

ON RESUMPTION ON 05.05.98 - DAY 2

CHAIRPERSON: We continue with the Section 29 hearing and when we concluded yesterday General Meiring was delivering his opening remarks and I think he completed that on page 19 and would be ready to continue. But Mr von Lieres.

MR VON LIERES: Thank you Mr. Chairman. You asked two questions at the adjournment. Firstly the general's attitude towards the affidavit of Gen. Liebenberg. I can confirm this morning that in principle there is nothing with which the General differs as far as the facts are concerned. There are certain minor differences which are immaterial and consequently he doesn't differ with the material facts set out in Gen Liebenberg's affidavit.

Mr Chairman the second thing I was asked by my attorney just to explain to you, Annexure F to the General's statement.

This is a statement which comes from a police docket concerning Mr Mafleka. The position according to my attorney is the following: we received a copy of part of a police's docket from your Mr Khoisan. My attorney on investigation found that there were a number of statements missing in the docket. He then approached the authorities in question and obtained another copy of the docket and that copy apparently included the Mafleka statement which was not provided to us by Mr Khoisan. I would just like to place that on record. Thank you Mr Chairman.

Then General Meiring is ready to continue with the answering of the questions posed in the subpoena.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you Mr von Lieres. Gen Meiring. Can I just make a note that the interpreters are caught on the road with the rain. They are on their way. If there is a problem we can adjourn for a few minutes, but it does seem to me as though the answers are in English, but by all means raise an objection if you need to Gen Meiring.

ADV COETZEE: Mr Chairman speaking for the record in view of what my learned friend Mr von Lieres has just told you regarding our client's affidavit, will it suit you if we are excused for attending these proceedings any further?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes by all means thank you very much.

ADV COETZEE: Thank you Mr Chairman.

GEN LIEBENBERG'S COUNSEL EXCUSED

CHAIRPERSON: General Meiring.

GEN MEIRING: Thank you Chairman. Sir I'm referring you to the second paragraph in fact the first question, put to me by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the subpoena in terms of section 29. That's on the first page down at the bottom.

Written operational orders or instructions that were issued to the 12 member team involved. On enquiry I've been advised by the present Chief of the Army Sir, that no written operational orders or instructions can be traced apart from Annexure C,

which I have handed in yesterday together with my submission up to no. Is there any point in that, or can I continue please?

CHAIRPERSON: Please continue unless we pause, thank you.

GEN MEIRING: As far as on the next stage. As far as question 3 is concerned where it refers to the names of members involved in the planning process, i.e. those involved in the initiation of the planning process for the operation. I would like to take the questions emanating from that 3.1 to 3.5 and deliver a comprehensive answer around them. If I should read them to you, I'll do that, the questions themselves, but can I continue to read the answer only?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, I think it would save us some time. We do have the questions in front of us thank you.

GEN MEIRING: It is what study etc. You have that?

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

GEN MEIRING: What I'd like to point out here Sir. In a military operation which is very complicated affair, but also a very effective process, it takes place at different levels of command, simultaneously. Not necessarily following in tandem. In this instance Sir the request to consider military action was received by the South-African army from the South-African Police. While it was considered at the level of the army, the army staff obtained permission from the Minister to confirm or refute the available police information. The staff then commenced with

provisional planning in accordance with the simultaneous action doctrine which was updated continuously as fresh information came to hand.

Subsequently then to the State President's approval the guidelines provided by him were incorporated in my operational instruction that was annexure C which I read to you yesterday in Afrikaans.

I also conveyed the instructions given by the State President to the officer commanding of the unit that was entrusted with the operation. We subsequently produced a detailed plan which was conveyed to me by telephone. At that time I was and I'm still today Sir satisfied that his planning was in accordance with the State President's instruction. I understood the State President's instruction to be the following:

The objective Sir was to disrupt APLA and prevent further future attacks against the RSA from that facility. To that end, to seize all weapons and documents at the facility.

In conjunction therewith to make captive APLA members found there for the purpose of questioning. All this had to take place as a clandestine infiltration operation with minimum loss of life. In fact Sir General Liebenberg specifically made the point at the State Security Council meeting that this could only take place on condition that the lives of own operators would not be threatened. This proviso was accepted by the State President and

all members of the State Security Council that were present that day.

My immediate staff in planning of this operation the Brigadier Castleman and Colonel Gibson. They were assisted by a number of staff members at other levels in the army headquarters. The South African Police did not take place in the planning or execution of this operation. Therefore, Sir, no coordinating conferences with them for the execution of the operation were held. That pertains to the questions set out in paragraph 3, 1 to 3.5 inclusive Sir.

CHAIRPERSON: Gen Meiring we'll obviously return to this again in the course of our questions, but I think it's better for you to finish, thank you.

GEN MEIRING: As far as paragraph 3.6 is concerned what was the outcome of the debriefing out of the conclusion of the operation:

Sir I, in my statement yesterday, I read out from a document that described the sequence of events specifically paragraph 15, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 29 which was annexure D to the briefing note that I have handed in to you yesterday. If you want to, I can re-read those. But this emanated from the debriefing at various different levels and was summarised by me for the Ministers help to....

CHAIRPERSON: Sorry Gen Meiring I don't want to interrupt you, I just seem to be losing that every now and again. I wonder if you could bring it closer to you. Thank you very much.

GEN MEIRING: As far as paragraph 4 is concerned the results of ballistic tests conducted on weapons found at the house, those weapons are all handed to the South African Police and I understand that the results of these tests are available in the police docket. I have not had it to see. In fact Sir all the captured equipment at the time of this operation, having obtained that, was brought to Pretoria and handed over to the South African Police.

Sir the South African Police was conducting investigations concerning actions or so called actions by APLA murders, robberies, etc in South-Africa. They had no reason or no status and mandate to conduct operations outside the borders of South-Africa. Therefore, it was our task as military to execute those operations outside the borders. But because all these things pointed to specific actions by APLA on their request we handed over everything that we found for their future investigations to the South African Police. Then Sir on paragraph 5 the documents that were discovered at the house must be produced for scrutiny by the TRC. I've been advised that all these documents as I've said was also handed over to the South African Police. To date I have not be able to obtain any copy thereof. Should they come to hand we'll definitely forward them to you. I

can distinctly remember looking at some of these documents. But I cannot for the love of me tell you what the detail of that was, other than what I summarised in that document D which I referred to you yesterday.

Sir these were the questions and these were the answers that I tried to hand over to you. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much Gen Meiring.

Before I ask Mr Khoisan to put certain questions to you the procedure is that questions will be put by Mr Khoisan who is one of our investigators of the investigative unit and has been working on this for a very long time. Commissioner Wildschut and myself obviously will also put certain questions. But to try to get some order and to try to do this with the minimum amount of time I'm going to suggest that he puts those questions to you now.

May I also say that on the panel yesterday and today Mr Komagu on my right and Mr Mapekeza, and Mr Magadhla has joined us who heads up the Investigative Unit under Commissioner Dumisa Ntsebeza.

So without any further ado I suggest we continue. We could consider a break at half past ten, a short break, and we are aiming to try and finish at lunch time, but I cannot give you any guarantee. It depends obviously on the questions and the answers.

So if we can be as brief as we possibly can be without taking away anything from the substance. Mr Khoisan.

MR KHOISAN: Good morning General. We've come here today to deal with this matter of the Umtata raid, and by way of going into it we would like to quickly build up to it by putting this thing in context.

Now just for the record. At the time of the raid, the cross border military excursion into the then "Independent State" of Transkei, South Africa was in a period of transition. I'm correct to assume that a multi-party negotiating forum was at that time going on at the World Trade Centre. Is that correct General?

GEN MEIRING: It may well be so. I'm not sure at the timing when the TRC was instituted or specifically what was when, I was not involved in any of those actions in that time. So it could well be so.

MR KHOISAN: General the Azanian People's Liberation Army, APLA, you are aware that it is an armed wing of the political organisation which in terms of the mandate of the Truth Commission was a party to the conflict which raged in our country from 1960 to 1994. Is that correct?

GEN MEIRING: Yes, I'm aware of that.

MR KHOISAN: At the time of the Umtata raid your various efforts by various parties to try to bring the conflict under



control and at that time there were certain instruments that were put in place including the National Peace Accord. Is that true?

GEN MEIRING: I believe that is correct yes.

MR KHOISAN: Was it the position of the military at that time, and you were a ranking member of the military, part of its command structure that all armed groupings have to be brought into the fold and under the protocol and instruments of the National Peace Accord?

GEN MEIRING: I do not know. I cannot tell you exactly when or where or what this had happened. At that point in time Chairman I was the chief of the army. The negotiations with politicians were not my mandate. I did not talk specifically on political matters to the superiors as far as the minister or the president was concerned. I only took the orders from chief of the National Defence Force, or Chief of the Defence Force at that time and in his absence, I had to take these orders from the minister and the president itself. But I had no day to day negotiations with the politicians. I was not a member of the State Security Council at that time. So I'm not sure exactly what the political implications at that point in time was.

MR KHOISAN: But nevertheless General as a member of the established military command structure which was an extension of the existing political order at that time inside the country which would have been the government that you served at that time

headed by President FW de Klerk, there was an attempt to try to bring the conflict in the country under control through a negotiation process. Can you concede to that?

GEN MEIRING: I concede that there was certain aspects that were continuing at that time which I can remember to try and bring the conflict to a head, but I cannot concede that the military at that time was a political instrument as might be referred to by your question. I was at that point in time instructed to assist the South African Police Service or the South African Police at that time to curb law and order which was still rife in that area, and we were doing that.

As far as the political connotations are concerned it was to my superior that was involve in that aspect.

