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Your file: 3/88/1

Our file: 115/23/37

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FROM: WELLINGTON C25306/WN1 04-Jul-1994

TO: NEW YORK Immediate

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P/S MFA
DEFENCE HQNZDF (DSIA, OPS, DDI)
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Subject

U53223: SECURITY COUNCIL : RWANDA

Your u/n fax of 3 July (not to all).

Summary

2 We are cautious about France's proposed secure humanitarian zone and any suggestion that the Council should indicate its support. We are happy with the letter of reply Marker has drafted. If there is any move to amend this to imply Council support, you should revert for instructions.

Action

3 Do not take a lead in Council discussions/informals. Report the views of others. Seek instructions as required.

Comment

4 The following are our preliminary comments.

5 On the face of it the French proposal is consistent with the concept of an expanded UNAMIR establishing secure humanitarian areas. But there are a number of problems with it:

- its size (approx half the RGF-held territory);
- that from west of Gitarama to the south, the border of the zone appears to be close to, if not contiguous

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- with, the current confrontation between RPF and RGF forces (with the former thrusting forward);
- in other words, by securing such a zone, the French would inevitably be caught doing what they said they wouldn't - ie that their forces would avoid conflict with the RPF and would not get caught in fighting between the Rwanda parties or be interpositioned. Already there are media reports of French troops returning fire from RPF forces near Butare;
 - it risks complicating matters further for UNAMIR in its own planning for neutral secure areas. If the French were given the Council's endorsement for the south-western quarter of the country to be a secure area, the result could be that UNAMIR would not be able to operate there if it were to become de facto the RGF/RPF dividing line. What happens if and when the French are to withdraw?
 - at this stage Council members are wholly reliant on French information about the situation and needs. We seem to have moved very quickly from a situation where French forces were rescuing Tutsi survivors from Hutu militia, to one where French forces are proposing also to protect Hutu refugees from the Tutsi-led RPF;
 - how long might it be before there is a proposal to extend the French zone north from Gitarama to Ruthengeri for exactly the same purpose?
 - in other words, it gives the appearance of being or could very rapidly become a political mission under a humanitarian guise (the RPF's statement of 1 July clearly sees it in those terms);
 - we could well end up seeing come to pass what we feared about the French intervention. If the Council were to support the French action as proposed, under threat of French withdrawal, it could well undermine its own impartiality.

Conclusion

6 The French intervention threatens to cause further complications for UNAMIR. If there is a move to amend Marker's letter you should revert for instructions. At the very least the Council needs an assessment from the Sec-Gen/UNAMIR of the implications of the French proposal, both in terms of the establishment of secure humanitarian areas and the impact on political/ceasefire talks which UNAMIR has been engaged in.

7 It may be that France has concluded that it would be unlikely to secure Council support for the proposal and is therefore not seeking it. The request is directed to the

United Nations through the Sec-Gen. Boutros-Ghali's word may be enough and in any event the French have already stated their view that France is authorised to organise such a secure humanitarian zone on the basis of SCRs 925 and 928.

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End Message