



UNAMIR - MINUAR

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From: DALLAIRE, UNAMIR KIGALI

Date: *20* June 1994

Subject: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED FRENCH-LED INITIATIVE  
IN THE RWANDESE CRISIS

*MIR 1199*

1. Attached you will find the document on the above subject.
2. Regards.

*23 pages excluding cover page TOTAL 24.*

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED  
FRENCH-LED INITIATIVE IN THE  
RWANDESE CRISIS

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the death of President Habyarimana through a mysterious plane crash on 6 Apr 84, Rwanda has been thrown into a state of war and anarchy which has resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of non-combatants (women and children) mostly of the Tutsi ethnic group. At the moment, the indicators are that the RPF has gained the upper hand and is poised to pursue their military objectives. These may include either the overrunning of the whole country or the attrition/destruction of the Rwandese Government forces and their political leadership.

2. Efforts have been made to broker a cease-fire to bring the war and the atrocities to an end by the international community and UNAMIR. These efforts have so far not yielded any significant positive results on the battle field except the transfer of the displaced persons between each zone. Thus the atrocities and hostilities continue relatively unabated.

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3. Efforts are being made to assemble more UN troops for UNAMIR in order to help stop these atrocities, provide humanitarian assistance to the suffering people of Rwanda and be in a position to monitor the future cease-fire. The international community has been slow to move as molasses in the dead of winter in responding to the UN requests for troops and equipment. This situation seems to have led to the French Government's initiative in announcing that it would intervene militarily in Rwanda on humanitarian grounds to put a stop to the bloodshed.

#### POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

4. External. The initiative of the French has raised eyebrows in certain quarters while some have welcomed it as a step in the right direction. Politically, neighbouring Zaire with its strong French links was one of the first to welcome the idea. Zaire has in the past been a sympathizer of the Habyarimana Government and this did not come as a surprise. Uganda, on the other hand, has not made any comments on the issue, certainly because the Museveni Government has been labelled as a sympathizer of the RPF, an issue the Uganda Government constantly denies. The stands of Burundi and Tanzania are not too clear as of now. Burundi has similar problems as Rwanda which it is grappling with at the moment.

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The recent radio announcement that the Bukova Refugee Camp in Tanzania has been turned into a militia training camp, leads one to believe that there may be an armed move from that location by sympathizers of the present interim Government.

5. Internal. The interim Government of Rwanda and the government forces (RGF) welcome the French initiative because it will certainly put a stop to the offensive action they have been subjected to from the RPA so far. On the other hand, the political and military leadership of the RPF have bluntly rejected the French move and called it an insult to the Rwandese. They have promised to fight the force wherever they see it.

#### MILITARY IMPLICATIONS

6. RPF. With the political/military leadership not accepting the French lead initiative, the likely implications to be drawn from this attitude is that the RPF will militarily confront the French when they arrive on the battlefield should such circumstances present themselves. This eventuality is highly anticipated as, even if the French lead force deploy in RGF territory (i.e. west of Ruhengeri-Gitarama-Cyangugu lines), the RPF forces are still advancing at a steady pace.

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both west and south. Furthermore, any deployment in and around Kigali, where so many people are at risk and which has caught the French public opinion, will immediately put the French lead forces in contact with the RPF who continue to close the noose around the city. With the cease-fire talks still on-going, as is the fighting, it is not expected that the RPF will halt its offensive operations because of the presence of the French lead forces. It does however seem very probable that the RPF leadership will want to "bloody" the nose of this French lead force in order to, as a minimum gesture to its followers, show that they stood up to the French, and then it would be time to go for a cease-fire. This is perceived so far as the most optimistic situation that could be seen on the battlefield between the French lead forces and the RPF.

