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Subject

SECURITY COUNCIL : RWANDA

Summary

Germans have misgivings over French humanitarian zone but are not prepared to voice them openly. The short-term problem is relations between the French and RPF, arising from the establishment of the humanitarian zone. In the medium term it is what to do with the zone after the French had left. While the Germans admit to having no recipe for the future, they place some hope on negotiations for a Government of national reconciliation, led by RPF. Doubts were expressed about the practicality of prosecuting all those involved in atrocities. Germany was still considering a UN request to provide vehicles for UNAMIR. We disabused our interlocutor of the notion that our abstention on SCR 929 was somehow linked to our past experience with the French.

Action

For your information.

Report

We spoke with Wienand, Deputy Director in the East Africa Section of the German Foreign Office yesterday on the situation in Rwanda, the Balladur statement in New York, and a possible German contribution to UNAMIR.

2 Wienand characterised the biggest short-term problem in Rwanda as the relations between the French and RPF. The

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establishment of the humanitarian zone had complicated the situation greatly. A large number of militia, "government" soldiers and others who had committed atrocities had fled into the zone. There were likely to be calls for the French to hand over the worst perpetrators to the RPF or the UN. Because of the sheer size of the zone and the number of people in it, Wienand thought the French had little chance of isolating the wrong-doers or disarming them. This had the potential to lead to considerable difficulties with the RPF.

3 For this reason it was necessary, in the German view, that the French leave Rwanda as soon as possible. This, however, was conditioned on UNAMIR being strengthened. Wienand said that any UN action needed time to be established and UNAMIR was no exception. The African soldiers that were available needed logistical assistance and outfitting. It took time to find the money from domestic budgets, including Germany's.

4 We asked Wienand about the significance of Balladur's statement and French withdrawal by the end of July. Wienand attached no particular significance to it. He claimed the French had always said their action in Rwanda would be limited to two months. Of late they had been talking of the end of July. It was no surprise to the Germans.

5 Wienand thought that the biggest medium-term problem was what to do with the humanitarian zone after the French left. The establishment or protection of such a zone was not in UNAMIR's mandate. (Wienand also said that it could be argued that the establishment of the zone fell outside the terms of SCR 929.) The zone could not remain as this would lead to a defacto partition of the country. It was also under criticism as an area which protected killers. He could envisage small protected zones being established in the area for the protection of refugees. Return of refugees to their homes was a significant long-term problem.

6 Wienand went on for some length - speaking honestly he said - about the practicalities of punishing all those involved in committing atrocities in Rwanda. There were so many with blood on their hands, and others who had incited the massacres. Some had already fled to Paris. He wondered how the Tribunal would handle this work from a practical point of view: collecting evidence; finding those responsible and punishing them; the length of time it would take; and the cost. For future peace in Rwanda an accommodation had to be made between the Tutsi and Hutu. We argued that humanitarian principles needed to be upheld and at least the worst perpetrators brought to justice.

7 The establishment of a new government of national reconciliation would assist greatly in providing a stable environment. There had been relatively few revenge killings on the part of the RPF - their soldiers were under better control. Wienand envisaged a solution whereby the RPF formed

a new government, similar to but not the same as the one laid down in the Arusha Agreement. The situation had altered drastically with the death of the Rwandan President, and the relative balance between the Tutsi and Hutu had changed. As in Burundi it was likely that the Tutsi would dominate the military and also hold down the Presidency.

8 We asked about a possible German contribution to UNAMIR. The German Government was still considering the request from the UN to provide transport vehicles, most probably as a gift. He could provide us no answer on the likely outcome of the inter-departmental debate. There was no question of German soldiers participating. While our meeting took place before the decision of the Constitutional Court was known, he thought that the Parliamentary hurdle, which he expected the Court to impose on out-of-area operations, meant that by the time Parliament had considered the action, the situation in Rwanda would have changed considerably. He rejected as impractical the US idea being considered by the Europeans of "adopting" an African battalion for the purpose of equipping them. For a start there could be political problems in "adopting" troops from one or other African country and picking and choosing between various African troop contributors. Further, the Somalia operation had shown the importance of maintaining a firm UN command and control. For this reason logistical assistance and outfitting should be centralised in the UN. Lines of responsibility should not be confused.

Comment

9 Wienand was critical of the French action, saying they were trying to play a role as "Gendarme of Africa". He questioned the establishment of such a large humanitarian zone and the consequences of this action. On the other hand, no-one else had been prepared to move in quickly and he did not doubt the French humanitarian motives. For bilateral political reasons the German Government was not, however, going to be openly critical of the French. Our abstention on SCR 929 was mentioned by Wienand and we disabused him of his notion that our abstention was somehow linked to our past dealings with the French, explaining our position along the lines of your useful C06545/WN2.

End Message