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RWANDA

SUMMARY

1. Further Secretariat report on situation. Evacuation of foreign nationals almost complete. Interim Government has fled Kigali and RPF have taken all key points in the city. UNAMIR force commander's efforts to negotiate ceasefire and a truce unsuccessful. Secretariat expect to receive force commander's assessment of prospects for UNAMIR on 13 April.
2. Preliminary discussion among Council members on options for UNAMIR. All stress that a decision needs to be taken as soon as possible.

DETAIL

3. Rwanda was discussed again during informal consultations of the Security Council on 12 April. Keating (New Zealand, Council President) drew members attention to a statement issued by the RPF (text by fax to AD(E)). This said that RPF forces had entered Kigali and were engaging elements of Rwandan Government forces. Despite the picture painted in the media, the conflict in Rwanda was a political and not a tribal one. The RPF was not a Tutsi rebel group but a national organisation advocating national unity, democracy, and security for people and their property. It called on the international community to support the RPF objective of stopping the killing and restoring law and order in Rwanda. Keating said that it was notable that the Arusha Peace Agreement was nowhere mentioned in the statement.

LWP 062/80

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13 APR 1994			

4. Riza (ASG, DPKO) then gave a briefing to Council members. The situation in Kigali was still very confused and chaotic. The killing continued. The interim Government had left the city and was heading south towards Butare near the Burundi border. The RPF, now strengthened by units from the DMZ, had taken virtually all key points in the city. There was less shooting and less use of heavy weapons but there were still clashes between the RPF and Government forces. There were also reports of disorder in other parts of the country. All efforts of the Force Commander to achieve a cease fire or truce had been unsuccessful. Instead he had received letters from the two parties guaranteeing safety of the evacuation of foreign nationals. The Minister of Defence was the only government figure of any authority left in Kigali. But the RPF were refusing to negotiate with him. In order to maintain some dialogue, the Force Commander and Special Representative were holding separate meetings with the RPF and the Minister of Defence. The only radio station still on the air was broadcasting anti-foreigner and anti-Belgian propaganda.

5. Riza said the evacuation had gone well. Cooperation between French and Belgian forces and UNAMIR had been successful. The Belgians intended to stay for at least another 48 hours. In the agreement between the Force Commander and the two parties, the RPF had insisted on setting a time limit for the withdrawal of the French and Belgian forces. This was set for 7 pm local time on 14 April. Riza explained subsequently that the time limit had been set by the RPF because they had taken positions near the airport where there were some Rwandan Government forces whom the RPF wished to engage. They could not hold their fire indefinitely. However, if the evacuation was not completed by this deadline then the Force Commander estimated that he would be able to persuade the RPF to delay a little longer.

6. Riza said part of the UNAMIR presence in the DMZ had now moved to Kigali (a Bangladeshi engineering company and half the Ghanian battalion). The other half of the Ghanian battalion had moved within the DMZ to avoid RPF bombardment of Byumba. He concluded that UNAMIR was unable in current circumstances to fulfil its mandate. Decisions therefore needed to be taken on its future. Recommendations from the Secretary General's Special Representative would be with the Secretariat on 13

April. The Security Council would be briefed on these recommendations as soon as possible,

7. Gambari (Nigeria) speaking on behalf of the NAM caucus drew attention on an African group statement (text by fax to AD(E)) which inter alia called for an immediate cease fire, asked the Council to consider expanding the size and mandate of UNAMIR, and reiterated the importance of full implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement. Gambari [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The cease fire was not holding. More and more people were dying. UNAMIR was doing what it could to help protect several thousands of Rwandans. The Council should consider what more it could do. The NAM caucus were considering elements for a draft resolution which would be circulated to Member States on 13 April.

8. Merimee (France) said French troops would probably leave on 13 April. The withdrawal of French and Belgian forces would create a security vacuum. The Council needed to consider what should be done about UNAMIR. If it left there was a risk of chaos and massacre. UNAMIR was a stabilising force. But this function was not within its mandate and it did not have the resources to fulfil it in the longer term. One possible answer was to strengthen UNAMIR to give it a new mandate and new resources. A second was to withdraw the force altogether. France was open to ideas. Merimee [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. There was no alternative in the long term to implementation of the Arusha Agreement. The Council should perhaps consider a resolution making this point and calling for renewed negotiations, as Gambari had suggested. Speaking personally, he wondered whether it might be possible to declare a safe area round Kigali airport where UNAMIR could concentrate its forces. (Comment: [REDACTED])

[REDACTED]: we had been told earlier by the French Mission that they were considering temporary redeployment of UNAMIR to Tanzania in response to African concern that withdrawal of the force would look like the abandonment of Rwanda. Our Belgian colleagues regard such a redeployment as absurd logistically, and pointless in military terms.)

