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MY TELNO 1434: RWANDA

Summary

1. Security Council adopts resolution 912 (1994) authorising a reduction in the strength of UNAMIR to some 270 personnel with a mandate to act as an intermediary between the parties in an attempt to secure a ceasefire, to assist in the resumption of humanitarian relief operations to the extent feasible and to monitor and report on developments. The situation in Rwanda is to be kept under constant review and any new recommendations on UNAMIR in the light of developments on the ground are to be promptly considered.
2. Nigeria, Oman, Djibouti, Rwanda and France speak in the Council meeting.

Detail

3. The Secretary-General's report on the situation in Rwanda finally emerged late in the morning of 21 April (text already faxed to UND and AD(E)). It presented three options to the Council. The first was for an expansion of the force by several thousand troops and a change in the mandate to enable it to enforce a ceasefire, probably acting under Chapter VII. The second was a reduction in the force to a strength of some 270 personnel essentially to support and protect the Force Commander and the Special Representative in their mediation role. The third was complete withdrawal of UNAMIR. The Secretary-General recommended against option III but did not express a preference between I and II.
4. The report was taken up in informal consultations of the Security Council later on 21 April. Gambari (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the NAM caucus, [REDACTED]

It was clear from the report that UNAMIR had been fulfilling a useful role in Rwanda and the preference of the NAM caucus was therefore for an option which was not in fact in the report: the maintenance of a larger force with a mandate to help create the conditions for a ceasefire and the resumption of the peace process as well as to offer assistance to the civilian population. As far as the options in the report were concerned, there was neither the political will nor the resources to implement option I. Option III was also unacceptable. Terminating UNAMIR's mandate would imply the Council had different standards for Africa. There had been no similar talk of terminating UNPROFOR's mandate. But given the reality, with no ceasefire, the increasing nervousness of troop contributing countries and absence of commitments from other troop contributing countries to provide additional or replacement troops, the NAM caucus could agree to option II. But this must be linked to the prospect of returning to the force level originally authorised. Efforts were being made by neighbouring countries to restart the Arusha peace process. If these efforts bore fruit then option II was merely a stop gap until the old force level could be restored.

5. Ladsous (France) also rejected options I and III. He supported option II as a stop gap but would be prepared to reconsider the issue at any time. Chen (China) also expressed support for option II. I expressed our disappointment that there had again been no clear recommendation from the Secretary-General. The Security Council was not as good a forum as that of the Force Commander and the Secretary-General to make such a choice. However we had been given a reasonably clear cut series of options. I agreed with the Nigerian Ambassador on option III. I also agreed with him that option I was not on the cards. But we should be careful not to assume that the only reason for this was impracticability. Whether or not troops were available to reinforce UNAMIR, we should think back to our experiences in Somalia as well as to what was happening on the ground in Rwanda and ask what mandate an increased force could be given.

Option I would entail taking over the whole country and dealing by force with two heavily armed opposing groups. Option I was therefore neither practical nor feasible. I agreed option II was not especially attractive. It was neither a permanent nor a lasting solution but it was a transitional phase. We should keep the force level under constant review, until the question of UNAMIR's long-term future was clearer.

6. Argentina, the US, Brazil, Russia and Spain all spoke along similar lines. Option II was the only one realistically possible. But the Council should retain flexibility on the future size of the operation depending on developments on the ground. Al-Khussaiby (Oman) asked whether UNAMIR had control of the airport. Could a withdrawal, if authorised by the Council, actually take place in safety? Baril (Secretary-General's Military Adviser) said that the Force Commander had plans for the immediate evacuation of up to a thousand troops from first light on the date of departure. This would leave 500-600 who would be deployed at the airport, at the stadium and at the headquarters. This figure would draw down gradually, with troops at the airport the last to go. He underlined the need for the Force Commander to be given some flexibility in terms of timing for achieving the 270 strong force provided for in option 2. He also underlined the need for a decision as soon as possible. The troops had now been put on alert to move and stood down three nights running. This was beginning seriously to affect morale. The Force Commander needed a decision as soon as possible on whether the bulk of his force would stay or leave. I said that in the light of Baril's comments we should aim to adopt the resolution on 21 April.

