

CONFIDENTIAL

115/23/37

Your file: 115/23/37

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| FROM: NEW YORK | C04641/NYK | 17-Jun-1994 |
| TO: WELLINGTON | WGTN UNSC | Immediate |
| CC: PARIS | BRUSSELS | Immediate |
| BONN | CANBERRA | Routine |
| GENEVA | HARARE | Routine |
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MFAT (MEA, UNC, ISAC, HRU, LGL, EUR, DP3, DSP1, EAB)

P/S MFA
 DEFENCE HQNZDF (DSIA, OPS, DDI)
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Subject
 SECURITY COUNCIL: RWANDA

Summary

- French outline their position to Council in similar terms to their presentation in Wellington
- Public responses are cool in Council
- Privately most delegations inside and outside the Council are very much opposed
- Senior Secretariat personnel believe French intervention would be a disaster, but Boutros Ghali has been persuaded personally by Juppe to support the initiative
- French honour is now on the line and delegation has instructions to push ahead with resolution
- Draft was circulated late this evening: text by fax
- We warned Merimee privately that he should not assume we would be on the same side

Action

For information.

Report

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At informal consultations today (17 June) French Ambassador Merimee explained to the Security Council their proposal that there be a UNITAF type intervention force in Rwanda. Merimee said that his government did not feel that the international community could allow further time to elapse if there was some possibility of offering relief to the population. France's proposal was predicated on the fact that it would be some time before UNAMIR could be fully deployed in Rwanda. If a ceasefire was agreed, or if UNAMIR was in place earlier than envisaged then there would be no requirement for such a force and France would not pursue the idea. Also France would not act alone. It was seeking partners in Europe and Africa and had had some encouraging replies although no firm commitment. Senegal was almost certain to participate and Ghana's response had been helpful. (Comment: Canada tells us that Ghana has said to them that it does not support the French idea.)

2 Merimee said that it would be purely humanitarian and a follow up to the UNAMIR mandate (Resolution 925 Op 4a). It would endeavour to ascertain where groups of people were threatened and take them to safe areas where they would be protected from attack. Merimee said that the force might be tasked with saving Tutsi lives and repelling attacks by the Hutu militia. While the force would not be seeking confrontation, if it were opposed by any elements, then the French (sic) troops would not hesitate to use force.

3 The French troops would only be there for two months, ie the likely interval between now and the arrival of UNAMIR reinforcements. Merimee claimed that even under the best of scenarios (ie the transfer - with the permission of the troop contributors - of some troops from Somalia to Rwanda) it would be at least 4 to 6 weeks before UNAMIR was in a position to act. (Comment: This is false. See para 16 below.)

4 Force would be a multinational not a national force. But given the rules of engagement and the possibility of combat it was essential, so far as the French Government was concerned, that the force be under national command.

5 Merimee said that the French Government was aware of criticism which could be levelled at the proposal. The RPF had said that it was not in favour; it feared that French intervention could conceivably reverse the trend which might bring it victory by indirectly giving encouragement to the other side. But France had to make a choice. If the massacres continued there needed to be rapid intervention. France was prepared to do this, with partners, so long as UNAMIR was not fully deployed. Merimee added that he thought there would not necessarily need to be direct contact with the RPF. The massacres were in the government controlled zone and that would be the priority area for operations. (Comment: French troops would be in RGF territory behind the front lines just as they were prior to establishment of

UNAMIR and again would in practice serve as a deterrent against RPF advances.)

6 Merimee said that France had already withdrawn once before from Rwanda. So there was no reason to doubt that it would be acting in good faith. Merimee said that as soon as a final decision was taken by his Government he would submit a draft resolution to the Council modelled on that which authorised deployment of UNITAF in Somalia in November 1992. France hoped that support from the Council would not be denied.

P5 Position

7 None of the P5 responded to the French proposal.

8 Hannay told us that his view and that of their experts in London is that the proposal is crazy. However for bilateral reasons they would make this known in private. The UK also told us that there had been an EU meeting in Brussels today at which the proposal was discussed. Apparently the French got no tangible support aside from ambiguous expressions of "admiration" that they were prepared to undertake this mission. Hannay said Belgium, Spain and Germany had been critical. No member state offered to participate though the UK understood that Italy had said it might participate "if several others do as well".

9 As for the US, Christopher is expected to speak to Juppe very soon about the proposal and until then the US is not ready to make its position known. US Mission have told us that they and the Africa Bureau believe it is a disastrous policy. However Strobe Talbott had declined advice that the US should speak against the idea expressing concern that this would give the media another stick to bash the US. The Mission is interpreting their position for now to be that they will not oppose the proposal if the French have partners and if the Council gives its blessing by way of resolution.

10 US will be saying to the French bilaterally that they are concerned about the possible "perception" that they will be entering Rwanda in order to assist the "government" which is now quite close to defeat by the RPF, having been pushed out of Gitarama and almost out of Kigali. One member of the US Mission told us that their assessment is that the French intervention would undoubtedly help the RGF. (Merimee admitted to us privately that in his view also this was an inevitable outcome.)