7. As current as this morning, the RPF senior liaison officer has confirmed the following points raised through him by the Force Commander yesterday to RPA Commander, MGen Paul Kagame:

a. In response to the question concerning his reaction to the French lead forces coming to Rwanda, it was made very clear that this is once again another mistake by the

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international community in its attempt to solving problems in far away lands. He stated that the conflict is going to evolve into a REGIONAL problem involving some neighbouring countries. The humanitarian problems now facing Rwanda will worsen and spill over the borders and thus create a considerably more complex and difficult situation. The liaison officer was emphatic in saying that "the French cannot impose themselves anywhere in this region, as it will escalate the tensions and the conflict".

b. To the question of their perception and position in regards to UNAMIR, the liaison officer specifically stated that Resolution 918 has been adversely affected by this French lead initiative, both in its tasks and its force composition. The humanitarian support and security tasks, particularly in RGF territory or near the confrontation lines, including Kigali, will be plagued by the fighting that they intend to conduct against the French lead forces. They cannot see how we will be able to accomplish our security tasks without getting involved in the conflict. They are concerned that UNAMIR will end up in the middle, and/or inadvertently targeted, in this very difficult situation. They furthermore have already

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stated that the transparency of UNAMIR is being seriously affected by the fact that some of the countries participating in the French lead coalition have elements in UNAMIR (Senegal, Congo and Togo, in particular). They clearly indicated that they will not be able to guarantee the security of these officers any more. Lastly, they even expressed concern that these officers have possibly already problems of dual and conflicting loyalties and obviously being deployed behind their lines is troublesome to them.

c. To the Force Commander's request to meet MGen Kagame, the liaison officer was emphatic in saying that he will not be available for the next two weeks and regrets not being able to meet face to face.

8. The apparent reasons for the RPF hostility to the French in particular are:

a. The French will prevent them from achieving their goal of possibly taking over the whole country, destroying the RCF on the battlefield and of bringing the interim Government before justice.

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b. The efforts they have put in so far to make their case heard as a group, which has been forced to live in destitute as refugees for the past 30 years, will possibly come to something less than anticipated.

c. They view the French lead initiative as a covert attempt to rectore the other side. They will be protecting, so the RPF say, the criminal elements they in fact created and which they, the French, have all along been supporting.

d. The French have engaged the RPF on the battlefield during the previous wars and there are scores to settle.

2. UNAMIR/RPF Position There are two possible scenarios that will present themselves in the UNAMIR/RPF relations due to this French lead initiative. The first is that UNAMIR troops may become targets of the RPF, as the French lead initiative is being endorsed by the UN Security Council and the RPF have, at least so far stated that the Secretary-General is obviously leading both mandates and as such must have linked the missions/tasks. This could draw UNAMIR into a Chapter VII-type operation with its attendant consequences which UNAMIR has not been mandated to do. The RPF resistance

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to the French lead initiative is likely to protract the war, particularly if they have any successes and, as they state, expand the conflict into a regional affair, with the RPA possibly changing their tactics into a purely guerilla mode. The Force Commander, at this juncture, wishes to remind you that the RPF are in a position to prevent the re-supply and even exit of UNAMIR from Rwanda as we are now wholly behind their lines, including our main supply route. The RPF have informally stated that such a situation will never occur, but...

10. The second possibility is the French lead initiative would be accepted/tolerated by the RPF, and thus the situation described above would not occur. We then would see an atmosphere conducive to and supportive of the implementation of UNAMIR's mandate. UNAMIR would in fact be more free to pursue the monitoring of the cease-fire to a great extent as a number of security tasks would be handled by the French lead force which will be deployed principally in the RGF territory, and that until the UNAMIR forces are at the strength level needed to do all its tasks.

11. The former Minister of France, Bernard Kouchner and the Director of the Centre de Crise francais, met yesterday with

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the RPF Chairman and he apparently stated that if the coalition force did not have French troops, it may be acceptable and thus the situation could still evolve in the area. However, the RPA liaison officer this morning stated that if there were no French troops, who would be leading this force? Also, why have this separate force instead of simply reinforcing UNAMIR? Lastly, some of the coalition countries (like Senegal) have already shown their hand and as such are nothing more than French lackeys. Already the RPA liaison staff here have openly expressed to my officers from the said countries their negative views of this coalition force. Both the Senegalese and the Congolese contingent commanders have communicated with their national HQs to express their concerns for their safety and effectiveness in this situation. Should the Force Commander have to redeploy these contingents, then the bulk of the French language, bilingual capability will be lost. Our eyes and ears will be gone.

