders to break the stalemate and advance the peace process rapidly and substantially. The Ambassador mentioned the continuing respect of the cease-fire as an example of some of the positive elements in the peace process so far which ought not to be ignored or compromised. He indicated that his Government might lean towards a six-month extension of UNAMIR's mandate but with the requirement that the Council review the situation again within the first 90 days, an approach similar to that called for under the Council's resolution 872.
3. The Ambassador said it was his understanding that the Secretary-General's report to the Council might be ready early next week. He wanted to know UNAMIR's thoughts on the Council's forthcoming meeting and specifically which option we would prefer regarding the mission's future.

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4. I informed the Ambassador that I had, as he would expect, submitted a report to the Secretary-General on developments on the ground. Obviously, I observed, several factors would have to be taken into account when the Secretary-General made specific recommendations to the Council. Clearly, UNAMIR; and I believed the international community as a whole, was not satisfied with the present impasse. At the same time, we recognized the vital role played by UNAMIR in preventing the resumption of hostilities and aiding the parties to continue dialogue. Furthermore, as the Ambassador himself had noted, some progress had been made and the fact that the cease-fire continued to hold was not a minor achievement. I agreed with the Ambassador that the simple withdrawal of the mission might result in a situation even more dangerous than at the moment and that it would also be useful, if the Council decided to extend the mission, to include requirements, such as an early review, as a means of pressurizing Rwandese political leaders to take the necessary measures to advance the peace process in a significant way.

5. The French Ambassador also informed me that he and the ambassadors of the two other European Union members in Kigali (namely Belgium and Germany) had met yesterday morning, 22 March, with President Habyarimana and in the afternoon, with the Prime Minister Designate. They had left those meetings cautiously optimistic about the prospects for compromise which would allow the installation of the transitional institutions which they hoped could take place within the next few days. The Ambassadors had once again, during those meetings, underlined the need for peaceful dialogue to overcome present difficulties.

6. My meeting with the Russian Ambassador this afternoon was our first encounter, as he only arrived Kigali on 18 March to take up his post. In our review of developments in Rwanda, he left me with the impression that while his Government was concerned about the current stalemate, it did not appear to have taken a position yet on possible Security Council action during the forthcoming consideration of this item. He stressed in general that Russia wanted full and prompt of the Arusha Peace Agreement and UNAMIR to play its role. If there was no substantive progress, this could make the Council's deliberations difficult. He believed, nevertheless, that imposing ultimatums would not be helpful. It was important, he said, to recognize the peculiarities of the situation in Rwanda which did not lend itself to artificial approaches.

7. The continuing drama in neighbouring Burundi also came up in my discussions with the two Ambassadors who shared my preoccupation over the disturbing events in that country which we all agreed could severely complicate the situation in Rwanda. Both Ambassadors supported a global approach to the quest for peace in this sub-region, otherwise any progress registered in one country would at best be partial and fragile.

8. Regards.