MR KHOISAN: Now General let my refer you to Annexure 1. It's a document which you have in front of you entitled Submission in respect of the former SADF compiled by the SANDF Nodal Point presented by General B Mortimer. Let me refer you to page 33 point 35 of that document. Can you please find it. Page 33 and point 35. "PAC/APLA actions".

GEN MEIRING: Yes I have that.

MR KHOISAN: Let me just quickly read it into the record so that it stands.

"The Azanian People's Liberation Army APLA was not a substantial factor in the armed struggle or the

revolutionary war, but they played a leading role in the development of the Soweto unrest in 1976.

APLA's military capabilities increased from an estimated 300 trained members in 1982-83 to approximately 2700 trained members in 1991-1992. By 1992 approximately 300 members were deployed internally mainly in Transkei. The PAC had not joined the political dialogue between the government and the ANC and was not a party to any agreement.

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Point 36.

From 22 February 1991 to 6 February 1994 APLA was responsible for 77 acts of violence in the Republic of South Africa. These actions were scattered throughout the Eastern Cape, Transkei, Western Cape, Witwatersrand, Northern Transvaal, Natal and Free State".

And then point 7 gives an idea of some of these APLA actions.

Now, in terms of the information in respect of APLA, and I concede that you may not have been a part or even been consulted in respect of the compilation of this presentation. But do you concur with this?

GEN MEIRING: Yes I do.

MR KHOISAN: Now in respect of the point that the PAC had not joined any political dialogue between the government and the

ANC and was not a party to any agreements, the fact that you was not sitting on the State Security Council, but you were part of the general staff, is that not true at that time?

GEN MEIRING: It depend on what you call the general staff. The general staff only exist in the army. The army's got a general staff. The National Defence force had at that time a National or a defence command council the DSC. I was a member of that Defence Command Council yes.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. Well actually let me put it that way. You were part of the defence command council. In respect of

presentations that have been made to this institution over the period that we have been holding, the Commission has now existed, we've been informed reliably that the command council had to deal with certain major issues. The most prominent of these would have been the security of the existing state and securing the transition. I'm talking in the period post the banning of the liberation movement to the formation or the institution and inauguration of the new government. So would it have been a matter that would have been discussed in the council the fact that the PAC, one major party, one party in the country which had an armed wing was not a party to an agreement and as such was left to its own devices. Would that have been a concern within the council?

GEN MEIRING: I think Chairman, everything that was affecting the peace in the country was of concern to us, but why they did not take part in the negotiation process, we did not know. But we at least did know that APLA was not part of this whole negotiating process. But we also know that the ANC was part of that. But if members of at that time, Umkhonto weSizwe or APLA or IFP were initiating any violence we acted against them. So the political aspect concerning these actions was not prominent in our minds. The actions, the resulting actions that threatened peace and stability and that were concerning the South African Police investigation into law and order in which we were assisting, yes, that did concern us.

MR KHOISAN: Now in terms of the concern that came before the council and I'm not talking about the planning which led to the Transkei raid *per se*, I'm talking at the time in the context that there was one party that was left out and left to its own devices as it were, which had a military capability, maybe not a major threat, but a military capability, and in your view were there any actions that were instituted off of discussions from the council which were to try to neutralise this threat?

GEN MEIRING: No, I did not know of anything of that nature. As I said political questions concerning those aspects were not discussed. The mandate that we had was to safeguard the security. In fact as far as this raid and other aspects concerning

the curbing of violence was concerned the political motive was never mentioned. In fact it was taken as background that the real driving factor was always the results threatening of peace and security and what to do, what we could do in assisting the South African Police to curb that.

MR KHOISAN: Now in 1992 was the directorate of Covert Collection still busy with its project of infiltrating the Azanian Peoples Liberation army including its command structure?

GEN MEIRING: I don't know. It was not on my level. Covert Collection acted as a staff organ under the chief of intelligence under the then chief of the South African defence force. I as chief of the army I had to do with the executive purposes of the so-called land threat and I have not been involved in that aspect at all. So I wouldn't know.

MR KHOISAN: Now General in terms of the particular information that came at the time in respect of the fact that the Azanian People's Liberation Army had personnel and logistics located in Transkei. I know you've told it to us, maybe we can just hear it again quickly. That's in your submission, but this is in the Q and A section. This information was placed into the hands of the military by the police. Did you get that from the senior commander of police at that time?

GEN MEIRING: Yes and no. Eventually I did get it personally from the commander and that was that was General van der

Merwe. But as I pointed out to you at that point in time, in the normal exchange of information it became known that such information existed because people were captured, people were apprehended, people were arrested and from the effects of the examination these facts became known. So yes at lower and at higher levels we were given the information from the South African Police. There is or was a free flow of information pertaining the aspects for which we had a mandate between us and the other agencies as far as information was concerned.

MR KHOISAN: In terms of Gen van de Merwe was there any other agency charged with the collection of intelligence internally or externally which also brought on information relevant to the activities, personnel or capabilities of APLA in the area known as Transkei?

GEN MEIRING: There could well be that the previous national intelligence, NI had given at times strategic information concerning activities of APLA. But this was disseminated and included in the organ at that time. I forgot what the name was that was charged with evaluation of information, and this was then disseminated into tactical requests for information and tactical intelligence having been evaluated and that was our concern at that point in time.

So the military, the army as such of which I was the chief at that point in time worked with intelligence, or intelligence

gathering on a tactical level. We exchanged these tactical information with the police. We were not concerned with strategic information or intelligence which was supplied to us in an already evaluated form. So it could well be that certain of this information could have been obtained from NI at that National Intelligence at that point in time. But I received the requests concerning - and the exchange of information from the South African Police.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. And in terms of the information, and let's look at the structure that might have dealt with or been a high level clearing house or processing centre of information with the end of decision-making. Was any of this information ever, according to your knowledge ever filtered through the Intelligence Coordinating Committee.

GEN MEIRING: Yes, I subsequently knew that it was at that time. I received the request. I received the fact that specific intelligence was in possession of the South African Police. I received the request for verifying this information and/or intelligence which we did, but subsequently I did come to know that this emanated also from this body that evaluated and coordinated the intelligence in South-Africa at that time and that they were part of this. Off course we only know that they were involved and they were involved in all of these cases. But we



worked again, as I have said, with the intelligence and the intelligence requests at the level which we were concerned with.

MR KHOISAN: Why General did you not mention the Intelligence Coordinating Committee and its role in your presentation to us?

GEN MEIRING: It had nothing to do with me or the presentation. I presented the presentation to you as it were at that time I was chief of the South African Army. I said to you now, I've just said to you that we worked with the execution and the detail request for tactical information. I said also that I subsequently know of this on your question, but it didn't concern my affidavit. It didn't concern my submission. That what I read into this Commission was that what happened at that time and I thought that it fitted to it in this way.

MR KHOISAN: Okay let me refer you to a document which you have in front of you, called National Intelligence Service. It is called the "Rasionalisasie van Inligtings verantwoordelikhede in die binneland". Do you have that document before you General?

GEN MEIRING: Yes, I have that.

MR KHOISAN: Let me refer you to a point called number 7.1. It's on page 4 and it begins with the words:

"The SAP and National Intelligence, the two premiers gave them the responsibility for internal security intelligence."

Now in terms of the role and function of the SAP and National Intelligence Service, given the fact these are two different organisations, one is an on the ground dealing with law and order issues, and the other one is primarily an intelligence gathering instruction and a processing clearing house. But in terms of the information in respect of APLA, and given the fact that you were about to launch an operation which would do one of two things. It could scuttle a very sensitive transition, and at that stage we were dealing with a very sensitive part of the process the which is the negotiation process. And two, it could have resulted in possibly into a international incident because the incursion would have been into a foreign territory which was at that time under for all intents and purposes, a sovereign administration.

In terms of the launching of the Transkei raid in your view, and from the way you understand they way the military would have operated, if you have received information from the South African Police, would you have tried to clear that with the National Intelligence Service to ask them if they had something that could corroborate that information?

GEN MEIRING: No, I did not. It wasn't my job to do that. As I said to you repeatedly today, I was tasked and mandated with the execution of specific orders and instructions from my superiors. When I received a request for authentication of certain aspects from the police I had to obtain permission from the minister who

was the body from which I could get that authority to deploy people inside the Transkei to try and verify some of this information. I handed that back to the police. It corroborated with what they had. I had further requests at a later stage which I again requested the minister to deploy people inside, to have a look at verifying or otherwise this information which then did. Having done so, we prepared on request plans to act should we be authorised to do so. In my submission yesterday I read in to you and the occurrence of events that what we did is that having obtained the information it was given back, further intelligence and then information then was obtained, on the strength of that, the President and the State Security Council discussed this and decided to take the action. I was merely then instructed to continue within the guidelines that they gave us to execute the plan. So I had no reason on my own as a substructure of the South African Defence Force to query the orders from above. I had received information and intelligence. I had to verify this and then I had to act on that. So I did not go to any higher authority to clear out the intelligence. It wasn't my job Sir.

MR KHOISAN: I understand that General. But let me refer you to annexure A part 3 of the submission, and we are going to be working from these two documents for now. The submission in respect of the former SADF. It's annexure A part 3 and it's an organogram. It's the page immediately following page 51. Right

at the top of the organogram - Minister of Defence, Chief of the SADF that particular organogram. Do you have it?

GEN MEIRING: Yes.

MR KHOISAN: Okay . Now in terms of operationalising this particular raid in Transkei. We have it here that you have information that is brought to you and at some point you know at a high level from the SAP, that's in the person of Gen van der Merwe, and the information is cross-checked or corroborated. And based on their corroboration now you have to activate a plan. Now in terms of that particular plan how would the two areas here under, one personnel division and one under planning division, how would they specifically have been involved, and what would have been the process of drawing them and bringing them into....?

