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Subject

SECURITY COUNCIL: RWANDA

Our C04276

Summary

- The Council met on Saturday to consider Franco/Belge unilateral national action to evacuate foreign nationals, (now almost complete)
- Council receives further report of continuing grave situation today and further report expected tomorrow (Tues) - No further UN casualties
- UNAMIR assisting with national efforts to evacuate and with protection of civilians, as possible, given its limited means

Action

For information only

Report

2 Following the French unilateral action to land forces in Kigali, we decided it would be necessary to convene informal consultations of the Security Council. France subsequently approached us for a meeting "to brief Council members of their actions". We accordingly convened meeting on Saturday amidst intense media interest in developments on the ground.

3 Prior to the meeting Rwandan Ambassador (Bisimana) called on the President. Bisimana indicated that UNAMIR should continue its efforts to broker a cease-fire agreement and expressed concern about reports that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), (rebel forces against the late President's Presidential Guard responsible for the bloodshed following the President's assassination), was now moving on three

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fronts toward Kigali with the express intention of moving in while Kigali was in turmoil.

4 Rwanda requested that the UNOMUR observer forces on the Rwanda/Uganda border be instructed to monitor the situation closely following the movement of RPF forces in that region. Rwanda had no objection to the UN continuing to engage in contact with the new authorities in Kigali and believed the Special Rep had a role to play in remaining in contact with these new authorities on the political level. The evacuation was a humanitarian operation with which the new authorities of Rwanda agreed. As "a member of the Council", Rwanda was committed to such "humanitarian objectives".

5 President also had an opportunity to discuss situation with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) Representative (Dusaidi). He indicated that RPF had no difficulty with evacuation efforts but with the previous caveats as to time and purpose. RPF forces were on the move and it was plain that their objective was to make the most of the turmoil in Kigali in achieving military or political advances.

6 Beginning the Council meeting, the secretariat (Riza) provided an update on the situation which had deteriorated sharply (by Saturday). A large number of displaced persons were now sheltering in a sports stadium where the Bangladeshi battalion is stationed. Part of the RPF forces had moved through the demilitarised zone (DMZ) in the north and were heading for Kigali, though there had been no reports that these forces had yet engaged in any fighting. The UN force commander was trying to work with the "Crisis Committee" (ie the "new authorities" of the Rwandan Government). The RPF forces denounced the new authorities (because - in their view - they represented the Presidential Guard).

7 Very provocative statements were being broadcast on air against foreign nationals following the landing of French forces. A UNDP convoy had taken agency staff and dependents out of Kigali toward Burundi and although they had received minor attacks and some injuries, they were not serious. The airport was under the control of the French with a UNAMIR (Belgian) contingent also at the airport.

8 The French then briefed the Council on the French unilateral action to land forces to evacuate nationals in terms which made it clear that Paris had no intention of seeking any UN cover for this operation. 190 men had landed on 8/9 April to take control of the airport and more would be arriving with a total French contingent of 300 for the operation. The Belgians would be landing additional forces. They were a "peaceful" force whose intervention the new Rwandan authorities had "consented to".

9 French emphasised the humanitarian nature of the operation and that it would be strictly limited in time. The French Government had felt that French nationals were in

danger (2 had been killed) and they were without protection. The first duty of any government France emphasised was the protection of its nationals. (Although it would be prepared to evacuate other foreign nationals whose governments requested this assistance.) But any questions relating to UNAMIR's role or presence was an entirely separate matter for the UN to determine.

10 The US strongly supported the "national decisions" involved in the joint Franco/Belge operation and emphasised the separate nature of the operation from any UN decisions concerning UNAMIR. Given the deterioration in the situation in Kigali, the UN decisions needed urgent consideration.