12. RGF. Having lost so much ground so far (6 Prefectures out of 10), with questionable logistics resupply and morale dropping daily, the RGF have suddenly, over the last few days, demonstrated a more determined position. They are quite pleased to have the French come to what does seem to them to be to their aid. There is also a seemingly sense of relief

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among some of them that an outside force is coming in to do what they could not achieve, i.e. stopping the militia/Interhamwe from further killing the Tutsis and moderate Hutus. They have repeatedly stated that they could not handle this problem because their forces are committed to fighting the RPA and so could not spare men to confront the militia/Interhamwe. This position would mean that there is no link between the RGF and the militia/Interhamwe, a position that is not readily accepted due to past experience. There are links but they are not at all clear, neither in method nor in chain of command.

13. UNAMIR/RGF Position. The RGF have accused UNAMIR in the past of helping the RPA in the war against them. One of the cases that comes to mind is the Kigali International Airport (KIA). The RGF accused UNAMIR of handing over the airport to the RPA after we had struck a deal with RGF to make the airport a UN Neutral Territory. They essentially state openly, as part of their propaganda, that wherever UNAMIR elements go, the RPA follows soon thereafter. We have been accused of being RPA reconnaissance elements. They also relate the cases of the Byumba Garrison, the Amahoro complex, the CND complex and other infrastructure/locations in the general Kigali area that were overrun by the RPA in the early

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stages of the war through our presence, and yet we were simply there before the hostilities started. There are also tensions between the Interim Government and in particular the FC as you well know. This has spilled over to their troop level as the Rwandese media have again, yesterday, targeted the UNAMIR FC as being a flagrant RPF sympathiser. Relations with the RGF leadership are still open but being handled, quite effectively, principally since last week, by the Deputy Force Commander, BGen Anyidoho of Ghana.

14. MILITIA/INTERHAMWE. If the French initiative is to be taken on the surface, the militia/Interhamwe and whoever is subversively leading them or giving them orders (maybe some RGF leaders, but certainly some political back-room leaders) may not be fully supportive with this move because they will be the primary targets. They may therefore go all out to fight the French and resist their presence because they will be prevented from pursuing their aim of eliminating their long-time enemies - the Tutsis. Alternatively they may also simply move into the shadows and feel a certain level of protection and relief behind French lines as the RPA will not be able to get at them. Such a position would be to their advantage until at least the French leave and then they would come out during UNAMIR's mandate and start their terrible actions again having had a good rest and a rebuilding period.

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15. UNAMIR/INTERHAMWE/MILITIA Position. The Interhamwe/militia will most likely target UNAMIR for collaborating with the French but more importantly with the RFA in order to stop their barbaric acts. Even though the Interhamwe has in the past not targeted UNAMIR, a sudden change for the worst in the attitude of these young men who operate under the influence of drugs, alcohol, money and ethnic emotions cannot be entirely ruled out. They are bold in certain quarters of Kigali and have become bolder in the northern prefectures where the interim Government is now established and which is the Hutu extremist homeland.

16. UNAMIR. Since the passing of Resolution 918 of 17 May 94, UNAMIR has patiently waited for its expansion in order to fan out and help stop these massacres, offer humanitarian security assistance to the hundreds of thousands of displaced Rwandese and be in a viable/effective position to influence and implement a cease-fire. The ineffective reaction to meeting the critical needs of the Mission in order to implement its mandate has been nothing less than scandalous from the word go, and even bordering on the irresponsible to dangerous towards the personnel of the Mission here in theatre. This has directly led to the loss of many more Rwandese lives, to the casualties amongst our troops and of course to the French initiative.

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17. UNAMIR hopes to see an immediate end to the war, the movement of humanitarian supplies and the cessation of the wanton killings of civilians in particular. The French lead initiative is not seen by UNAMIR as the most effective solution to the situation. We see this French lead force as a misguidance of resources that could have come into the UNAMIR family. Furthermore, the proposal to have French troops deployed on Rwandese soil totally ignores both the recent conflicts (Oct 90 and Feb 93) and the agreements made with both parties for the instituting of the original UNAMIR mandate and troop composition, i.e. Resolution 872 of 5 Oct 93.