GEN MEIRING: Sorry Sir, they are not involved at all. The personnel division ...(intervention)

MR KHOISAN: No, no, I said under the personnel division. I'm just giving you an idea the graph where I am. There's a section called intelligence division and planning division. Are you saying that the planning division and the intelligence division were not involved in this thing? Now, that's what I'm asking you about.

GEN MEIRING: Can I just rephrase. The planning division had to do with strategic planning process and the strategic planning process of the defence force initiating every year emanating in the

budget. It had nothing to do with the day-to-day planning of operations. That resorted under the operational division.

The Intelligence division is there to disseminate and forward intelligence to the various bodies that were instructed to use that intelligence. The intelligence division never acted by itself. So it handed down, it disseminated, evaluated and disseminated intelligence, handed it down to the various other sub-bodies of which the army was one, for request or execution. So in fact in this specific operation the process of obtaining intelligence was done and handled by the intelligence division which gave us intelligence to continue with their operation. So the intelligence division was constantly involved in corroborating the different bits and pieces of information, clearing it out with the other intelligence agencies, going to existing documentation and existing information, corroborating it with the police and handing it further to us and requesting specific clearing of this information or corroborating of specific bits and pieces of information which we did.

The planning division is in no ways subjected to this process at all. They were a completely different type of organisation in the defence force.

MR KHOISAN: Okay.

GEN MEIRING: The chief of the army is the execution of the land threat or actions to prevent the land threat from emanating.

So it itself has also got a specific intelligence division which I referred to yesterday as GS2. I referred to the other intelligence action as military intelligence.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. In terms of the intelligence division and their involvement in the corroboration of what you call the bits and pieces of information, who was the point person there, who was the main liaison person in respect of that in terms of bringing that up threw the channels to the command structure?

GEN MEIRING: I don't know. I can go back and look. I can give you a written reply on that, but I can't remember now who that individual was but it had no concern as far as we were concerned as the army, because our staff, the staff of the military intelligence in the army and the military intelligence as chief of the SADF level that is the thing that you'd just asked me about was specifically concerned with tactical intelligence. Intelligence of a tactical nature concerning the day to day execution of our job and we liaised between the GS2 branch of the army, that is the intelligence branch, as well as the specific intelligence substructure that worked with the South African desk so to speak. They exchanged information on a constant basis.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. And did you have occasion as you were planning this to be concerned about the possible repercussions at that time the territory of Transkei was under a different institution. Shall I say a military institution was responsible for

the state there. Would it have been a concern of yours that there might have been some repercussions on a military basis from this particular state, this sovereign in terms of your incursion into its independent territory, sovereign territory? If so what plans were undertaken in respect of that?

GEN MEIRING: As was also mentioned in my submission yesterday, in fact in one of the annexures, I think it's in the operational instruction where it was specifically stated that minimum loss of life were to be instituted according to the operation as well as against civilians and the Transkei defence force should they be encountered. We did plan of course for any eventuality and we did plan that if we ran up against specific opposition we would try and circumvent that. In fact it's on page 3 of the operational instruction.

I read this to you:

"Minimum losses to local population the Transkei defence force without putting them into danger".

This was a sovereign country and that we might come up against the security forces of that country. But we in fact planned for that and we executed the plan accordingly. We were not overtly concerned of the results because again, Chairman, this is not our concern. We were given a order to execute, and we planned accordingly, and our superiors were satisfied with the

detail of the plan as we had it at that time to enable them to achieve the results which they set us out to do.

MR KHOISAN: General in terms of the affidavit of which you have had the privilege of listening to of Gen Liebenberg and also in terms of your statement to us, there was a view that once you had received the information and as part of the corroboration process to establish just exactly what was going on, that there was some kind of surveillance which was carried out, some kind of reconnaissance mission. Just to check the stuff and also to make sure that things are where they are, that it is as it has been stated. Who was responsible for that, which particular agency was responsible for carrying out this reconnaissance?

GEN MEIRING: The South-African army was and it was members of some of the reconnaissance units of the South African Army.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. That would be - I just want to be very clear so that when we get ready to - that would be appendix G in front of you. Maybe we can go to that. Appendix G part 3 and it's one of those graphs there. It follows on, it's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 graphs ahead of the one that you have. It's General Officer commanding special forces heads that particular thing there, we can see it.

GEN. MEIRING: No. At that point of time General Officer commanding special forces did not exist anymore.



MR KHOISAN: No, no, no, I'm just referring you to a graph.

GEN MEIRING: Ja, but in a graph is something that was happening previously. At that point in time that specific organogram did not exist anymore. In other words, when I was chief of the army, in the beginning of my time, the general officer commanding special forces ceased to exist. And that as a specific entity ceased to exist and they were placed under the army's command.

So they were in fact under command of me as chief of the army at that point in time. It was then 45 Special Forces Brigade which was under my command.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. General I'm just doing it to draw your attention and I'm actually glad that you gave us that very important piece of information to say that you had assumed command of special forces. There is one particular, there are five, there are four - one had been disbanded at that time. Now of this 1 reconnaissance, 2 reconnaissance was five reconnaissance regiment, 5 Recce, were they involved in any way in this particular mission in Transkei?

GEN MEIRING: No they were not, they were only involved as far as back up forces could be concerned. They were not involved at all.

MR KHOISAN: What do you mean - so involved as back-up forces, so who did you use to carry out the recce in the area, in Transkei?

GEN MEIRING: I would not know at this point in time which specific unit because the order was given to 45 Brigade and they used troops available to them. I'm not sure from which they came, but as far as I know 5 was not used. But I'm not sure about the specific reconnaissance, but in the operation they were specifically not used. That I know because I have that in the operational instruction.

MR KHOISAN: So, and in terms of a person to whom we can assign some kind of authority in terms of the recce, that was done in Transkei, do you have a name for us, General?

GEN MEIRING: At that point in time when the recce took place it could be the officer in commanding of 45 Special Forces Brigade, I think. I'm not sure exactly who that at that specific point in time was when the recce was initiated. The one, the reconnaissance was initiated.

MR KHOISAN: So in terms of the fact that the reconnaissance was done and the way we've been given to understand it there was some kind of aerial photograph that was even taken of the house in the area. Is that correct? Did you get the opportunity to see an aerial photograph of the house?

GEN MEIRING: No, I did not. If that was taken I don't know about it. But I can tell you that a number of aerial photographs of areas in the Transkei, possible areas in the Transkei, areas in other neighbouring countries were taken. As far as I know the first corroborating evidence when the police interrogated this specific witness of theirs, the first part of the corroboration took place from an aerial photograph. I've never seen that. But that was done at military intelligence. That was a level higher than mine. I didn't have that aerial photograph.

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MR KHOISAN: So, what you are telling us is that military intelligence was responsible basically for processing that information, collecting that information?

GEN MEIRING: Military intelligence is responsible for collecting or evaluating all evidence, all intelligence in the South African Defence Force at the time and also one their clients and subscribers is GS 2 which is the military intelligence aspect at army headquarters. Between them they share the information on a databases that existed at that time, and specifically who first saw the aerial photograph I won't be able to tell you. But it's in the intelligence process, it's not done in watertight compartment as far as intelligence is concerned. It's a free flow of intelligence, and who did what at what point in time I am not sure.

MR KHOISAN: Who is the officer to which we can assign some kind of authority in terms of military intelligence, General, in respect to the run-up to the Umtata raid?

GEN. MEIRING: I can only tell you which officer I used at that point in time, and that is in my submission and this is Colonel Gibson who was the staff officer grade one of intelligence that worked specifically with this aspect during that time. He was one of the officers who assisted me, but by no means the only one and I would not be able to tell you who exactly everybody was.

MR KHOISAN: So there were others?

GEN MEIRING: Of course. we work in staff compartments. The military Chairman, do not work like the police where specific individuals are responsible for specific actions. They work as a team. In this case, the man I normally worked with, was Colonel Gibson. But he is part of a major team under chief of army staff logistics, whom at that time, I forgot what his name was. I can let you have that specific name. But they in turn liaise with the military intelligence organisation. At that time the chief of military intelligence, and he has under him large numbers of other brigadiers and one or two, or more than one colonel at least. They are structured in military or in intelligence desks. A specific group looking after specific aspects. There could be an Africa or a Southern Africa or an Eastern Africa desk. People of that

organisation then liaise with Colonel Gibson and his people and among them this was done.

So it is in fact team work. It is very difficult in the army to pin-point a specific individual in a staff position who do a specific job. In an execution position it is different, but in a staff position it's very difficult.

MR KHOISAN: No we are just trying to find out along the line who the people were. In terms of this particular thing General, given the sensitivity of what was about to happen - because the whole world was focusing on South-Africa at that time. We had

just had the problem in Boiphatong which had already scuttled the Codesa talks. There were problems there, and I'm sure that the state as it was constituted at that time, and the government which was responsible for the country at that time would not have wanted something which would have landed full square as a problem in it's own court. In respect of that, you were going to launch an operation into a foreign country at the time, that "enemies" quote, were making peace with each other, trying to find a solution. Now was the chief of staff intelligence or an officer assigned by him at any time involved in this process?

GEN MEIRING: I'm not sure what your question entails at this point in time. I'm not sure because you addressed a large number of things and you asked me in this process, I'm not sure to what you are referring. What I can tell you is that this operation was

not done from the military point of view only. The military acted on request. It cleared the request with the government of the day who instructed the military to continue. I got my instructions from the chief of the defence force Gen Liebenberg at that time in the format of an operational instruction which I again issued further to the specific institution to execute this task with.