11 Nigerians, "representing the OAU", took the view we expected that although the Council must show understanding for the humanitarian nature of the national operations, the Council should also be concerned with the protection of Rwandan civilians, including giving some thought to beefing up UNAMIRs presence for such a role. During subsequent protracted discussion about the justification for the French intervention, Gambari (supported by Brazil, Russia and Argentina) made it clear that what was important in this context was the assurances given by the French that their operation would be first of a purely "humanitarian nature in exceptional circumstances" and secondly, would be strictly "limited in time". It was the strong wish of the African group (supported by China) that this rationale be placed "on the record" by the President by his making a statement to the media to this effect.

12 In the event it was not possible to reach agreement on this. The US and France (supported by the UK) reserved, in very strong terms, the "right" of governments to take national decisions regarding military operations. The French could not accept the President making any statement reflecting on the evacuation at all. This was solely a matter for France.

13 This aspect of the debate continued for some time and under increasingly difficult circumstances. Pakistan (and Brazil) characterised the difficulties as being short term on the one hand (ie relating to UNAMIR's future) and long term on the other (ie the Security Council responsibility for the long term political situation in Rwanda which historical evidence showed had a real likelihood of having an impact on the peace and security of the region). Finding a way to involve the OAU in the process of bringing peace to the region was important.

14 Secretariat (Anan) went on to emphasise the need for the two types of operations, now side by side, (and with Belgian forces participating in both) to cooperate closely. There was every indication that France would instruct its force to cooperate closely and this was welcome. However, if UNAMIR was to stay, the question of its mandate might need

consideration.

15 In subsequent discussion the US reserved its position as regard to what UNAMIRs role might be in the evacuation process. Rwanda made an intervention toward the end of discussion noting agreement to French actions, supporting the Special Rep's efforts to establish authority which could fill the political vacuum and welcoming the continued role of UNAMIR.

16 Accordingly, the President was asked to make statement to the media which noted that the Council had met and been briefed by the secretariat and by France; that it had discussed the situation of UNAMIR and begun to discuss the long term situation including UN support for the restoration of stability in Rwanda. The statement did not venture into the question of the French evacuation efforts. There was much interest in the position of the RPF forces now and the implications of the evacuation efforts on that developing situation.

Monday Meeting

17 At informals today Rwanda was again discussed and a further briefing received from the secretariat (Riza). Mortar and shelling is continuing in Kigali with a hospital having been hit (30 dead and large number of injuries). Efforts were continuing to reach a "truce" (as opposed to a cease/fire which RPF has ruled out unless it is considered in the context of a peace settlement). The army was now taking on more of a control role (the Guandarmerie had previously) and the Defense Minister had now returned to Kigali (he had been scheduled to fly on the plane which carried the assassinated President).

18 No further UN personnel had been injured or killed.

19 The majority of the foreign community had now been evacuated and both the RPF and the army were delivering on their promises to cooperate in this. Most UN civilian staff, including non-essential UNAMIR support staff have now left (either by road convoy or by airlift). The UN had chartered planes for this and also used the French/Belgian resources. Cooperation between UNAMIR and the national operations was very good. UNAMIR is escorting convoys of evacuees and is assisting with maintaining the control of the airport. UNAMIR was also guarding large concentrations of Rwandan civilians at the stadium (6,000) and at one of the hospitals (8,000).

20 The new authorities seemed to be exercising more authority but the situation was still unclear. The new acting PM had been scheduled to meet with the Special Rep today but this had had to be postponed for security reasons. Some RPF forces remain at their original positions behind the DMZ, while some had moved through the zone and were already

at the outskirts of Kigali. There were two alternative scenarios: either the parties reach some political settlement and a cease-fire is agreed within the terms of the Arusha Peace Agreement which provides a framework for the peace process to go forward; or the situation deteriorated further and UNAMIRs viability will have to be reviewed. Perhaps the crunch decision will need to be taken in 1-2 days.

21 France emphasised that it was important that the RPF had not made things worse to date and that they must return to their previous positions. The evacuation had been largely successful, some 600 French nationals having now left with just 20 unaccounted for. The airport remains calm enabling aircraft to use.

22 A further briefing would be provided by the secretariat tomorrow (Tues).

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End Message