

HUBERT VEDRINE

RESTRICTED COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON RWANDA, APRIL 2, 1993

**PARTICIPANTS:** PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC – PRIME MINISTER – MR. JUPPE – MR. LEOTARD – MR. ROUSSIN – MR. VEDRINE – GENERAL QUESNOT – MR. DELAYE – MR. BOIDEVAUX – ADMIRAL LANXADE – GENERAL RANNOU – COUNTER-ADMIRAL LECOINTRE – MR. FOUGIER.

**SECRETARIAT:** MR. DENOIX de SAINT MARC – GENERAL HUCHON.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Let's start with the military situation.

MINISTER OF DEFENSE

The situation is extremely serious and urgent. The FPR is advancing towards KIGALI. It advances with troops dressed as civilians. On the ground, there are 600 French nationals and 1500 other nationals.

We already called back two troops and we are left with about 300 men facing many thousands coming from the north.

The situation is precarious.

Should we want to stay, we would need reinforcement of up to 1200 men.

It is difficult to remain in the current status quo.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Defense Council Chief of Staff, Sir?

DEFENSE COUNCIL CHIEF OF STAFF (Chef d'État-Major des Armées)

I can confirm that the FPR will not implement the cease-fire and goes on with its deployment. Men and military arsenal pour in from UGANDA. This is made possible by the fact that there is no observer monitoring the Rwanda-Uganda border.

We are heading to the breakdown of ARUSHA thanks to pressure from the FPR.

We are foreseeing an FPR attack within the next week.

We are left with only two troops on the ground and there are many hundred of thousand refugees pressed at the gates of KIGALI.

The alternative is to either evacuate our nationals and our troops, or to oppose the invasion of KIGALI by the FPR, but that would mean asking our soldiers to engage directly in battle.

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The situation is precarious. Massacres may occur if we leave, and this would create distrust between France and African nations. However, if we strengthen our troops we risk getting stuck in this affair.

We cannot leave.

But we must intensify our diplomatic action and pressure against the FPR, especially our action at the United Nations, as difficult as it may be.

Even if we do reinforce our troops, we must launch a strong diplomatic action as well.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The threat of the United Nations has been used to stabilize the situation. MUSEVENI does not want to expose himself to international criticism.

The United Nations can achieve a lot on the psychological level, even though its action on the ground does not immediately follow.

MINISTER FOR COOPERATION

I have the same information than other ministries. I would like to be kept in the loop in this affair. We will have to provide additional materials, ammunitions. We are already much in debts with the Ministry of Defense. But the Ministry for Cooperation must participate more actively in this affair.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

It will certainly be so, as this depends on the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER

Status quo is not a viable solution. Our forces are too weak. We must be more present. Regarding the troops, we can add another thousand men, but we must know how long we can hold the fort.

We must provide our armed forces with additional means.

The objective is to find a long-term solution.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

We have cooperation agreements with many countries. They have been in place for a long time, long before I was elected.

The rule is that there is no French intervention unless there is a foreign aggression, and not in cases of tribal conflict.

Here it is a mixture of the two, because of the Tutsi problem. President MUSEVENI himself is a Tutsi.

We must do as you wish, Prime Minister.