We could not involve ourselves in the politics. What you were describing now is happening at the level of the State Security Council who got to look at all these things. We were not involved in that. ~~The only institution, the only individual of the~~ defence force that could sit on the State Security Council was chief of the defence force, and he alone was there, not as a full member, but as a director general of a specific department involve in these actions.

So we in the military at that point in time were not involved with these questions that you were talking to us about. So there could be no real involvement in this process as you describe it, if that is what your question referred to.

MR KHOISAN: Ja. I was just trying to find out just if the chief of staff intelligence was consulted in any way, whether he was in the loop. If he wasn't, it's clear, it's that. If he was according to your information then I would just like it to be put onto the record, that's all.

GEN MEIRING: As far as I know he personally wasn't, but his staff was as I pointed it out to you. There was a continuous flow of information between the two institutions.

MR KHOISAN: Now in terms of, and we are leading up to this particular thing, you say in point 6 of annexure D which you've handed to us:

"On 5th October 1993 ... through physical reconnaissance was confirmed at the house, was indeed 47 AC Jordan Street and that all given information from the source concurred with what happened or what is seen on the ground.

It also confirmed that the house is lived in. The contents of the house could not be ascertained."

ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE

Now in terms of that particular thing you say that for all intents and purposes and for just proceeding here, your sign, the reconnaissance aspect, the intelligence gathering aspect to military intelligence, and we'll leave it at that. Now in terms of this particular point that on 5 October 1993 there was a physical reconnaissance, now what concretely did you have in your hand to be able to put this down?

GEN MEIRING: I think Chairman it is quite clear that the process is not understood at this point in time. What happens is that if military intelligence from its sources, whatever they might be, could be police sources, it could be national intelligence

sources, it could be agents found intelligence pertaining to a specific target or tactical disposition. They have no other direct means of verifying this. If it's envisaged that an operational action is to be undertaken against this institution or whatever the intelligence pertained to, it is normal practice to use your reconnaissance elements to verify tactically on the ground as far as possible the routes to, the situation of; the locality of; the nature of this thing that you were given information about.

In this specific case sketches, plans, sketches made of ~~interrogation or from interrogation in the police was available and~~ a number of specific actions which is also I believe in the police docket was at that time used to construct the viability or not of what was being said.

So what we merely did was to look, is there a house at 47 A.C. Jordan Street? Are there people in there? What can you see about this? So it was to verify specifically those other aspects that was obtained by military intelligence. So in fact we tried to be as sure as possible, before an operation is being commenced and that it is operationally feasible and that the intelligence is not a hoax. And that is what we actually did. I think that I tried to explain your question in this way.

MR KHOISAN: General, I'm trying to also find out now in terms of the collection. Just on a side. Maybe you know, maybe you don't, if you don't I'll understand. In terms of verifying this



information that came in in bits and pieces did you employ a source network?

GEN MEIRING: No, in this case the bits and pieces came from interrogation, of a number, as I pointed out in my submission yesterday and it was also read into it from what Gen van der Merwe said at the time of the press conference just after the raid, that there was a number of aspects that they obtained through interrogation or other means which I don't know about. Then we went into our files, our databank in military intelligence to try and verify to see whether we have also knowledge of names that were mentioned; of addresses that were mentioned; of actions that were mentioned. So all the - and as you see it was from the 1st to the 7th of October so not a lot of time was available. So all the resources available would normally have been tapped for this, and in this case it possibly also had been done by that.

But then for the last resort we'd asked for and obtained permission to deploy reconnaissance troops to go specifically to put a house under surveillance to try and find out whether this collected bits and pieces that has now been put into an evaluation form as intelligence is in fact verified on ground level, and if it is possible to be able to conduct an operation against this.

So in this case I'm sure, as far as I know, no agent network was at that point in time used to corroborate this. It was from interrogation from the police initially.

MR KHOISAN: And that leads us to point 7 of this particular annexure D which says that at the receipt of this information there was an order given to conduct a study of the possibility of executing this operation. To whom was that order given, and what was the outcome of the study?

GEN MEIRING: Again, let me try and explain me the workings of such an aspect. Again there's not an individual to whom a study was requested to be done. The operational staff was instructed at the operational division of chief of the army to do a feasibility study on the ground of the information and the intelligence available; to plan in broad detail what could be done to this. One option could be to do nothing; one option could have been to attack by means of conventional military means. One option could have been, I'm not sure, I'm just speculating now, because I don't know, I can't remember all the options. It could have been perhaps to clandestinely infiltrate and get information from the house etc, etc, etc.

So a feasibility study was then done as to what to do with this should we be given an instruction to act against this specific house, or target or institution. This is now done first of all by the staff organ of operations of chief of the army. It is then cleared out with the operations division of chief of the South African Defence Force at a higher level, to see whether any actions pertaining from them, any guidelines from them could be

included. They coordinated normally the Air Force medical services and Navy and Army. In this case I was, as chief of the army, instructed to be the chief executive and the liaison with the Air Force and medical services was then delegated to me by that specific aspect.

So my operational staff did this and to whom I cannot specifically say. I know that at the point in time the director operations was Brigadier Castleman. But he had quite a major staff under him at that point in time.

MR KHOISAN: You see the way this document starts, what really is baffling is the way this document starts here, is it starts with, particularly in point B of page 1 of this document, annexure D, there is, according to what they call a "bron" or a source or probably an interrogated person at that time, all of these weapons in this house, that's the way I understand it. So if I'm given to understand that this is the reason why on page 1 - was it your information that all these weapons are in this house.?

GEN MEIRING: Yes. That was according to the information received from the police investigation and the police interrogation which is also read to you yesterday. That was a summary of that information which we had.

MR KHOISAN: That's a lot of weapons to be in one place.

GEN MEIRING: Yes, but 30 weapons is not much. It's small  
...(inaudible)

MR KHOISAN: No I know, I know, 30 AK 47's, there's 8 R1's, 4 Uzzis, 2 Scorpions. A small unit could cause quite a bit of damage with that amount of weapons.

GEN MEIRING: That was why we tried to prevent them to cause damage. Because on the strength of this information Chairman, it was then requested to take these weapons out, that they have to bring them back, or to destroy them.

MR KHOISAN: But, General didn't you know at that time that the - or was it your view that the South African Police Force in respect of it's work was - that they were a reputable organisation.

Did you ever in your mind question whether this particular list of things to be located in one place might be fact or it might be fiction? Was there ever a question that obtained in your mind about whether that is actually the case?

GEN MEIRING: It could be more or less. But this was given to us in the same line, from the same sources that spoke about the house, that spoke about certain specific actions. That as we read in into you yesterday was at various stages corroborated. In fact we believe that weapons of this nature, not necessarily all of them, or these specific ones was at that place because other parts of this information or intelligence was verified by our observation on the ground, and also because more than one suspect was interrogated which basically spoke about similar actions and similar weapons. So not necessarily that all these specific

weapons were there, but that there were weapons we were convinced of.

And also subsequently looking back at this, when the people raided this house, they found the strongroom prepared for weapons in which at that time only some cleaning material for weapons were held. So why would you build a strongroom in a house with cleaning material for weapons in it, and not house weapons there from time to time? So we were quite convinced that we were correct and I'm still convinced today that this was true at the time when we heard it. ~~Not necessarily in specific quantities, but that weapons were there I was convinced was correct.~~

MR KHOISAN: General with all due respect. And Mr von Lieres we are actually questioning the General. I really would appreciate if you do not prompt the General while we are questioning him. If you want to stop the proceedings so that you can consult with your client, we would appreciate that you do that, otherwise the General is the witness before us who has been served with the invitation to come here.

In terms of this particular information, what I am trying to ascertain here is that you had a recce on the ground that ascertained that there was a house there. Did they ascertain troop movements, APLA troops moving in and out of this place? Was there any indication that this was a military centre?

Because the fact is General that we only have your word, and the word of the people who reported back to you of what they found in the house. The victims who were in the house are dead. They cannot come and tell us what they found there.

And as you well know, and as been pointed out by the attorneys for Mr Liebenberg, the firm of Ntsebeza and Company tried to obtain these weapons and had to go through, as you quite rightly pointed out in your submission yesterday, they had to go to international organisations to try to retrieve these weapons, to have ballistic tests done etc. So we still have that particular thing is something that still has to be tested. It's not really a fact.

So I'm trying to find out what did you have in your hand besides the fact that there was a house at AC Jordan Street that indicated that, that was an APLA base? Did you see an APLA commander? Did you see people - and besides people that were interrogated inside South Africa? What was found in Transkei which indicated that that information was indeed true?

GEN MEIRING: With all the respect Sir. You would not have found an APLA base with APLA troops as was mentioned here. It doesn't exist because APLA was too scared to sit in a specific base as such. That this house was a facility of APLA was told to us. We found that about 18 people as I have submitted lived in the house. We found that the house was only occupied by male members which is strange in any place like Transkei, like Umtata,

that only a number of male persons lived there. We found that the house coincided with what we could see from sketches drawn up from interrogation. We found that all the aspects of information concerning the house was in fact true. So any intelligence, it is not evidence that you are leading, it's intelligence that you are gathering and trying to formulate facts on there. It is normally so that if some of or most of, parts of it is true the others could also be true.

So on the strength of that we said, that well this man did not speak nonsense. Some of what he said we could corroborate. We couldn't go inside the house of course to see whether there were weapons. But subsequently we did. Subsequently we found five weapons in the house. Subsequently we found the strong room in the house. We found APLA material in the house. We found cleaning material in a strong room. So with hindsight we think that we were correct. Thank you.

MR KHOISAN: Now in terms of this particular - and with all due respect, you had operators on the ground but did you have aerial reconnaissance of that particular house and the immediate vicinity?

GEN MEIRING: As I've stated that there was a aerial photograph which I did not see of the house which conformed with the location which we in fact verified with an on-ground specific observation. That aerial photograph showed a house.