18. All of the above will most likely put the Force in an unacceptable and complex position with potentially any one or more of the three factions (RPF, Interhamwe/militia, RPF) due to the Secretary-General's position of having condoned the French lead initiative without clarifying nor directing any change to UNAMIR's mandate or modus operandi in Rwanda, with the Rwandans to start with, and with UNAMIR in particular, before decisions were seemingly taken. The very real possibility exists that UNAMIR will be drawn into an armed conflict or at least suffer from very strained relations (at best) to sustaining more unnecessary casualties (at worst)

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than what we have already incurred due to the lack of support to UNAMIR. UNAMIR may be forced to conduct active self-defence actions caused by the friction between us and the factions in this increasingly tense and growingly negative attitude towards the Mission's mandate, its work, its contingents, even its sustainment and some of its personnel. It is our assessment that this French lead initiative, both by the way it has been launched politically, and in its naïve future operations on the ground, has already, over the last few days, significantly undermined the months of determined and courageous work accomplished by this Mission's personnel.

19. At the moment, UNAMIR cannot pursue a Chapter VII mandate and is just holding on militarily (all 9 x BTR 80s are unserviceable now) and basically surviving logistically (we have had no fuel for 3 days). Resolution 925 does not approve the use of force, except in self-defence and in the protection of humanitarian activities which may be threatened. Getting dragged into an armed conflict will only be suicidal for this force under these circumstances. Regrettably, the mission is physically dependant on the cooperation of the RPA. This is because all our units/assets are behind RPA lines and our logistics support must also come through RPA lines. Should we be cut off, with limited ammunition stocks, next to no fuel

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and only thirteen days of supplement rations left, we are operationally vulnerable to RPA intentions and whims.

OPTIONS

20. In the light of the above, the options open to UNAMIR at the moment are the following:

a. Option 1. To close down operations of the mission by terminating its mandate .

(1) Advantages. The only advantage here is that there would be no casualties to UNAMIR troops since confrontation with any group would be avoided.

(2) Disadvantages.

(a) The good work so far done would come to nothing.

(b) UNAMIR would be seen to have abandoned Rwandan displaced persons and the country as a whole and as such would make it very difficult to recreate a similar mission later.

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b. Option II. UNAMIR to operate either side by side or in cooperation, even limitedly, with the French lead forces but still under different mandates.

(1) Advantages.

(a) UNAMIR would continue to try (if RPA agree) to build up its forces and resources and maintain the current humanitarian and cease-fire tasks.

(b) The French would fill in certain humanitarian security tasks and UNAMIR could thus pursue its other tasks with less hindrance.

(c) The killings of civilians should abate in RGF territory with the coalition troops presence.

(2) Disadvantages.

(a) The two different structures of command operating in the theatre, would not see eye to

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eye since each is operating with a different mandate, different Rules of Engagement and different capabilities that may not be wholly complementary. This situation would lead to conflicts between the two forces that could further lead to operational incidents/accidents and these divergences certainly could be exploited by either belligerent.

(b) UNAMIR troops could be deliberately targeted by any of the three different parties in the Rwanda conflict that are wishing to sabotage or create confusion to their advantage.

(c) Division of tasks may not be possible due to the close proximity of the belligerents, particularly in Kigali, and the varying attitudes towards the French and UNAMIR.

(d) The French lead initiative speaks of a coalition of contributing countries and as such, should any of those countries already have contingents in UNAMIR, we would be forced

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to withdraw them as they would be targeted specifically by RPA. They would in fact be in conflict of interest/loyalty in possible compromising operations due to the hostile confrontation that the RPA intend to take against this French lead force. This will create serious turbulence to UNAMIR's structure. The francophone African countries have particularly effective contingents in UNAMIR at this time and their departure could be devastating. As an example, the Senegalese contingent holds down such critical jobs as all the G-2, MA and ADC to FC, UNMO team leaders and sector commander. They have been dynamic, courageous and determined UNMOs who are also fully bilingual. This loss to the force, at a time when we are supposedly building up, borders on ridicule and danger.

c. Option III. To temporarily withdraw UNAMIR to allow the French lead force to conduct their Chapter VII operations. This would permit UNAMIR to build up its forces in a secure area before returning to Rwanda as a sort of relief force to the French lead force. UNAMIR

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would of course return if and when all sides have stabilized the situation, have worked out a modus vivendi that would not create increased insecurity for UNAMIR, and when UNAMIR has the capabilities to do its mandate job.

