

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, 3 May 1994

At the 3372nd meeting, the President read out a statement on peace-keeping (text attached).

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

Rwanda

Mr. Gharekhan reported that there was intensive firing today in Kigali and elsewhere, and both sides were conducting recruitment drives. The remaining 450 UN personnel were not in direct danger, and no further reductions were planned. The SRSG, as well as the Secretary-General of the OAU, were both going to go to Arusha. The Force Commander was continuing his efforts to stop the massacres and to get humanitarian supplies through. No confirmation had been received of the allegations of a massive influx of troops from Uganda. A determined effort was underway to pool all information for a humanitarian needs assessment. The security of aid workers was going to pose a serious problem.

France said it had begun its own bilateral humanitarian efforts. But it was essential to have intervention from outside to put a stop to the massacres, and agreement by both parties was a prerequisite for such intervention. France deplored the RPF's refusal to participate in talks, since dialogue was crucial. Supposing that agreement for outside intervention was reached, it would have to be primarily humanitarian (distribution of supplies and safety for civilians), since it would not be realistic for this intervention to aim to bring peace between the factions.

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There were three possible types of intervention, continued France: intervention by Rwanda's neighbours (which would be tricky since they were not seen as neutral); intervention by the OAU (but this would be slow, since it could not meet until next week); and intervention by the UN (which had recently decided to reduce its presence), requiring the consent of the parties. The UN presence must not be reduced any more.

The UK and others felt that the French were too pessimistic about the possible role of the neighbouring countries, particularly if their activities were within the UN/OAU framework. Moreover, the fact that the OAU could not meet for a week was not very important because it was not as if the Council itself was likely to come up with anything very significant in that time.

The UK continued that the UN must be very careful about words such as "forceful action" (used by the Secretary-General, and which would hardly encourage countries to contribute troops) and "intervention" (used by France, and which could mean that only one side would support it). This point was warmly embraced by such anti-interventionist stalwarts as Brazil and China.

Russia said that if the violence continued, the Council would have no choice but to consult with the OAU and other Member States in order to elaborate a possible enforcement action in accordance with Article 53 of the Charter. New Zealand said forceful action could not be ruled out, but such a course entailed grave difficulties. Its preference was for UN (as opposed to OAU) action, but far more detailed recommendations must come from the Secretary-General. Nigeria felt a mixture of all three elements suggested by France would probably be necessary, as long as this "outside presence" was given a very clear mandate. China stressed the importance of the role of African countries and said they should receive political and economic support.

Regarding the issue of an arms embargo, France said it was not hostile to the idea, but it recalled that most of the massacres were being carried out by hand. Other delegations, including the US, felt the matter was quite important.

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The US suggested that the President designate a Group of the Council to travel to Rwanda to bring back information and provide some symbolism (and avoid headlines such as "Shame on the UN"). This idea was supported by Nigeria and others, but opposed by the UK, which saw such missions more as an alternative to action (particularly since it would mean that the Council would not be able to take action until the mission had returned).

The US said it agreed with much of what the Secretary-General had said in his letters to the Council, and felt that the UN should take steps with the OAU to provide security for refugees on both sides of the Rwandan border. A draft resolution would be submitted by the US soon. The UK welcomed the cross-border activities of the ICRC and UNHCR, and said the OAU/UN plan must seek to protect and extend such operations.

Argentina commented that the Secretary-General's letter of 29 April had "infelicitously" suggested that the Council had made the wrong decision in adopting resolution 912 (1994); it was not a good idea for one wing of the UN to criticise another like that, and anyway the Secretariat had been consulted on the resolution.

It was agreed that the President should discuss with the Secretary-General the views of the Council, encourage him to continue on his present path and underline the nuances involved in "forceful action" and "intervention". A report from Arusha would also be needed as soon as possible.