MR KHOISAN: So there was some kind of aerial reconnaissance? Because what I'm trying to ascertain is whether you actually had a photograph that showed a photograph that showed a house and people and anything else besides a house? Because ...(intervention)

MR VON LIERES: Mr Chairman with respect this is the fifth time the same question has been put to the witness, and he's answered it already. Repetition doesn't make the evidence any better.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you could you move on please?

MR KHOISAN: All right. General now in terms of the fact that you had this information, you are saying that there was nobody in the PAC which was verifying your information for you?

GEN MEIRING: I did not say that.

MR KHOISAN: It might have been somebody inside the PAC or APLA who was part of the corroboration process, if so, can you provide us with details?

GEN MEIRING: I said that the information we received came from the police, from interrogation of APLA members, so called APLA members at that time. We didn't have at that point in time anybody inside the house, or anybody there belonging to APLA which told us about these things.

MR KHOISAN: Alright. Now when you were getting ready to launch, when this particular plan now, to operationalise this



before R F Botha as you put it told you to go to "fok hulle op", before all of this, when you were satisfied that you'd crossed the threshold of corroboration and the target had been established as this place where APLA were storing weapons and having its people, personnel, and this matter was brought to the State Security Council, according to your view, was what you had in your hand enough to launch a military operation?

GEN MEIRING: I had what I had, and I brought it to the State President and presented it to him with Gen Liebenberg who came in fairly late from another position where he was and with Gen van der Merwe from the police, I had information which I thought was enough to conduct an operation, but I had no authority to do it, and I couldn't do it unless the State President gave the specific order to operate beyond the borders of South-Africa. He in fact looked at all the evidence or all the information on intelligence before him. He gave certain guidelines. He discussed this with his colleagues. They gave their assent that they think that this was going to be feasible. He then told me and chief of the defence force to continue. I left later then to receive the operational instructions from the chief of the defence force and then continuing to execute the plan that was then made.

MR KHOISAN: Was there anybody according to your information, at a high ranking, who held a high ranking position in the military, or who was the senior member of the government

of that time, who was a voice of dissent, who may have called for caution of this operation? Who may have asked that this particular information be taken for further verification? Was there anybody who was sitting among those people who were the decision-makers in respect of this raid, who at any time was a voice of dissent?

GEN MEIRING: I think if we look back, what happened that this was a series of events that took place. Before any request for information, or request for action is requested, initiated, a large number of series of action has to be done. I have discussed this matter with the Minister. He obviously discussed it with the State President. I was then invited in the absence of Gen Liebenberg to speak to him. He requested us for further information which we then did, as I pointed out to you, in my thesis that I submitted yesterday.

Also he cautioned us that if we should conduct this operation, it should be with minimum loss of life. We also confirmed that in our operational instructions. But you must remember Chairman that at that point in time, the South African government of the time was confronted by continuous acts of violence against civilians including children, churchgoers, innocent bystanders in bars, etc by APLA. And they were trying their utmost to try and bring these perpetrators to task. This

could have been the target they were looking for to try and curb this violence, or get the perpetrators of the violence into court.

So at the time when this was presented to the President, and later to the State Security Council, it was presented against the background of the APLA incursions into South Africa, specifically the Eastern and Western Cape and parts of the Free State. Having obtained enough verification that this facility might exist, it was then decided to continue with to initiate a raid on this aspect as was pointed out to you. I think this is basically the broad outline. But if there were, I cannot remember if there were a member present who at that point in time said, no. But they could have voiced their concerns before the time. Having resulted in actions and in in ... (inaudible) of the plan to eventually come to this specific plan that was accepted. That I cannot bring to mind exactly. But in that point in time no, there was nobody that said no, the raid should not take place.

MR KHOISAN: Isn't it true General that besides the house at AC Jordan Street 47 that there were other places, houses or other structures that were also put as part of this intelligence about APLA activities in the former Transkei? Isn't it true that attorney DB Ntsebeza's house in Tqala was also part of that information?

GEN MEIRING: Sir I don't know the last. I know that there was about nine possible potential targets in the Transkei, about nine. I can't remember the number exactly. And it was in fact from the

data on the database that was also used to corroborate some of the information obtained in interrogating some of the suspects, that this was now construed as to be this specific house. I'm not sure, because that wasn't in my specific mandate at that time to initiate anything or any actions against any of the other targets. But I knew that there were more than one target, about nine in the Transkei.

MR KHOISAN: But more specifically can you verify that attorney Dumisa Buthe Ntsebeza's house and his person was also a target.?

GEN MEIRING: No, I cannot, because I don't remember and no ways this is coming into consideration at all. I had no authority or no request for that specific house to do a detailed verification study as I did with 47 Jordan Street.

MR KHOISAN: Maybe we can - I don't know about the Chairman, but I know he said to stop at 10H30, and it's 10H30 exactly, and I want to be snappy with this thing.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you for your help. I suggest we adjourn and in light of the time factor could we be back in 20 minutes, ten to eleven. Thank you.

HEARING ADJOURNS

ON RESUMPTION

GEN MEIRING: (s.u.o.)

MR KHOISAN: Thank you Mr Chairman. Where we left off General and thank you for your cooperation this morning and your assistance in this regard.

You did discuss the fact that there were like nine potential targets or there were nine areas that were set out in the intelligence that was in front of you in respect of places where APLA either had weapons.

GEN MEIRING: Sorry Sir, it's not correct. I didn't say that intelligence was in front of me. I know about nine that were targeted in the intelligence as potential bases. But it wasn't in front of me. I had nothing to do with that, I had only to do with the execution of that specific target. I just gave you what I knew, it wasn't in front of me, sorry.

MR KHOISAN: I just wanted to ascertain how you knew that General?

GEN MEIRING: We, from time to time at the defence command council received in broad outline intelligence briefings. The intelligence briefings stated that what was known or supposedly known pertaining the actions in Southern Africa and further afield as was our involvement or not. I remember it was mentioned in one of these cases that there were about I forgot the exact name, but nine stuck in my memory, potential places of operation from

APLA out of the Transkei into South Africa, facilities, not necessarily bases.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. Now in terms of the particular operation here, and I'm talking about the operational instruction 1693 annexure C page 2 point 6, I'm given to understand here, it's a little bit - the photocopy didn't come out so clear, but I think it's 6. It's under the subheading "Ruglyne". Do you have that General? Now we can go through some of the stuff very quickly. This was a clandestine operation, yes, is that correct?

GEN MEIRING: Yes.

MR KHOISAN: Now in terms of this being a clandestine operation you would operate on a need-to-know basis in respect of various parts of the plan.

GEN MEIRING: Sure.

MR KHOISAN: And in terms of physically putting together the team which you would have to do with the execution of this operation who was the point person?

GEN MEIRING: The officer commanding 45 Special Forces Brigade.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. In terms of this operation, we can get to the other stuff later but I just want to get a sense of the troop strength once the plan had been drawn up in terms of moving, can you give us an idea of the troop strength that was proposed for this operation?

GEN MEIRING: Chairman, if one turns to the previous page, that is page 1, it is set out basically in that area, under paragraph 3, 4, 5 up to B, 5A up to B. Those were people involved in the entire operation, directly or indirectly.

MR KHOISAN: So these were the people that you put on in point 4 and 5? These was the people and logistics including 2 Oryx helicopters, 2 Puma helicopters etc, these were the people that were physically connected directly and indirectly to this operation, we can safely assume that?

GEN MEIRING: Paragraph 3 as well. Paragraph 3 didn't denote how big or what the task, the operation will be clandestine. This operation was put together and I then noted specifically the reserve elements in paragraph 4 and 5 and their support elements.

MR KHOISAN: Do and I have heard that Sams was connected to this operation, who at Sams was the liaison person or contact in respect of this operation?

GEN MEIRING: No, I couldn't remember that. In the operation division we have normally a staff officer, that is not necessarily the same person who is the liaison officer between the army and the military medical services. In this case, suffice, it's sufficient to know is that a medical officer and a operational medical officers were in fact earmarked for this numbers only, in the event that anyone should obtain wounds, or anything like that were

there any casualties. So these was the only reason why the medics was involved in this.

MR KHOISAN: Now in respect of Counter Intelligence, what was their role in respect of this operation General?

GEN MEIRING: Counter intelligence, as in all operations, were supposed to look at the leakages, the security, leakages of information, the security of the operation and to try and ensure that the target group did not know of the impending operation.

MR KHOISAN: And who was the person that was the connecting element to command?

GEN MEIRING: No, I don't know. The operation instructions says in paragraph 6(b):

"Teen Inligting"

that's T I counter intelligence.

"must be applied strictly and 55 Parachute Brigade must appoint a CO operation, knowledge must be dealt with exclusively"

...[inaudible] given to the unit as such.

MR KHOISAN: That's why I'm ask that particular question, because you say that:

"'n Teen Inligting offisier moet aangestel word vir 'n operasie"

and I was trying to find out if you know, if you don't it's fine.

GEN MEIRING: No, I don't.



MR KHOISAN: Okay. So we'll be able to find that out possibly from Counter Intelligence who was on that operation?

GEN MEIRING: No. A Counter Intelligence Officer can be any officer that for that specific purpose is being given the task of looking after the security of the operation. In this case at this level it does not necessarily a Counter Intelligence Officer, it could be an Infantry Officer as well.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. One second General. Now, if there was a problem in respect of a leakage in terms of the Counter Intelligence Officer executing his mandate and preventing people from knowing about the operation, is there anybody - did anything come to your attention about maybe a senior APLA member or even General Holomisa getting to know about this operation and if so what was done in respect of that?

GEN MEIRING: Before the time we know of nothing of such an event.

