

A great part of the discussion of 15 April was devoted to the alternatives of UNAMIR's operation. The Bel MFA wrote to the SC President that he intends to withdraw Bel units by the end of the week. He recommended that the SC pull out UNAMIR completely, until a cease-fire is arranged. He also informed about his readiness to hand over the materiel and equipment of the Belgian blue helmets to UNAMIR if the SC decides not to withdraw it.

(Note: This was just a small segment of the extensive and intensive Belgian diplomatic offensive directed toward the end of the week at withdrawing UNAMIR. Some important delegations evaluated this as a Belgian effort not to look stupid or irresponsible once they decided to pull out. However, they decided to pull out rather for understandable domestic political reasons caused by their 10 soldiers having been massacred than for objective reasons following from the Rwanda situation. Judged by its results in the SC, this diplomatic offensive failed. It is true of course that the population – the Hutu – have a thing against the Belgians, though not against foreigners as such.)

According to the Secretariat, the French contingent left Kigali on 15 April and the Belgian contingent, including their UNAMIR unit, was to leave by the weekend.

The situation in the country continues to be fluid. However, UNAMIR controls the airport (where the Belgians are passing the baton to the Ghanaians) which both belligerent parties respect. The postponed informal meeting of RPF representatives and the interim government took place, under UNAMIR's auspices. The RPF's key partner will be the defense minister who maintains at least some control over the (disintegrating) army and even over the Presidential Guard. The Secretariat confirmed once again that both parties are interested in UNAMIR's presence and agree with the mediating role of the SRSG.

The CZ delegation has established contact at the working level with the RPF representative in New York who emphasized that the RPF also considers the Arusha agreements as the only possible framework of further peace talks. The RPF's attitude to the new govt is influenced by the lack of clarity on the other side. It is unclear who one should negotiate with (remnants of the original, pre-coalition dictatorial govt of Pres Habyarimana and the decimated interim government which, however, was never constitutionally ratified have varying degrees of influence).

The Secretariat repeated the SG's earlier position on UNAMIR: one alternative – let it continue even without the Belgians (i.e., with the strength of some 2000 men); the other – pull out everyone except technical and security support staff of the SRSG who would also stay in place (all told some 200 people). Both alternatives assume a cease-fire; the discussion, however, clarified that a cease-fire is needed not (only) for UNAMIR to be able to operate but (also) to allow the withdrawal of its possible surplus units. The Secretariat repeated that the SG prefers the first alternative and that he doesn't consider it practicable, desirable or wise to pull out UNAMIR completely and immediately (as minister Claes would want).

Nigeria, on behalf of NAM, supported the first alternative. The US stated that if the SC were to decide today (i.e., on 15 April), the US would insist on completely pulling out the military component of UNAMIR but that they completely understand the complexity and changeability of the situation and won't have a problem with waiting for two or three days more. The UK preferred the second alternative.

The Secretariat underscored that even if the second alternative were adopted it would not be possible to withdraw the units immediately. Positions of delegations with different views did, however, not converge. Amb Kovanda helped sort out the situation by pointing out that if the SC doesn't decide otherwise, the first alternative will turn into the default position, albeit without making an actual decision and without a change of the mandate. (NAM of course anticipated this result all along. They pulled the rug out from under the feet of the notoriously poorly prepared US.) Even though this decision-non-decision is not ideal (the world might have been expecting a decisive reaction from the SC), it gives the SRSB and Gen. Dallaire the chance to continue their discussions with the parties about a cease-fire.

The UK pointed out that we agree on 90% of the draft resolution and disagree only on what next with UNAMIR. He recommended adding a general para to the draft stating that "the SC carefully and continuously monitors the most suitable size and functions of UNAMIR". Not even this formulation was acceptable of Friday; but since in the end we'll have to say something, this formulation may well become the starting point for something further.

The SC President prepared his speaking points for the press which with minor changes were adopted without major problems as a reflection of the discussion. The SC will return to the matter on Monday 18 April.