

Involved in the crisis were a relatively small number of key actors in addition to the RG, the RGF, and the RPF. Key countries were France and Belgium because of their neo-colonial connections and troop presence, and the US because of its preponderance internationally and within the SC. The key UN players were the SC and the SG. The OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) caucus played a junior role. A key individual as time progressed was the Force Commander (FC) General Dallaire. Others such as the UK, Canada, NZ as SC chair, and Nigeria as the NAM spokesperson, played important but not pivotal roles. Harder to define but certainly key was the collective UN membership, in particular those with the capacity to provide troops or equipment.

Not surprisingly, the SC played the deciding role as it had the sole authority for creating and mandating first UNOMUR and then UNAMIR. With such pride of place comes the promise of glory if all goes well, and blame if it fails. It looks as if the Security Council, or more specifically its various members, did not meet reasonable expectations. For a day by day account of the debate and jockeying in and around the SC, see the Annex and the crisis chronology.

The SC's apparent failure stemmed initially from a general unwillingness of the US to allow substantive peacekeeping efforts to occur. In this they were abetted in decreasing degrees by the UK, China, and Russia. Further failure resulted because of the glacial speed at which countries apart from Canada, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Ethiopia and Senegal agreed to commit troops or equipment once the SC finally decided to strengthen the size and mandate of UNAMIR.

Consensus is that the US was rebounding from its most recent experience in Somalia. It simply did not think that the UN was capable of mounting an effective peacekeeping operation, and the US felt it had a duty to save the UN from itself. It also did not want to incur further financial costs to the US to support an abortive mission, and absolutely did not want to have to contribute troops to rescue any such mission. Without debating the merits of their assessment, it is obvious that steps must be taken to assure the US and other countries that there is UN capacity. As will be elaborated below, one such confidence building measure would be the creation of permanent rapid deployment headquarters.

At any rate, the US chose Rwanda as a chance to 'draw a line in the sand' and forcefully enunciated and implemented Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25). New Zealand in particular argued in vain that UNAMIR post April 6th was no longer a peacekeeping mission but rather a humanitarian mission and thus did not fall squarely under PDD 25.

PDD 25 itself is a group of good peacekeeping principles and ideas. In many ways it only repeats what many other troop contributing nations have been saying, and this resonates in their own official and off the record concerns about UNAMIR and other ongoing peacekeeping missions. However, in the Rwandan crisis post April 6th, PDD 25 was pushed too far and applied inflexibly so as to become an impediment to rapid and effective conflict resolution and intervention into what was a humanitarian disaster.