MR KHOISAN: But after the fact, did it come to your attention that there was a leakage in respect of this operation?

GEN MEIRING: In fact very much later, only recently when I read the police docket, this is only recently, having obtained some of these documents, it was stated from a witness interrogation that a leakage did occur which we did not know of at that time. Whether there was or another source of information, we don't know but this was only recently that I came to know about that,

that people knew that a raid of sorts was going to take place and that weapons and people should be moved from the different locations. This only came to my mind recently.

MR KHOISAN: And that for the record is reflected in an affidavit that was taken some three years later from one, W G Mafileka.

GEN MEIRING: I've read that yesterday into my submission, yes.

MR KHOISAN: Now in terms of this particular operation, now once the ground had been squared and stuff like that, were there any friendly forces, anybody that was a point of liaison within General Bantu Holomisa's government who might have been contacted in respect of this operation, either for the purpose of damage control or for other purposes?

GEN MEIRING: No, not at that point in time. It was considered that if the operation was finalised the normal liaison through Foreign Affairs will take care of the fact to enlighten the Transkei government as to what happened but not before the time and I don't know of any such thing. If there were, it was not in my mandate; it could have been under the Foreign Affairs mandate.

MR KHOISAN: You have in point 4(c) here, I do see that this operational order, operational instruction 16/93 was written or

sent out, disseminated on 7 October 1993 but you point here in point (c) is:

~~"Company of 451 Battalion in Phalabora"~~

Now am I given to understand that part of that component would have been the guys from 5 Recce?

~~GEN MEIRING: Yes, as you call them now, 5 Recce but they were only an a supportive role as you could see. They were to be the reaction force, should anything happen, stationed then at Durban to be flown in by helicopter only my direct instruction as this read further.~~

MR KHOISAN: So at no time were they used physically in the operation?

GEN MEIRING: No, no.

MR KHOISAN: Now in terms of the operation itself, what was the last time that you met with an discussed with people on the 7th any matter in relation to the operation of the raid of the ...[indistinct]

GEN MEIRING: Constantly, I didn't sleep that night.

MR KHOISAN: So you were basically on post the whole time?

GEN MEIRING: I was in the operations room, yes.

MR KHOISAN: In the ops room?

GEN MEIRING: Yes.

MR KHOISAN: And you were getting constant feedback?

GEN MEIRING: No, not constant. We couldn't, we had radio silence. We only had certain specific times, we call it report lines, that is a specific - if the force passed a specific point they only come on the air and they give a code word which means: that that specific line was crossed, so we could trace the operation as far as that was concerned and they, should they be in a problem they would have come back to us. And then because - you see the instructions, I had to issue the order specifically for the support elements to come into being and I would then be - must have been in the position to do that so that is why I was there.

MR KHOISAN: So what was the last time before the actual execution of the operation physically on the ground at 47 A C Jordan Street, that you received a situation report and any kind of feedback from them?

GEN MEIRING: I cannot remember exactly the time, it is some time in the course of after midnight on the 7th, 8th, I can't tell you exactly what time.

MR KHOISAN: And the guys were already in Transkei at the time?

GEN MEIRING: Yes. I think they crossed into the Transkei more or less at midnight.

MR KHOISAN: And when was the next time that you were in contact with the forces that executed this operation?

GEN MEIRING: When the operation was finished.

MR KHOISAN: And what is that, that would be 3 a.m., 4 a.m.?

GEN MEIRING: Round about that time, I can't remember. I'm sorry Mr Chairman, but I cannot remember that detail.

MR KHOISAN: It's okay, we don't want to test your memory, push it all the way back you know, it's fine. Now in terms of this particular physical operation, you say that - you have here 24 operators here, you have all these other people on standby. What I'm trying to ascertain is physically were there 12 or 20 or 5 or 10 people who actually were on the ground at AC Jordan Street doing the operation?

GEN MEIRING: No, I don't know how many were there. There group that went in were 12 but how many were used inside the house, I don't know. It could be 3, it's normally not less than that, it wasn't all 12 because there was supposed to be a immediate reserve so, I'm not sure how many because that detail did not involve me.

MR KHOISAN: So when you got a - who was the person who was directly in touch with you from the operation to your operational room because I'm sure that these people had a commander on the ground?

GEN MEIRING: Of course, it was the commander of 45 Brigade. We also said that they must have a special command control link continuing with this. I spoke to him only.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. And his name, you don't have his name?

GEN MEIRING: I would give you the name, I have requested his permission. The Officer Commanding was J C Swart but he was not there at the time, he was away and his second in command was there and that was at the time Colonel Hannes Venter. He's no longer in the National Defence Force, he's left.

MR KHOISAN: So Colonel Hannes Venter was commanding the troops on the ground?

GEN MEIRING: I believe so, yes. He was the man I spoke with. I don't know whether he had intermediate commanders between him and the troops but I spoke to him.

MR KHOISAN: Now, when you got feedback at approximately 3 a.m., what was the exact nature of that feedback?

GEN MEIRING: That the operation was conducted, that it was a success, that unfortunately no people could be apprehended - what is the word, captured, that a number of people were shot, that weapons and documents were found, that none of our own forces were injured and that no direct need of assistance was necessary. If I remember correct that was basically it. It was a long time ago Chairman, this is more or less what I remember.

MR KHOISAN: On the 10th of October 1993, you have a statement, there's a statement by you, I believe it's by you General, where you stated that none of the people were under 16 years old, can you confirm that?

GEN MEIRING: That was - I read this in, it is - the report is Annexure D I think, to the Minister to assist him. In that report that we got back, because we knew from press reports that people claim that there were children. As far as the feedback from the unit was concerned at the time when this was construed, they confirmed that none of the people were, as far as they could see, children but they were youths and I think the word: "they didn't seem to be under the age of 16" was mentioned. This is how this was construed but I didn't say that.

MR KHOISAN: But how did they ascertain that?

GEN MEIRING: Chairman, again let me explain that after an operation a series of debriefs are being held at various levels, in other words should there be a section - I'm now talking generally, should there be a section involved, the section holds a debrief to determine what did go wrong or what did go right or what actions had to be taken additionally if you had a future operation of this kind, trying to get from the troops concerned as much information as possible.

A further higher level of debriefs then takes place. So during the course of the debriefs the information that is contained in this submission dated 10th of October 1993, was construed and summarised for the Minister, so it came from debriefs at various levels.

MR KHOISAN: Now at the time both members of the military and members of the civilian authority, that is Mr de Klerk's government, went before the world and the country and the press and put out the position that they had executed an operation against APLA and that it was successful.

Now, was there any time where there was a reflection by the military and by yourself as the senior officer below General Liebenberg, that there must be caution about public statements in respect of this?

GEN MEIRING: No. What happened at the time, if I understood you correctly - I'm not quite sure of the content exactly of the aim of your question, but what I can tell you if I construed this in my mind what you said is the following, that we did go and I was present at a press conference, we gave the information at hand leading up to the raid, the raid itself as well as the results of the raid.

The success was that the raid itself, in other words the execution of the aim was successful insomuch as that the target was found, that there were weapons, that there were signs - as I've already pointed out, of a strongroom where weapons were or could have held and that there were cleaning materials for weapons in this house and that there were documents obtained, handed over to the police.



Nobody was told by anyone else how to say or what to do with it but is custom, the media conference is made only at a specific level and in this case it was handled by the Department of Defence under the leadership of the then Minister of Defence and Justice, Mr Kobie Coetzee, he presided at this media conference.

Together with him were myself, General Liebenberg and if I remember correctly, General van der Merwe, yes he was there because parts of his statement I read into this thing yesterday. So this is basically what happened.

There was a large number of media people present and they reported widely on this aspect at the time, if you could refer back in your memory to the time that this took place.

MR KHOISAN: The reason I asked that question is because in point (c) of Annexure C you make reference to, in your operational instruction to: "Guidelines for a Media Plan", so obviously you anticipated dealing with the media in respect of this raid?

GEN MEIRING: Of course. Chairman, I think it is, it would be irresponsible not to have perceived that this should become known in the media. And there was an endeavour made to - in the beginning in the operational instructions, to prepare for such an occurrence should it be necessary to do so, we always do it after any operation.

But in this case, because of the events as they took place, it was taken out of our hands so to speak and the Minister himself arranged for the media conference.

MR KHOISAN: And in point 4 you say:

"involved Judge Goldstone and senior ANC representatives at the press conference"

...[inaudible] involve Goldstone and the ANC?

GEN MEIRING: That was a plan because, as we have read into the documents yesterday, part of the Goldstone findings concern APLA in the Transkei and it was thought fit at the point in time to acknowledge or to give him the feedback if the operation was a success. Also because of the TEC that existed at that time, I think it existed I'm not sure, but that at least the senior members of the ANC who were then involved in the negotiation process were to be involved in giving them information. This I obtained from the Minister at the time, that's why I put this into the instructions.

MR KHOISAN: Were they briefed before the operation or immediately after the operation?

GEN MEIRING: Not as far as I know. It wasn't my task at the time, I said that we must do it but after the operation I did not do it, the Minister - I don't know what and to whom he said but he addressed the meeting at the World Trade Centre where the negotiations took place, for which this aspect in appendix D was

drawn up and he used that to enlighten the members at the World Trade Centre.

MR KHOISAN: And you don't know who in the ANC was briefed on this particular thing?

GEN MEIRING: No, but at the time when the Minister briefed them, the whole body at the TRC was actually briefed but who there was I don't know.

MR KHOISAN: Are you absolutely certain that Judge Goldstone ...[intervention]

GEN MEIRING: Of the? Sorry?

CHAIRPERSON: Not TRC.

GEN MEIRING: Sorry Sir, ANC. Excuse me.