11 US also told us that they believe it is essential that this French proposal not divert energy away from arrangements under way to deploy UNAMIR. To this end they are proceeding with the immediate delivery of their APCs to the area and will be supplying the Ghanains with other equipment. US emphasised they also wish to see other countries provide the airlift and other equipment UNAMIR needs as soon as

possible. "Delay", said Inderfurth, "which you all criticised the US for", is now the responsibility of others.

12 The Chinese and Russians do not yet have instructions. For the Russians it is possible that they may see a linkage between the French request for Council approval of their proposal and the Russian proposal for Georgia, making it difficult for them to oppose.

NP10 Responses

13 NP10 Council members were taken by surprise and no NP10 members had instructions apart from New Zealand. Comments were generally noncommittal.

14 For our part, we thanked the French for their presentation to the Council. We said we had two observations. First, we understood the desire to respond to a very serious humanitarian crisis that the Council had been grappling with for some time - not always with success. Secondly, we said that the situation in Rwanda was very volatile. There had been negative reactions from parties to the conflict. We said we would need to consider this aspect further in particular the problems of any intervention force fitting in with UNAMIR and the impact on UNAMIR's future ability to operate in Rwanda.

15 In responding to these comments Merimee agreed the relationship between the French force and UNAMIR was an important issue. He said that France wished there to be a "clear distinction" between the French force and UNAMIR since "UNAMIR should not lose its neutral character as it would if it were too involved with the French force". Because of this they would prefer to "observe a distinction even though the mandates would be similar." He also agreed that efforts to deploy the expanded UNAMIR should not be interrupted.

16 In response to a question from Spain, Gharekhan said that most of the African troops were ready to go now but just required the logistic support. Air lift and APCs are the "main problem". He reported the Secretariat hoped the Ghanians would arrive late next week and also that they had a "reasonable hope" that one other African battalion could also be in place in "a reasonably short period of time".

17 Gharekhan appealed to member states to do what they can urgently to support these efforts.

Nigerian View

18 Gambari, who was not at the Council this morning, told us privately that Nigeria did not support the French idea for intervention. He believes Africa will have very serious problems with it. It remains to be seen, however, whether this will remain true once the French lobbying machine goes into overdrive in Francophonia.

Canadians

19 Canadians tell us that Gen Dallaire has reported from talks he had with RPF that RPF said there cannot be 2 UN mandated operations in Rwanda, one of which they do not support. Apparently if the French proceed, and the UNSC agrees, RPF will withdraw its support for all UN operations, since in their view it would be difficult to distinguish between the 2 forces.

20 Canadians' have told the French privately they are absolutely opposed to the French proposal and that France's efforts would better be directed to deploying and equipping an expanded UNAMIR as soon as possible. We understand they will be conveying to the French their strong preference that they work through UNAMIR and avoid any other complicating factors or for the French to jeopardise UNAMIR's position.

Other Reactions

21 The Brazilian, Argentine and Spanish delegations expressed strong reservations to us privately particularly citing the report of the special commission of enquiry into the Somalia debacle as reason for not supporting France's initiative.

Rwandan PR

22 We understand from the US that Bizimana is now signalling he will not be cooperative about stepping aside from the presidency in September. Djibouti put the proposal to him a day or so ago and initially it seemed on track. However, at P5 meeting yesterday at which France gave a briefing on their initiative, we understand China reported a conversation they had had with Bizimana. He had said he was "very optimistic that things would change before the end of this month", (ie that he would be accepted as legitimate), China then asked Merimee directly if Bizimana was therefore referring to the French initiative to enter Rwanda. This caught Merimee by surprise who responded that until Juppe had made the announcement, no one in the Rwanda "government" knew of their initiative. (He did not deny, however, that for some time the RGF has been pressing for such help from Paris with increasing desperation.) Others have recalled to us the closeness of links between France and the late Habirimana regime.

Situation on the Ground

23 Secretariat (Gharekhan) reported at informals that there had been 12 UNAMIR casualties today. A Uruguayan Major had been killed and a Bangladeshi Major wounded in a reconnaissance mission some 10km out of Kilagi en route to Ruhengeri. The mission was attempting to determine a viable route for humanitarian supplies to the north. A UNAMIR

inspection team would go to the site to investigate. The Bangladeshi is being medivaced to Nairobi by Canadian aircraft.

24 An observer team on reconnaissance to Gitarama had reported many civilian casualties and corpses in houses. There was heavy fighting in Kigali and an RPF raid on St Famile Church to free Tutsi sheltering there. Some 40 casualties amongst the militia and gendarmarie were reported and a number of refugees released. The militia had attempted a raid on the Hotel mille Collines where some 400 Tutsi are sheltering. The RPF had forced its way into the hospital and taken stretchers and 2 boxes of drugs from Medecine Sans Frontiers.

Postscript

25 Since drafting the above French have circulated draft resolution (which implies definite decision in Paris to proceed). It is modelled closely on the UNITAF precedent and confirms rumours that they have Boutros Ghali on board because it is predicated on the concept of a SG's recommendation to proceed in this manner.

End Message