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Advance Unit of French Troops Sent to Rwandan Border

By RICHARD D. LYONS,

France moved an advance party of troops to the Rwandan border today to prepare the ground work for an eventual dispatch of as many as 2,000 troops once the United Nations Security Council votes support for the French intervention.

In Paris, the French Government has stressed that it would not send the forces into Rwanda if the opposing Government and rebel forces do not agree. France had previously been a major supporter of the Government, and because of this the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front has opposed the French entry.

France had also hoped to win European support, including the participation of other European nations in what the French have described as mission to help out Hutu and Tutsi refugees within Rwanda. The original plan is for the French to set up enclaves just inside the Rwandan border with Zaire, and not to try to move into Kigali, the capital. This rather limited military intervention would not in itself stop the killings in Rwanda, but is being pushed by the French as a sign that the world is not completely indifferent to the situation in Rwanda. Obstacle to Intervention

Although the United States and Britain have said that they would back the French move, and the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has given strong support, the French have run into trouble trying to get quick Security Council approval.

Nevertheless, there was some expectation that the French plan would be approved by the Council on Wednesday. This 2,000-man force would be in addition to the already approved United Nations force of 5,500 troops, composed primarily of African soldiers, requested by Mr. Boutros-Ghali, but which has not yet been assembled and is not expected to get to Rwanda for three months.

Washington, which has agreed to contribute armored personnel carriers to this 5,500-man force, is backing the French so that there will be a core force on the ground when the 5,500 troops under United Nations command arrive later.

During today's consultations here, spokesmen for the Rwandan Patriotic Front accused the French of having already sent forces into Rwanda, but the French Ambassador here immediately labeled the accusation as "trash." Charge by Rebels

Claude Dusaidi, a spokesman for the Rwandan Patriotic Front, said a party of French troops had landed today near the town of Kamembe in southwestern Rwanda near the Zairian border, and he called on the Security Council and other United Nations members to oppose what he called an intervention of his country.

In Paris, a spokesman for the French Government said that 20 French troops had been sent to Zaire and that these "scouts" would be seeking sites to set up refugee camps to accommodate people

coming over the border from neighboring Rwanda, and to begin planning for setting up enclaves across the border in Rwanda.

The French had previously announced that they intended to create such camps outside Rwanda.

The French chief delegate to the United Nations, Jean-Bernard Merimee, said no force had landed in Rwanda, and added that the mission of the French in Zaire was "to go where people are in danger." U.S. Is Doubtful

American officials here added that they too doubted the report from the Rwandan rebels.

One American official said the United States was "very supportive of the French position" but he added that the State Department viewed it as but a "bridging operation" until the United Nations itself was able to mount its own troop deployment.

At present, the United Nations has less than 500 lightly armed troops under its command in Rwanda, a force that has been unable to stop the bloodletting.

When the killings started in April, there were some 2,000 troops, mostly French and Belgians, in Rwanda as observers to monitor a truce between the Government and rebels. But within weeks, the French and Belgians evacuated their forces, and this left the country to marauding bands of Government troops and militia who massacred thousands of Tutsis, and to the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which resumed its fight against the Government. U.S. Seems Hesitant

The United States position has been ambivalent, urging the withdrawal of United Nations forces, and only belatedly supporting Mr. Boutros-Ghali's call for an international force, albeit without the participation of American troops.

Mr. Merimee said his Government hoped that at least one other European nation would offer its own troops in support of French forces and under questioning said it might be Italy.

But an offer made by Italy last weekend to bolster the French forces with an unannounced number of Italian troops seemed to have been downgraded from an outright offer of assistance to a consideration to offer support. The Italian Defense Minister, Cesare Previti, said that there was no thought in Rome to backing any unilateral effort by the French.

Aside from France and Italy, the eight other members of the 10-nation Western European Union, a military alliance which is meeting in Brussels, have flatly rejected any idea for their sending of troops unless it comes under some United Nations umbrella.

Photo: France's efforts to relieve the suffering in Rwanda are not expected to involve rescue missions deep inside the country. An injured Tutsi lay in the Ste.-Famille church in Kigali yesterday; the church holds thousands of refugees from marauding Hutus who control part of the city. (Agence France-Presse) Map of Rwanda shows the location of Kamembe.