THEIR CLOSETS AND FEAR PROSECUTION FOR PAST CORRUPTION AND INCOMPETENCE WITH THE RPF JOINING THEIR RANKS.

5. AMONG THE MID-LEVEL OFFICERS, THERE ARE TWO DISTINCT CAMPs. THERE ARE THE MID-LEVEL OFFICERS WHO BELIEVE THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE IN CARDS WITH THE RPF, WORKING FOR THE OUSTER OF THE PRESIDENT. THE CURRENT POLITICAL IMPASS is FOR THEM ONLY REFLECTIONS OF THE RPF AND OPPOSITION EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE A MAJORITY IN THE TRANSITION GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE HABYARIMANA. THE OTHER CAMP WITHIN THE MID LEVEL OFFICERS TO REALIZE THAT CHANGE IS NECESSITATED AND SHOULD SUPPORT THE MOVE TOWARDS MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY.

6. AT THE ENLISTED LEVEL, MANY SUSTAIN MULTIPARTYISM AND THE TRANSITION GOVERNMENT WITH THEIR IMMEDIATE DEMOBILIZATION. SINCE MOST OF THE DEMOBILIZED MILITARY WILL COME FROM THE ENLISTED RANKS, THEIR MAJOR CONCERNS ARE GETTING ADEQUATE TRAINING AND COMPENSATION ONCE THEY LEAVE THE MILITARY.


8. THE MILITARY ON BOTH SIDES DOUBT THEIR ABILITY TO RESOLVE DIFFICULTIES QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY, UNLIKE THEIR POLITICAL COUNTERPARTS. CONFERENCES PARTICIPANTS POINTED AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE EASE WITH WHICH THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, THE GENDARMERIE CHIEF OF STAFF, AND THE RPF FORCE COMMANDER AGREED ON THE MOST OF OPERATION WITHIN THE KIGALI WEAPONS SAFE AREA ESTABLISHED BY UHURU UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN KIGALI.

9. ALTHOUGH, THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR OBSTACLES PUT UP BY EITHER THE RPF OR RPF IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PEACE PROCESS, COL. MAREHO, THE RPF LIASON OFFICER TO UHURU, BELIEVES THAT THE MILITARY'S WILLINGNESS TO IMPLEMENT THE ARUSHI ACCORDS HAS NOT REALLY BEEN TESTED. THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS INVOLVING FORCE INTEGRATION AND DEMOBILIZATION HAVE NOT YET TO BE DISCUSSED AND MAY RISK IN SOME OF THE SAME TYPES OF IMPAIRS CURRENTLY SEEN ON THE POLITICAL FRONT.

CHANGING ROLES, UNCERTAIN IDENTITY FOR THE MILITARY

11. During the period 1973-1988, the armed forces were an organ of the one-party state. The role of the military was to protect that state, the Nkombe Party and its president, Major General Juvenal Habyarimana. The president also held the functions of minister of defense, and chief of staff of the army and government. Day-to-day operations were under the control of the deputy chiefs of staff. Army officers held ministerial positions, were elected as deputies, and were appointed to civilian jobs.

12. With the June 1991 constitution, political parties were legalized, an important event in the political parties law making, party membership illegal for members of the armed forces. Later, a civilian minister of defense was appointed by the first multiparty transition government in April 1992. With the acceptance of multipartyism in government, the army's role changed from that of support and protection of Habyarimana and the Nkombe to the political protection of a multiparty state. Yet as the NSG conference showed this new role was never really defined for the military or its civilian masters.

Command and Control Questions at Issue for the Military

13. During the NSG conference, both RGF and RPA officers asked questions about what it meant for the army to support democracy and be under civilian control. RGF officers specifically asked if democracy equaled the government, and if so did they give their loyalty and follow orders from the president, the minister of defense, the national assembly or the people. RGF officers in defense of the military claimed that they had fought in support of democracy during the past three years and had been under civilian democratic control at least since 1991 with the new constitution, taking orders from the president and the civilian minister of defense.

14. The RPF as well as some of the civilian participants in the conference seemed to differ with this interpretation of civilian control of the army. The RPF pointed to the numerous human rights violations committed by the military, allegedly under orders from the president and sons of his civilian prefects. Actions such as these, said the RPF, were clearly not actions in support of democracy.