MR KHOISAN: Okay, nobody in the TRC was briefed before this operation?

GEN MEIRING: No of course not, of course not.

MR KHOISAN: Okay.

ADV VON LIERES: Excuse me for interrupting, may I be permitted. Sometimes my client has difficulty in finding the right English word, I'm prompting him in that connection.

CHAIRPERSON: No problem at all, although he's doing very well.

MR KHOISAN: ...[inaudible] wanted to ask you General, so according to your information and your knowledge there was at no time anybody, and you can state that affirmatively and for the

record, under oath, that at no time before this operation was Justice Goldstone or the ANC or any of its leadership figures consulted about the possibility of this operation or that the operation would be launched?

GEN MEIRING: As far as I know, no. What the Minister or the President did was no concern of mine but we, as far as I know the military did not involve them at all.

MR KHOISAN: Okay. Thank you Chairman.

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS BY MR KHOISAN

ADV VON LIERES: Chairman, could I just ask for one second's indulgence please?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

GEN MEIRING: Can I just mention a fact, just to finalise and I think I should have done that previously? I have mentioned it but I want to underline it, it is not custom of the military to involve politicians in its planning or people like Goldstone. These, as I pointed out, were specifically guidelines on the request of Minister Kobie Coetzee that I put it in here. So it was in fact a political guideline included in the instructions to ensure that afterwards this was not neglected to do so but it was not from the military point of view. Sorry, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON: We understood it like that, thank you.  
Commissioner Wildschut?

MS WILDSCHUT: General, you've been at it for quite a while and I hope that my questions will be brief. I have two short sets of questions, the one set is to do with a more conceptual nature and the next set is more of a protocol nature.

The first question I'd like to ask you is, when an instruction is given which includes words like: "neutralise", how do troops interpret that instruction and what guidelines do they have in order to decode words like neutralise?

GEN MEIRING: Commissioner, I'd like to answer the question is the following way: neutralise means in fact to disable the opponent, to render useless, to stop the target interfering with what you are doing, in other words to render him ineffective. This is what neutralise in the military sense means. Neutralise can be translated, as you put it, according to the severity of the operation. If you are in a conventional operation you mean neutralise, it means you then shoot until the other bloke stops shooting, that means neutralise.

When you say that you must neutralise an observation post, it means people are talking from an observation post and you fire until they stop talking. They are now not necessarily dead. In this case this was a facility that we believed operated and was used to launch APLA attacks from it. We were to render that useless so that it could not be used again, in other words if there were weapons stored, to confiscate and neutralise the weapons

means maybe to destroy weapons or to take it into custody so to speak.

If there were means of communication, to destroy that. If there were people, we had specific instructions on people to try and bring back, to capture an individual for further interrogation.

So it was to render this facility useless for further use by APLA. This was in fact how this could be translated.

MS WILDSCHUT: And so if the person stops shooting that might mean that the person could be dead? So neutralise could also mean that you can kill?

GEN MEIRING: By effect it is so. We have actually said in the instructions that minimum loss of life should occur although we said without endangering the operators lives themselves. So if they believed that they are threatened, they have license to shoot, this is correct yes.

MS WILDSCHUT: Shoot to kill?

GEN MEIRING: Madam, a soldier is never trained anything but shoot to kill. There is no way of asking how to shoot, you shoot for effect if you do shoot.

MS WILDSCHUT: You will understand that in the TRC process we have been struggling with these concepts all along and very often we've been confronted with an instruction to neutralise and the result then is a killing has occurred, so I'm asking that question in that context.

Perhaps just a slight elaboration on that, I'm sure in a military sense as in other situations too there is usually an outcome standard that one would use, against which you measure the success or otherwise of a particular operation, so what would be the outcome, what would be the standard outcome? Am I right in making that analogy between civilian life or ...[intervention]

GEN MEIRING: Yes, to large degree but it's not always clearly specified.

MS WILDSCHUT: Yes.

GEN MEIRING: In this case the success was measured by the decrease in the number of attacks from APLA since that specific time. As soon as this raid happened, the statistics show or showed at the time that the number of attacks from APLA into the Republic of South Africa, specifically the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, decreased measurably. So in that context it was regarded as a success.

It was further regarded as a success because at that point in time pamphlets were obtained, weapons were obtained, that could have been used as evidence for the South African Police. They regarded this as a success because they got a lot of information to conduct further investigations on, concerning APLA's movements, their way of training, the type of weapons that they were using.

In one of these investigations it was found that one of the weapons was previously issued by the South African Government

to the Transkei Government and that weapon was subsequently issued by the Transkei Government to APLA. This was verified later. So yes, there was a lot of information gained from that and that was the measure of the success as well as the decreasing of the attacks of APLA on South African soil.

MS WILDSCHUT: Without you feeling that this is a junior staff course, may I ask one more question?

GEN MEIRING: You could ask senior staff questions as well Madam.

MS WILDSCHUT: Or senior staff course questions. Minimal loss of life, does that apply to the troops or to the target?

GEN MEIRING: No, to the target. We specifically said minimum loss of life concerning civilians, Transkei people. We also said that we want to capture people, so if we want to capture people we are not going to unnecessarily kill in that context.

MS WILDSCHUT: Yes. I do have the reference General Meiring, I'm actually looking at it right now. The issue really is, my trying to understand that is how troops would interpret what instructions were given so I'm just trying to confirm that.

Now my second set of questions are related to protocol. Can you describe for me what the protocol is in respect of operations being launched in a foreign country, what is the standard protocol around that? And because you're a military person, what would be the military protocol with regard to that?



GEN MEIRING: First of all, the National Defence Force has to put into service for operation in specific areas, this is done by the State President and in this case it was done some time ago. For a period that was not recorded at the time, the South African Defence Force was put into service to act inside the Republic and outside, specifying a specific area in which they could operation in. This is the first pre-condition.

Secondly, if an operation were to be undertaken outside the borders of South Africa, specific permission was obtained from the political level. It could have been from the Minister who would request permission from the President himself or it could be directly from the President. In this case it was done via the Minister to the President and he consulted the State Security Council of this specific matter, I believe perhaps - because of what Mr Khoisan said, of the sensitivity of the occasion at that point in time.

But the two pre-conditions are, you will have to be put into service for a specific are and you had to have specific authority to conduct an operation outside the country. For each operation outside, the broad outline, in other words the operational instruction, had to be verified by Chief of the South African Defence Force and in this case he issued it. And in that normally is contained the limitations and pre-conditions set out for a

specific operation by the political body, in this case the State Security Council.

MS WILDSCHUT: My concern is really country to country protocol. So is there any protocol that exists, say if you want to invade France or whatever, would you have to have some standard set of guidelines operating, connecting yourself with the country, the other country in other words?

GEN MEIRING: No, Madam, not as far as the military is concerned. The operations undertaken by the military can be described as international self defence in this particular case. This means that you act in self defence on another country's soil to be prevent actions from happening in your country. However, it's the widest possible definition that I can give you. But there is - in our sense we would not ask another country to operate in its territory.

If we got an instruction and the instruction is authorised in terms of having been put into service and having got the highest authority to continue with this, we don't ask anybody we just do it because that is the responsibility of the political body, to talk or to determine how they would like to construe this effect. We only give execution to the orders, we can't go and talk to other countries if we want to enter them. This is not our job.

MS WILDSCHUT: No, I know, that's why I'm asking if there is any protocol in the military in relation to exercises in another country?

GEN MEIRING: Exercises yes, Madam but not operations. Exercises or operations on the request of another country, there's a whole set of protocol but pertaining to this specific aspect where an operation to do harm possibly to some facility inside another country's boundary is militarily not cleared out with that country at all, it wouldn't be wise to say the least.

MS WILDSCHUT: And then at a political level - I know this is out of your ambit, but at a political level, is there protocol if such an operation were to happen?

GEN MEIRING: I would think it largely depends on the politician or on the government concerned. We have in the latest number of years since the Second World War, I cannot imagine we had one time where war was actually declared as laid down. It occurred, it occurred as a pre-empt of strike, that's happened in Israel a number of times, it occurred as a punitive raid. It happened in Turkey in the northern borders. Even the Gulf War was not a declared war, it was stated that: "if you don't do a thing by such and such a time we will do something" but it wasn't a formal declaration of war, it was a punitive measure.

So it very much depends largely on your government concerned at the time, how they want to put into effect their

actions in diplomatic or protocol ways, I'm not sure Madam but in this case it wasn't done.

MS WILDSCHUT: A small question then, so what was the nature of your relationship with the Transkei Defence Force at the time, in relation to the South African Defence Force?

GEN MEIRING: Previous to this, and that was a number of years previous to this, some of them did courses in our institutions. We also supplied officers on secondment to them from time to time. At this point in time there was no, as far as I know, no officer on secondment to the Transkei and neither did they do courses with us at that point in time. In fact it was regarded as a potential militant force in a neighbouring country because we believed that they gave access and training to people like APLA and like MK and we didn't like that but we not in a war situation with them.

MS WILDSCHUT: Thank you.

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS BY MS WILDSCHUT

GEN LIEBENBERG: Mr Chairman, may I be permitted just to make one remark regarding Commissioner Wildschut's questioning. You will have a different situation where there's an allied relationship between two countries as far as troop movements are concerned for operational purposes, that is where there is a contract between two countries to mutually support one another but since the Second World War there's been no officially

declared war and we've had something like 330 odd wars since the Second World War raging through the world.

None has been formally or officially declared. I think Clausewitz says that the military is an extension of politics and it's sort of a politician's last resort that's why he commands them, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Magadla?

MR MAGADLA: Thank you Chairperson.

