CHAPTER 9

THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE OF NEW YORK AND CAPITALS IN THE WEST TO THE DETERIORATING SITUATION

9.1 FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER THE GENOCIDE FAX

Failing to convince the Secretariat, General Roméo Dallaire was forced to abide by the instructions received.

Dallaire and Jacques Roger Booh Booh had to make a démarche to President Habyarimana, in which he was informed of the received information and asked to take action within 48 hours. Furthermore, they had to inform the heads of the missions of the United States, Belgium and France of Jean Pierre's story and ask them to make a similar démarche.1

On January 13 Booh Booh cabled Kofi Annan outlining these undertaken activities. He informed New York that the heads of missions had expressed serious concerns about the information and that they would inform their governments.2 In his book, Dallaire explains that none of the ambassadors seemed to be surprised by Jean Pierre's story, which according to Dallaire meant that the information was merely a confirmation of what the ambassadors already knew. Dallaire had asked the ambassadors to find sanctuary for Jean Pierre and his family, but they had all refused.3

Booh Booh's cable continued by describing the meeting with President Habyarimana on January 12. The Special Representative to the Secretary-General (SRSG) noted that the President had denied knowledge of the activities of the militia and had agreed upon an investigation, the findings of which he would make available to UNAMIR. When Dallaire and Booh Booh had raised the issue of the harassment of UNAMIR personnel and the violence of Rwandans "all belonging to one specific group" during the demonstration of April 8, the

3 Dallaire, p. 148.

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President had answered that he was unaware of the demonstration. A cable of February 2 from Booh Booh to Annan would show that Habyarimana never informed UNAMIR of the promised investigation. This inaction on the side of Habyarimana would put the credibility and reliability of Habyarimana further at stake, but this warning was not taken seriously by New York.

Lastly, Booh Booh’s cable mentioned that Habyarimana had asked Booh Booh and Dallaire to inform the President of the MRND, Mathieu Ngirumpatse (Jean Pierre’s boss). Following this request, the SRSC and the Force Commander met with Mathieu Ngirumpatse and Joseph Nzirorera, the Secretary-General of the MRND. Booh Booh explained that both deputies had denied that the MRND or its militia were involved in the alleged activities. The fax stated that “the president of the MRND seemed unsure and is reported to have subsequently ordered distribution of weapons.” In a final comment, Booh Booh wrote that the feedback from the meetings showed that both Habyarimana and the MRND officials were “bewildered by the specificity of the information.”

9.2 THE RESPONSE OF THE HEADS OF MISSIONS OF FRANCE, BELGIUM AND THE UNITED STATES TO THE FAX OF DALLAIRE

On January 13 ambassador Swinnen sent a fax to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he described Jean Pierre’s information. Having set out Jean Pierre’s story, the ambassador wrote: “This information confirms what was already believed or presumed.” Swinnen added: “All this cannot simply be ignored.” Swinnen mentioned that Booh Booh had asked the heads of missions for action.

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