6. A working group then convened to look at the draft text. The group focussed on the paragraphs which had been contentious in the earlier version. These were the mandate paragraph (now OP8), the provision for future changes to the mandate (OP9) and the references to neighbouring countries (OP11). OP8 caused few problems given the near unanimity in informal consultations that option 2 was the only practical solution. However, OP9 was more difficult. The NAM caucus wanted the wording to imply the Council's willingness to increase the force if developments on the ground warranted it. The Americans could not agree to a reference to an increase without a balancing reference to the possibility of a further decrease. We suggested the compromise language in OP9 which was eventually accepted. There was also some discussion about the role of neighbouring countries. We underlined the importance, in the light of the initiatives currently underway, of recognising and supporting the leaders of the sub-region in their efforts to bring about a solution. We therefore proposed the language in OP11 to replace the previous language. However, Rwanda, [REDACTED], insisted on some reference to other countries refraining from action which might exacerbate the situation. The eventual compromise reached was to leave our wording as OP11 and to add a new PPK stressing the need for all

countries to avoid any action which might exacerbate the situation in Rwanda.

8. On this basis, Council members agreed the text and a short Council meeting took place late on 21 April (during a suspension in the Council's meeting on Bosnia).

9. At the formal session, Nigeria, Oman, Djibouti and Rwanda spoke before the vote. Ayewah said that an enforcement mandate would not meet the security and political challenges in Rwanda. But withdrawal would be defeatist and would seriously damage the credibility of the Security Council. Nigeria therefore reluctantly supported the reduction of the force level with a possibility of an increase if a ceasefire was later established. He wondered, however, whether the international community had done enough in the face of the carnage and violence in Rwanda. In the coming days and months the UN would have to face the choice on whether to turn its back on Rwanda or to do more. This was not a political but a moral question which hit at the heart of the credibility of the United Nations.

10. Al-Khussaiby (Oman) said it was most appropriate for the time being for the force to be reduced to a minimum. However the UN presence must be maintained to allow continued mediation. If conditions improved it would be sensible to review the mandate.

11. Olhaye (Djibouti) said he would have preferred an option between I and II: a larger force which did not have a mandate to enforce a ceasefire but instead one to ensure the safety of innocent civilians who had taken refuge with UNAMIR. It should also continue to play a role in the delivery of humanitarian aid. But Djibouti accepted that option II at the moment was the only one which was really workable. He underlined the need for a return to the Arusha Peace Process. The problems of Rwanda would only be solved in the long-term through a Government of national unity and national reconciliation.

12. Bizimana (Rwanda) said that since the death of President Habyarimana, Rwanda had been experiencing the most critical period in its history. But the response of the international community had been rather selective. The Rwandan people felt abandoned. Although of course it was legitimate for there to be concern about the safety of foreign nationals, there had been far too much emphasis on this issue. Some of the attention paid to the

evacuation should have been given to increasing the staff of UNAMIR to allow it to achieve a ceasefire and the conditions for an end to violence. The humanitarian agencies and NGOs could then have provided aid to the population. The Security Council could thereby have served as a tool in the service of peace. However the Council had a double-edged policy. In some places, if the security situation deteriorated, the Council reacted by enhancing the military and logistic means at the disposal of the UN operation deployed there. Elsewhere, even a small deterioration in the security situation, meant the UN would leave. In the resolution about to be adopted, the Council had expressed its concern about the violence and killings in Rwanda. But the option chosen, to reduce the level of troops, was not a proper response to this crisis. No measure was being envisaged to help the people of Rwanda who hoped that the Council would eventually realise it had a duty to help them. He was associating himself with the vote because of its calls for a ceasefire and the return to the political process. He also hoped that the request to all countries not to undertake any action which would exacerbate the situation would be respected. UNOMUR's operations on the Uganda border should be continued.

13. The resolution in MIFT was then adopted unanimously as SCR 712 (1994) of 21 April 1994.

14. Ladsous (France) spoke after the vote. France had been dismayed at the scope of violence in Rwanda. He paid tribute to the Belgian soldiers who had lost their lives. He stressed that no military solution to the problems in Rwanda was feasible. The Arusha Agreement remained the best framework for achieving a durable political settlement. The UN was committed to helping Rwanda achieve this solution but the continued absence of a ceasefire had made it necessary to reconsider the current presence of UNAMIR. All the parties should heed the call in the resolution for cessation of hostilities.

Comment

15. Pressure had been building throughout the week to take a substantive decision on Rwanda following the delay and confusion at the end of last week. The Nigerians and other members of the NAM caucus would probably have preferred to leave the status quo in place a little longer to see whether the Arusha meeting on 23 April could achieve any kind of agreement. However, General Baril's

forceful intervention on the need for the Council to take a decision for the sake of the troops on the ground, tipped the balance in favour of a decision on 21 April. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] But the key was to take the decision as soon as possible. This has now been done, and to our satisfaction.

15. See MIFT.

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