(1) Advantages.

(a) UNAMIR would take over from where the French lead initiative would end, after having built its capabilities in a secure environment, reducing the chances of casualties in the process.

(b) UNAMIR would avoid any increased confrontations in any form, with any of the parties.

(c) Security actions for humanitarian goals could continue and in fact may be effective sooner.

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(2) Disadvantages.

(a) The Rwandese may not accept UNAMIR when the French lead forces hand over operations to UNAMIR at the end of the coalition mandate.

(b) The withdrawal will have a negative effect on the morale of our troops that have survived so far to maintain the Mission alive.

(c) The building up of the force may be difficult to accomplish in a neighbouring country in view of both the terribly weak FOD administration/logistics capabilities to respond to the needs of the force, and due to the problems inherent to obtaining consent from such a host country, particularly if the conflict becomes regional in nature.

CONCLUSION

21. The political and military implications of the French lead initiative to intervene in the Rwanda conflict has its pros and cons. Taken on the surface, it could be perceived as

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a very positive action of the UN and the contributing countries to come to the aid of Rwanda and by extension to UNAMIR. But it certainly has all the signs of further complicating the already difficult situation in the country which UNAMIR is doing its best to help resolve. This is mainly due to the reactions of the RPF against any French forces on Rwandese soil. Should however the RPF agree to a French lead intervention, the early deployment of this force could help UNAMIR in getting its capabilities together and see the humanitarian effort continue more effectively.

22. Should the French initiative bring forces into Rwanda not linked to UNAMIR command, there is the likelihood of a conflict between the two command structures that will be on the ground, since each force will be operating with a different mandates, ROE, etc. This situation could also be negatively exploited by either of the belligerents and be the cause of increased risks to the force. One wonders why and how the UN and the international community has permitted itself to get into such a situation in the first place, as an early and determined effort to get troops and resources on the ground under UNAMIR's mandate could have avoided all this and already saved so many lives.

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23. The RPF has so far vehemently rejected the French lead initiative that would involve French troops. The interim Government welcomes the move for a shopping list of reasons. The militias may respond in either way but they can afford waiting behind the scenes for a while.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

24. It is strongly recommended that the French lead initiative be encouraged only if the RPF agree to French troops on the ground, or if this force comes with personnel and equipment but no with any French troops. Should this option not be possible, then in order to avoid an escalation of the conflict, both inside Rwanda and in the region, as well as escalating the risks of putting the whole UNAMIR mission in doubt, the French lead initiative should be let to run its course alone and permit UNAMIR to build itself up in a secure environment in a non-involved/aligned neighbouring country, after which the Mission could redeploy with the effective forces planned for in its mandate. This is essentially Option III.

25. If option III cannot be followed, for a variety of reasons, then the risk assessment must be weighed as to the

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dangers to the current UNAMIR forces and those new troops being considered for deployment in Rwanda, against the option of a total cancellation of the UNAMIR mandate and go with a strong and even expanded mandate for the French lead initiative. This may subsequently lead to a cease-fire and peace agreement in which a "peace-keeping" force would then be mandated for monitoring and security tasks.

26. In light of RPA liaison officer responses today that reflect the RPA Commanders' position, the Force Commander is initiating the withdrawal of Senegalese, Congolese and Togolese contingents to Nairobi, over the next few days, with its inherent damaging effects on the Force capabilities and its obviously negative impact on all concerned.

27. Contingency plans for the absorption of increased forces to UNAMIR are still being finalised for immediate implementation, but so is the mission withdrawal plan to a neighbouring country.

28. At this point, FC finds regards very difficult to express.

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