

**PRESIDENCY
OF THE
REPUBLIC**

Paris, 7 April 1994

The Advisor to the Presidency

M E M O

**for the attention of
the President of the Republic**

(s/c the Secretary General)

[Illegible]

SUBJECT: Attack on the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi

1) Yesterday evening the aeroplane of the Rwandan President, Juvénal Habyarimana, which also had on board the President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, crashed in Kigali close to the airport. The aeroplane, which was returning from a meeting in Dar Es Salaam of the Heads of State of the region, devoted particularly to Rwanda and Burundi, came under fire in its final approach. According to the Belgians, there was firing of rockets or missiles.

The two presidents died, along with all the passengers (around ten), including the Rwandan Chief of Staff and two Burundi ministers. The three members of the crew, all French, were also killed.

The attack has been attributed to the Front Patriotique Rwandais (FPR).

2) In Kigali, the presidential guard began the hunt for the attackers. Information, as yet unconfirmed, cites arrests of ministers and well-known personalities, Hutu and Tutsi, political adversaries of President Habyarimana. A confrontation in the capital between the Rwandan army and the FPR seems inevitable. The interior of the country seems calm at the moment.

The transition institutions have not yet been set up, so the death of the president leaves the country without any recognised authority (the government and parliament have not been established). **A military coup is feared.**

In Bujumbura, the President of the Assembly, in accordance with the constitution, has taken over the management of the country. The situation in Burundi is calm and the authorities are developing, in their public declarations, the theory of an accident with regard to the Burundi president. It seems that it was not planned that he would be on board the aeroplane of President Habyarimana on the return from Da Es Salaam.

3) An inter-ministerial meeting was held this morning at the Quai d'Orsay. The following points were tackled:

- French position: Matignon and the Quai d'Orsay, in this new Rwandan crisis which risks being very bloody, doesn't want France to be in the first line and wants to limit our

action to interventions at the UN so that the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) can fulfil its security mission in Kigali (which it has not really done until now).

- Safety of the French community: At the moment our nationals are not under threat and no evacuation is envisaged. If this had to be reconsidered, we would act in collaboration with Belgium and the UNAMIR (1,500 people on-site, including 450 Belgians).

The Ministry for Defence has however already alerted two companies and a health unit (Bangui, Libreville and N'djamena).

- Family of President Habyarimana. For the moment his family is under the protection of the presidential guard. If they so desire, they will be accommodated at the residency of our ambassador, in compliance with your instructions.

Bruno Delayé