9. I said we needed urgently to reach a conclusion as to what could be done. There were four possible options. The first was to reinforce UNAMIR and give it a new mandate. This did not seem practical, given the situation on the ground. The second was total withdrawal. While we could of course accept such a withdrawal if it became necessary on security grounds, such action could reflect on the UN's commitment to peacekeeping operations in Africa. The third option was to leave the force in its present configuration to do what it could to encourage return to order. However, it was already clear that UNAMIR was unable to fulfil its current mandate and its safety was threatened. A fourth option was an Angola type solution: a significant reduction in the force, leaving in theatre a small group of civilians and/or observers who might play a useful facilitating role. We believed this option merited consideration. But the key was for a decision to be taken quickly. We should not delay substantive discussion of UNAMIR's future beyond 13 April.

10. Walker (US) agreed that there was a need for an early decision. If UNAMIR had to be withdrawn then it would be easier to do so in conjunction with the French and Belgian forces. The US Government had some doubts as to the continued viability of UNAMIR in current circumstances. It was possible that they were in fact a destabilising factor. Eleven members of UNAMIR had been murdered and the security and safety of some national contingents was being threatened. Walker doubted whether the US would favour a depleted UNAMIR force remaining in Rwanda: if withdrawal were necessary, the force as a whole should withdraw although it might in the first instance withdraw to another country.

[REDACTED]: another option they suggested was the "UNMIH" one i.e a paper operation authorised by resolution, but with no presence on the ground.) Walker said that the US Government would in any case favour the SRSG and a small staff remaining in place to act as facilitators, although they might need to temporarily redeploy outside Rwanda until the security situation improved.

11. Pedauye (Spain) agreed with me as to the possible options for UNAMIR. All of them presented problems, including an Angola type solution. It was quite easy to wind an operation down but not so easy to expand it again.

12. Cardenas (Argentina) agreed on the need for an urgent decision. But it would be premature to dissolve UNAMIR. He agreed that it might be possible to redeploy it to a neighbouring country. It would be important for the Presidency to consult very rapidly with troop contributing countries, particularly the Belgians, given the peculiar circumstances of their contingent. It made no sense for the Security Council to deliberate on the future of UNAMIR if troop contributors' views were different. He also thought it important for the President to make a statement to the press. Given the continuing killing and the fact that thousands of Rwandan lives had been lost and more were in danger, there was a need to show public opinion that the Council was doing something. Such a press statement might note that the Council continued to follow events in Rwanda closely and that it was seriously concerned at the continuing hostilities, and emphasise the need for the parties to agree to an immediate cease fire.

13. Vorontsov (Russia) said that UNAMIR had not been able to avert mayhem. Even if its mandate was changed, without reinforcement in terms of numbers or equipment it was unlikely that UNAMIR could help. The matter must be decided on 13 April. The Council should urgently request the Secretary-General to convey his views.

14. Walker (US) supported Cardenas' suggestion on consultations with troop contributors. The Council could perhaps meet troop contributors and hear their concerns direct. Kovanda (Czech Republic) supported a statement to the press and a troop contributors meeting. He also asked whether developments on the ground were affecting UNOMUR.

15. Riza replied that UNOMUR would certainly be affected. The Special Representative's recommendations would cover it. He recalled that the event that set off the chaos in Rwanda had been only five days ago. There had been enormous danger to Rwandan civilians and to UNAMIR. The immediate aim of the force had been to foster security in so far as possible. There was a need to assess the situation. He hoped this SGSR would report by 13 April.

16. Keating said that he would speak to the press as proposed. He agreed there was merit in exploring troop contributors

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views. However there were sensitivities about how such consultation should be handled. He thought it best for the Presidency to seek the views of Belgium and Bangladesh as the major troop contributors as well as any other troop contributors who wished to make their views known.

COMMENT

17. It would be helpful to have any further views you may have on UNAMIR deskby 131300Z, in time for informal consultations later in the day.

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