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Your file:

Our file: 161/1/1

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FROM: WASHINGTON C03039/WSH 21-Jun-1994

TO: WELLINGTON WGTN UNSC NEW YORK Immediate
Immediate

CC: PARIS LONDON Priority
CANBERRA OTTAWA Priority
ROME MADRID Priority
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BEIJING SANTIAGO Priority
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TO: Defence Immediate

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

P/S MFA
DEFENCE HQNZDF (DSIA, OPS, DDI)
DEFENCE MOD (GENTLES)

ACTION COPY

Subject

U04454: SECURITY COUNCIL: RWANDA

Your C42779. Our fax of 20 June (Wgtn and NY only).

Summary

US support for the French initiative is more nuanced than their public statement or French reports suggest. While the US finds it impossible to oppose the French offer to bring an end to the killing in Rwanda, it has expressed concerns that the operation be multilateral, under a UN umbrella, for a defined time period, and that France make "every effort to convince the RPF of its good intent". However the US shares French view that there is no way to get UNAMIR in place quickly enough to stop the killings, nor does it support a Ch VII mandate for UNAMIR.

Wilberg
Forsyth
Ward
Rider
Hughes
Kennedy
McVester
Fealy
McDonnell
Rush
Tyne
Dalton
Watson

Action

2 For information.

Report

3 We met early today with State's Rwanda desk officer (Aiston, Office of Central African Affairs). We set out some of New Zealand's concerns. We stressed that deployment of a national force with robust rules of engagement could (a la Somalia) cause difficulties for the UN force which must take

over from it, and noted recent reports of targeting of Francophone UNAMIR personnel. Aiston took careful note of these points and undertook to pass them on.

4 In setting out US views, Aiston noted that the US found it politically impossible not to support a credible initiative to bring an immediate end to the killings in Rwanda. It would be "a mistake for the international community to forgo this offer to save lives". Secretary Christopher had thus indicated to FM Juppe that the US would support the French proposal.

5 In conveying its support, the US had also expressed privately to France a range of concerns about their proposal, which Aiston remarked were similar to New Zealand's:

- (a) The French initiative should be under a "UN umbrella" (i.e. a Chapter VII UNSC mandate);
- (b) Participation in the intervention should be "as broad as possible";
- (c) France should make "every effort" to persuade the RPF of its good intent, i.e. that the French role would be limited to the protection of civilians (largely Tutsi);
- (d) There should be close cooperation between the French-led coalition and the UN. While the US sees some advantages in a national-led command structure, it wanted appropriate links and reporting to the UN Secretariat and UNSC. The US wants the DR strengthened on this point (and could be receptive to a specific proposal on reporting requirements).

6 Aiston commented that the US had also discussed with France the importance of strict neutrality of the French forces in the discharge of their mandate. Implicit in the US understanding of the French proposal was that it would "not necessarily" be a barrier to RPF forces and would not seek to be a buffer or interposition force. (Comment: there may also be room within US instructions to see a strengthening of the DR on this point).

7 We asked about the US understanding of the RPF reaction to the French proposal. Aiston conceded that it had been negative. The problem is that the RPF does not believe French declarations of good intent. However the RPF's US representatives had hinted that if the operation was UN-sponsored and truly multilateral they may reconsider their position. (State did not necessarily interpret these statements to have the backing of the RPF leadership in Rwanda). Continuing RPF opposition does not affect US support for the French plan - the US was well aware that they were likely to have problems with it. The US view is that French action is driven by domestic human rights outrage. Although "political" in that sense, it was "clear" that France was not

motivated by other military or strategic objectives.

8 State's information on most recent international reaction added little to your own. State's information on EU views tallied with yours - the British are "lukewarm", Belgium was supportive in principle but not in materiel, Germany had some reservations but would not oppose; Italy would lend active support "if others did". The US had no information on the Danish or Dutch positions but was due to receive embassy representatives later today. Among the Africans, only the Senegalese had offered active support. (Aiston noted the apparent anomaly that this could be made available immediately to France but would take some weeks to deploy with UNAMIR). Ghana had not yet, according to US information, confirmed its support for the French initiative.

9 On the military situation, State confirmed reports that the RPF was beginning to be stretched thin. However RPF was continuing to drive towards any areas where there were remaining Tutsi populations, especially Butari. State noted that there were few Tutsi (left) in the North West, which was a Hutu stronghold, and the US assessed the RPF would not attack in this region where it would face heavy resistance.

10 In response to probing on how the French announcement had impacted on the situation, State noted that the RPF had stepped up the level of fighting in an apparent attempt to make maximum territorial gains before the French arrived. Commenting on implications for the ceasefire talks, Aiston said that State's first priority is to see the killing stopped, but it also believed that the French action could, with appropriate international assistance, be "leveraged" into forcing a ceasefire agreement. The reverse did not hold: by waiting for a ceasefire agreement, we would not see an early end to the killings.

11 Aiston did not feel that there has been any "evolution" in US policy between its early opposition to an expanded UNAMIR and its current support for the French proposal. Rather the US had a "bad PR problem". It was and is "working feverishly" to get UNAMIR deployed. Even when the US had raised questions in New York about the end point and plan of operations for the expanded UNAMIR, Aiston argued that this "did not slow the deployment down", as the search for troop contributions continued in parallel with the US/UN discussions. State has been "pushing the bureaucracy" both in Washington (i.e. DOD) and in New York (i.e. the UN).

12 The US does not share our view on the need for UNAMIR to have no less robust a mandate than any French-led force. France does not want a repeat of what happened to the Belgians - it will not go in "with its hands tied". Chapter VII mandate for France was appropriate as it was a different mission from that assigned to UNAMIR, for which the proposed H VI authority would be sufficient. There were advantages in keeping the two operations distinct. (Aiston noted that

UNAMIR One did not even have a mandate to protect civilians).

13 Aiston went on to say that US assessed that if France "was there for two months and had fought its way in, they are likely to have done all the hard work" before UNAMIR-2 was deployed. We disputed this: 1-2,000 French troops would hardly subdue 20,000 RPF and some 40,000 (ragged) RGF forces. Aiston said that US reporting indicated RGF forces were now down to 20,000 due to desertions, and the French, with the advantages of being "Western, well trained and equipped and nationally commanded", would be able to achieve their objectives. (Comment: Aiston's reply did not address the implications for UNAMIR of any such French action).

14 On the question of a US contribution, Aiston noted that the 50 US APCs had been ready for delivery to Entebbe last weekend, but that the UN had requested a delay while it moved 10 APCs from Somalia to Rwanda. Rather than store the APCs in theatre, the US had held off shipment until this week. The first shipment could go as early as 22 June. Main deployment would begin on Friday 24 June and it would take until 29 June to get all 50 APCs to Entebbe. Aiston made no mention of any additional US assistance to the French operation. We will check further.

End Message