CHAPTER 8

THE GENOCIDE FAX AND THE PROHIBITION FROM U.N. HEADQUARTERS TO ACT

8.1 MARCHAL MEETS INFORMANT JEAN PIERRE

January 10, 1994, was the date on which UNAMIR received the most important warning about the unfolding genocide.

Faustin Twagiramungu, the Prime Minister-designate, had insisted on a private meeting with General Romeo Dallaire, Canadian Force Commander of UNAMIR, for the afternoon of Monday, January 10. He told Dallaire about an informant from inside the Interahamwe who wanted to inform UNAMIR of highly important intelligence.¹

On the evening of that day, the informant, code-named Jean Pierre, met with Colonel Luc Marchal. Jean Pierre explained that it was his job to monitor the general security within the MRND, that he had to make sure that the different “cells” throughout Kigali were supplied with weapons and that he was a trainer of the militia. He added that he received his orders directly from Mathieu Ngirumupatse, the president of the MRND. He explained his reason for unfolding his story to UNAMIR by saying: “As long as it is about warfare with the RPF I have no feelings... But since I have been asked to localize and to make an inventory of all Tutsi in Kigali, I realize innocent people will be killed... As my own mother is Tutsi, you understand I cannot agree with what is happening.”²

The story that followed was most extraordinary and went beyond anything that Marchal could have imagined.³ After two hours of talking, Marchal and Jean-Pierre decided to stay in contact through the Belgian Captain Frank Claes who had been present at their meeting.⁴ Marchal went straight to the residence of the Prime Minister-designate.

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of the Force Commander where he shared the story with Dallaire and Brent Beardsley.

Astonished by Marchal's information, Dallaire decided to immediately send a fax to General Baril, the Military Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and head of the military division of the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO). He decided to inform Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Jacques Roger Bosh Bosh, the next morning. For more than two hours Dallaire and Beardsley puzzled on the exact wording of the fax. On the night of January 10–11 they sent their carefully worded fax, now known as "The Genocide Fax," to New York.

The fax was titled "Request for protection informant." Dallaire commenced the cable by saying that he was put in contact with a "very, very important government politician," a top-level trainer in the cadre of the Interahamwe-armed militia of the MRND. Dallaire explained in this fax that the informant had been in charge of the demonstrations a few days before, which had been aimed at targeting the deputies of the opposition parties and the Belgian soldiers. The fax stated that the demonstrators hoped to provoke the RDF to fire upon the demonstrators and provoke civil war. Deputies were to be assassinated upon entry or exit from the Parliament. Belgian troops were to be provoked, and if Belgian soldiers were restored to force, a number of them were to be killed, thus guaranteeing Belgian withdrawal from Rwanda.

The cable continued by saying that the Interahamwe had trained 1,700 men in the camps of the FAR, split into groups of 40 throughout Kigali. The informant had been ordered to register all Tutsi in Kigali, which he expected to be for their extermination. He argued that his personnel were able to kill 1,000 Tutsi in 20 minutes. The informant was prepared to identify major arms caches throughout Rwanda, containing at least 135 weapons, but he wanted passports and protection for his wife and children.

In the concluding paragraphs Dallaire stated: "It is our intention to take action within the next 36 hours." The Force Commander recommended that the informant was given protection and was evacuated out of the country. He added

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Interview with L. Marchal, January 21, 2005; Marchal, pp. 133–136.

Dallaire, pp. 145–146.

Code Cable, January 11, 1994, from Dallaire to Baril, point 5.

Code Cable, January 11, 1994, from Dallaire to Baril, point 6.

Code Cable, January 11, 1994, from Dallaire to Baril, point 8.

Code Cable, January 11, 1994, from Dallaire to Baril, point 1.

For the original fax, see Annex 3.

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