

to achieve the assigned tasks.

In addition, the location and the method of creating secure humanitarian areas was quite unclear. And, what was only belatedly realised was the strong possibility that such secure areas could act to pull more refugees from their homes and act as a focal point for Interahamwe and similar 'thugs' to establish power bases.

While it is misleading to compare the international community's intervention into the former Yugoslavia with upwards of 38,000 troops over time with the Rwandan intervention of 2,500 downsized to 450 (270 mandated) as soon as the situation worsened, the comparison is inevitable and thought provoking. For the international community to claim massive ignorance of causal factors and a degree of international incompetence is not much more satisfactory and certainly less believable than the accusations of simple real politik underscored by perhaps not so subtle racism.

It is understandable that the Belgians were shocked by the April 6th execution by Rwandan government troops of the 13 Belgian peacekeepers and President Agathe Uwilingiyimana. This act of terrorism against moderate Hutus and UNAMIR had the desired effect when Belgium very quickly flew in over 700 troops to get its civilian nationals out of Rwanda and soon after announced that they were withdrawing their battalion from UNAMIR. By April 15th all Belgian nationals, national troops, and peacekeeping troops, had left. At the last moment they reneged on their promise to leave behind equipment, particularly armoured vehicles for the Ghanaian Battalion. The withdrawal of the Belgians also took up UNAMIR resources such as the single air link, the Canadian military C-130, which helped to airlift them out.

Then in an even more controversial move, Belgium at the UN in New York conducted a major lobbying effort to convince countries that the situation for UNAMIR was totally untenable and that it would be 'chopped up' by government forces. Sceptics claim that this was an effort by Belgium to cloak their hasty departure, and a desire by not to be seen as the only country abandoning the effort. Their campaign clearly had the desired effect on those TCNs who had no independent source of information on events in Rwanda. Several of them such as Bangladesh quietly voiced a desire to also slip out of Rwanda. US officials are also claiming now that Belgium's warnings convinced them that it was time to close down UNAMIR²³.

Perhaps the Rwandan military had taken note of the ability of a handful of thugs on the dock at Port au Prince to turn back the UN teams attempting to land from a US naval ship. At any rate, their ability to scare off the strongest component of UNAMIR and throw other TCNs and UN decision makers in New York into disarray and a state of inertia is rather worrisome. Peacekeeping doctrine needs to be further clarified and the public, the politicians, and

²³ This claim seems a bit of an overstatement as the US had its own intelligence on what was happening in Rwanda, and they had long opposed the initial creation of UNAMIR. US officials also claim that they had only agreed to the creation of UNOMUR and then UNAMIR as a favour to the French. This claimed willingness to tailor US policy to the wishes of first France and then Belgium, is not given much credibility.