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MFAT (MEA, UNC, ISAC, HRU, LGL, EUR, DP3, DSP1, EAB)

P/S MFA

DEFENCE HQNZDF (DSIA, OPS, DDI)

DEFENCE MOD (GENTLES)

Subject

SECURITY COUNCIL: RWANDA

Summary

FM Juppé announced yesterday that France was ready to intervene in Rwanda along with its principle European and African partners to stop the massacres and protect those threatened with extermination.

France is said to be discussing the initiative with Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Americans.

Action

For information.

Report

2. In a surprise announcement late yesterday afternoon, FM Juppé said that France "would be ready to intervene in Rwanda with its European partners or African countries to protect groups threatened with extermination". He noted that the operation could take place "in the near future" if the ceasefire, concluded Tuesday between the RPF and the interim government in the margin of the OAU Summit, was not respected.

3. Our contacts in the Quai d'Orsay were unobtainable for comment today. We have however faxed to Wellington only a copy of an article that that appeared in Liberation this

morning under Juppe's name outlining French policy and the background to the initiative. The article emphasises the failure of the international community to respond to the situation in Rwanda and, while specifically not accusing the UN, notes that the long delay in strengthening UNAMIR has been complicated by the need to equip those African countries willing to send troops. France is providing FF20 million for this purpose. "Nothing must slow down the deployment of the UN troops which alone will allow lives to be saved." Juppé also stresses the importance of finding a political solution to the conflict through the efforts of neighbouring countries. He calls on the international community to support and protect those surviving moderates in Rwanda capable of playing a constructive role in the task of political reconstruction and concludes:

"It is no longer the time for crossing one's arms and deploring the massacres but of taking initiatives. The urgent need for international intervention must lead us to use our imagination and courage. If UNAMIR is taking its time in arriving in Rwanda, why not use some of the 18,000 UN troops still present in Somalia and who could be rapidly deployed to Kigali? I have suggested this to the UN Secretary-General who is favourable in principle. We are actively working to put this in place through our representative in New York.

If this isn't enough, France is ready with its principle European and African partners to prepare an intervention on the ground to end the massacres and to protect the populations threatened with extermination.

No solution should be discarded to end the Rwandan tragedy. France is ready to place its part in this effort."

4 Few other details of what is being considered have emerged today. A number of questions remain unanswered - not the least of which the relationship between any French intervention force and UNAMIR. It is not clear which European or African countries might be approached to join France. Tonight's Le Monde suggests that France is discussing the issue with Belgium, Germany, and Italy - none of which are considered likely to be every keen in light of their recent experiences in Rwanda and Somalia. The issue could also have been raised with George Moose, in charge of African Affairs at State Department, who is in Paris today. What little public comment there has been from the Minister's office has stressed the importance of France taking some action now in response to mounting public pressure.

Comment

5 It is certainly true that the Government has come in for a lot of flak over its policy on Rwanda. There has been a good deal of criticism of France's support for the Rwandan Government (including its assistance to members of the former

President's family now resident in Paris). At the same time, the nationalist Right has deplored the way in which France so easily abandoned Kigali and what it sees as France's responsibilities in Francophone Africa. The delay over strengthening UNAMIR has allowed others, like former Humanitarian Affairs Minister Kouchner - due back in Kigali today - to highlight the Government's own ineffective response to the crisis. The initiative may therefore be as much a response to domestic political pressures as to the current situation in Rwanda. In any event, it does not appear to have been particularly well-thought out. France may claim that it does not take sides in the conflict but it is hard to see the RPF accepting French intervention on the ground.

6 We will try and obtain a readout from the Quai tomorrow and report further then.

End Message