15. This discussion led to questions such as what actions were proper and improper for the army to take in support of democracy. The NSG trainers responded that the army was tasked to uphold the democratic principles embodied in the constitution and ensure the protection of human rights. Both RGF and RPF officers agreed that this would be their task in Rwanda's new multiparty democracy. The RPF's lingering concern, though, is that both the military and civilians receive sufficient political/government education to be able to understand the concept of respect for human rights and how this applies to the minority.

16. Integration of the two armies (essentially integration of government Hutu and RPF Tutsi forces) is scheduled to begin 90 days after a broad based transition government is established. Since independence, the Rwandan armed forces have been dominated by the Hutu ethnic group, while some Tutsis did enter the military, and a few made it into the officer corps. The outbreak of war saw many of them arrested as collaborators or forced into reserve status. The war itself for most members of the armed forces was a conflict between the Hutu army and the Tutsi invaders. RGF officers believe, therefore, that ethnicity may initially pose a problem for integration.

17. For example, Ecomaf spoke to RGF high command officers who are still wary of the "Tutsi RPF." In particular, Ecomaf cited the "no Hutu, no RPF" sign outside the UN office in Kigali that reads "Hutu, no Tutsi, no RPF - UN administration - total power. According to Ecomaf, RPF officers in the high command will act as infiltrators, assisting the RPF political leaders in the planning of a coup from within, and thus accomplishing the ultimate goal of total power. In his assessment, the timing for such a coup will come after an RPF loss in the elections after the mandate is over and UN troops have withdrawn. Additionally, Ecomaf maintained that the Hutu government "must continue to exist in Kigali as a security force, not a political force, and that the RPF must be integrated into the army and government structure to be acceptable to the majority."

18. For officers at the mid level, however, the ethnic tensions are not so pronounced. The goodwill displayed at the NSG conference between RGF and RPA officers suggested that animosity between the two forces could be short lived in the newly integrated army. By the second day of the conference, RGF and RPA officers were talking among themselves like long-lost brothers. One remarkable incident during the conference was seeing an RPF and an RGF officer leaving the mess hall together hand-in-hand. Grand holding among men in Rwanda is an acceptable custom, denoting friendship.)

19. In the enlisted ranks, the RPF soldiers were provided political education in the field. All were taught the RPF political program that the nature of the three year conflict was not ethnic but rather one of fighting against a dictatorial regime for the rights of all Rwandans. By comparison, most of the RGF enlisted men given very little training and taught that Tutsis were their enemy. Integrated training of the enlisted will have to focus on the ethnic prejudices many will bring to their platoons. "Enemy" will have to be redefined and dissociated from "Tutsi" or "Hutu."

Scenarios for Upcoming Demobilization and Integration

20. Entering into the third phase of the peace process in which under the broad based transition government, force integration and demobilization, the military would respond to these changes in three possible ways. First is that which would hope for; that the military adjusts to and accepts its new role in support of the peace process, the transition to democracy, and the
21. A second possible response could be a mutiny among lower-level officers, without the objective of taking political power, in which untrained soldiers take matters into their own hands without significant leadership from the officer corps. Such a mutiny could be triggered by fears of demobilization without sufficient compensation or training or by the eruption of conflict between integrated RDF and RPF units.

22. A third possibility is a coup either by those in support of the President should there be an impeachment attempt or in the near term by those from the opposition including members of the military who want change and are frustrated with the political impasse (which they blame on the President). An RPF coup, used as a tactic to shift the political balance, strategically similar to the February 1993 offensive, is also a possibility raised by the army chief of staff.

23. General Dallaire, the UN force commander has considered each of these scenarios and adjusted his force strategy and deployment to cover "seam flanks in the southern sectors. Fears of a coup from the pro-Hutu right continue with rumors of interhame (Rwandan, pro-Hutu extremists) and paliperantu (Burundi, pro-Hutu extremists) training in Burundi refugee camps along the southern border. Concerns about a pro-RPF coup from the left still linger with the threat in Burundi and the possibility that the Burundi Tutsi-dominated army could turn to the north to help its RPF brethren seize power. The results of any coup would be catastrophic and could result in ethnic backlash throughout the countryside similar to that witnessed in Burundi.

24. At this time, however, there is no serious evidence that a coup d'état of any kind is in the card from Burundi would counsel against such actions. Leadership for a coup is lacking as well. Given the divisions already in the military, it is unlikely that the whole of the armed forces could be counted on to support such actions no matter what the leader or what the objectives were.

COMMENT:

25. Whether there is a critical mass in the armed forces for positive change in support of the transition to peace is uncertain.