On Annexure D page 4, under the operation itself, - this is the document, I think it's by:

"J H Coetzee, World Trade Centre, 15 October 1993:

Umtata Raid Background and Overview"

CHAIRPERSON: ...[inaudible] press conference on ...[inaudible]

MR MAGADLA: Yes, I think it is.

This is now under the operation itself:

"The relevant intelligence was laid before government and on the morning of 7 October, authority was given by the Government for the SADF to conduct a limited strike on the house"

What would that mean:

"a limited strike on the house"

GEN MEIRING: Chair, I'd like to explain the whole situation. The word: "limited strike" was then mentioned by Mr Coetzee, I think to determine the largeness, the immensity of the action. We

never had an instruction for a "limited strike", we had an instruction to neutralise the area. I think the Minister wanted to emphasise the fact that because of the target we did use excess forces. It was limited in terms of the number of people, it was limited in terms of only a strike on the house and nothing else, it was limited to the effect that we used only lightly armed forces, that we didn't use tanks or armoured cars or things like that and it had no further target area set out to be.

So: "limited strike" in this context is not a military word, I think it was used by the Minister to describe this specific action. But in the instructions we received the word: "limited strike" was never mentioned. I think that's the best way I could answer that one.

MR MAGADLA: Thank you, I think it does explain it to an extent. Now under that you also have:

"The Aim of the Operation was Three ...[inaudible]

CHAIRPERSON: ...[inaudible] on please.

MR MAGADLA:

"To capture APLA weapons and all possible documentation"

Was that achieved?

GEN MEIRING: Yes. What we found there we brought back, we brought back as much I think, I wasn't there but as far as I could ascertain from the debrief as much as if not all the

documentation at that house. Also all the weapons that we found I listed yesterday in my submission. There were not many rifles or pistols but what we found we did bring back and handed it over to the police, yes.

MR MAGADLA: Would that have tallied with the kinds of weapons mentioned by the informer as it were?

GEN MEIRING: No, we were thought there would be many more weapons, as I pointed out, we talked about 30 AK47's, I think three were found. We talk about a number of R1 rifles, one was found, two pistols were found. Basically that was the weapons of the people in the house, it wasn't stowed away but there was a strongroom in which it was obvious weapons could have been stored. There was in there some cleaning material for cleaning rifles or other parts of weapons. We didn't find that but we did find some weapons in there.

MR MAGADLA: Then to obtain information about APLA training activities and operational planning, wasn't that obtained from the two APLA operatives who had been arrested?

GEN MEIRING: Basically again - please remember that this was the way Mr Coetzee put it across, you have to go back to the operational instruction to see the actual aim of the exercise, of the operation. But in this case any information that could corroborate any further information that is available, is of a bonus nature. In other words even though it was obtained from

interrogation that APLA used a certain way of doing things, if we could confirm that by other sources like a document or a training pamphlet or whatever the case may be, it gave better evidence to lay before a Court later because it is substantially more than they had at the time.

So this I think is the way how we put this out because we told the troops: "get as much as you can", period and it wasn't described in this way.

MR MAGADLA: The third is that:

"If possible to capture and bring back to South Africa, members of APLA"

Now there were these members of APLA - because I believe the original - what triggered actually the whole thing that resulted in the setting out of this mission to Transkei, was that there had been attacks on farms, attacks on places but the two or three APLA operatives who had been arrested, one was even from exile, trained there and according to - what seems to be the case here, they were the people who were doing these killings and they actually did say they were the people.

Now, they had been captured, they were there. Now, what would be an instruction to capture those that would found in that house?

GEN MEIRING: There were so many more people that initiated the attacks because there were 77 attacks initiated in the course



of the period under consideration and in this case we had to get as much information as possible for the police to try and apprehend as many as possible and to try to confirm evidence they already had or to get new information about evidence that they may not have had, to enable them to conduct their investigations successfully.

So specifically, if a member of APLA at that point in time, who could have given information about raids or operations in South Africa, could be brought back it would have been very much of a bonus for the investigation of the South African Police.

Because you will remember that I - you were not here yesterday Sir, but I read in yesterday an example of large numbers of these actions, in Cape Town, in King William's Town ...[inaudible] and to obtain as much as possible information about these culprits, we had to try and get information and if you could get someone from that facility which we believed at the time was then a facility of APLA, would have been very much a bonus to the police to aid them in their investigations.

MR MAGADLA: But from what one reads in what these detained people had been saying, it does seem that their own springboard, whether it took off from a place called Sterkspruit. Now I just want to find out whether - what sort of focus then was directed at that place and what sort of action if any was taken towards that place?

GEN MEIRING: Sterkspruit, to our intent and purposes was one of the potential targets but it was used, as you rightly said, as a springboard, in other words it was not a facility to be used in a constant way. The intelligence believed that they assembled, it was an assembly area where people before a raid or before being launched to do something or before going to another country like Lesotho, assembled at Sterkspruit and from there was then launched to do the job but then there's no facility, it was only a place then it ceased to operate as such.

But we believed that the house in Umtata was a much more permanent structure, therefore a much more permanent facility of APLA. So you were not always sure whether there were people at Sterkspruit although you could be sure that there might be people in the APLA facility in Umtata.

MR MAGADLA: In view of it having been said now lately that that information leaked and that the possibility is that the actual operational cadres who were supposed to be in that house had moved at a time when the force struck there but when one reads further down:

"Subsequent Analysis of Information gathered from  
the House"

According to the report by the South African Police:

:Three of the dead were initially identified as trained APLA terrorist and later a further one, the fifth has not yet been identified"

Now how does one reconcile that with the fact that there is now this, that the actual trained people had moved because of the leak that had taken place?

GEN MEIRING: Chairman, I'm sorry I cannot answer that question because I simply don't know. It could be perhaps of interest if one could pursue this line of information gathering with APLA because to me it was quite a shock to learn that this operation had been leaked and that weapons and people were taken away and only youths left in this house to fend for themselves. So as I put it out yesterday, it might have been a propaganda trap and if that were the case I'm very much concerned about this. So it could well be that the TRC could investigate that further but I don't know Sir.

MR MAGADLA: Now on the document:

"SADF Umtata Operation, October 8, 1993"

Page 8.

GEN MEIRING: Please read Sir, we can find the ...

MR MAGADLA: Ja, in the middle of the page:

"The operation was launched by a small team in the early hours of this morning. A number of these team

members entered the house and found five people who reacted offensively, action was then taken"

Now:

"reacting offensively"

could you elaborate on that? Exactly what is it that they did to warrant it being described as "reacting offensively"?

GEN MEIRING: Sir, I must say I'm now contemplating, what we now at that time is that the first individual that was seen sat upright with a pistol in his hand. You will remember that under:

"Observation"

it was read in yesterday that it was found that almost 18 people slept in the house, that was also from evidence and from the observations carried out. So when they entered the house and they found people in the living room so to speak and not in the bedrooms, they assumed that this house was full of people and when a bloke sat up with a pistol in his hand, I think they then started reacting.

But now this is a question that I can only answer from the debrief and I cannot say from firsthand knowledge that this is so.

MR MAGADLA: It could only be your assumption under the circumstances?

GEN MEIRING: No, the assumption is not correct because it was stated that the man sat upright with a pistol in his hand and it

was also found later on that there was a man with a pistol, after he was shot, a person with a pistol.

MR MAGADLA: Ja, well I'm wondering because when I as a layman in that situation read:

"the person reacted offensively"

then down the line, the paragraph following that at the bottom of that paragraph it says:

"There was no interference with the team at all and they all returned safely with no losses"

"no interference at all"

and then you get someone acting offensively?

GEN MEIRING: No, Sir. I think to try and put this into perspective, what was meant there - and these were my words so I remember them, it means that on their way towards the target and on their way back and in the actions that they took in that house, no outside source interfered with him, in other words there was no Transkei Government or other APLA forces to counter-attack or to involve themselves with this raid, this is what that meant.

MR MAGADLA: Thank you. Then it says on page 3 of that same document, on paragraph 5:

"APLA's internal high command for a Republic was based in the Transkei"

Now was there any focus in terms of an intended strike on the APLA command itself who were based there? Because if there

was a strike at that house and a few people taken away, captured if they were, but the APLA command was there in Umtata or in the Transkei, was there any focus or surveillance on them or any focus on them? Any attempt at neutralising them?

GEN MEIRING: No, there were quite a number of attempts to localise where the APLA command found themselves. It was found through time, and I'm speaking purely from memory now and please excuse me because it was a long time ago, that it was reported that the APLA members never slept in the same house twice. They moved around in the area particularly not to present a target of themselves to any outside source. So I think that were it to be found that there was a specific facility of which enough information became available, it could well have been that such an operation could have been conducted against such a target but at that point in time we had not enough information to allow us to enter into any such operations.

MR MAGADLA: Now if the mention by the operators was that there was this APLA person who was sitting on his bed or whatever with a weapon in his hand, mentioning that one person and having that weapon, is there any explanation for killing all the others?

GEN MEIRING: No, and yes. I can say only doctrinal what I know. If a house is being invaded and the soldiers entering the

house found that in some way the operation has been compromised, they then go over to immediate action drills.

Immediate action drills means that they shoot at people or at positions where people might be located, in other words if you enter into a house and you find that your entry has been observed and it has been negated to execute your original plan successfully and that there might be a threat against you or your people or the people with you's lives then they shoot and they also shoot in places like cupboards or under beds where people might be hiding.

And this I would imagine happened at that point in time.

That is doctrinal, the way that they use in clearing a house of people.

MR MAGADLA: On page 9 of the same document APLA itself in a publication called Evoquoting Mr Liso Mali, Border Regional Chairman of the PAC, that it was recruiting and training youths.

That is quoting this Liso Mali maybe I think up the there. That is followed by:

"APLA is therefore not only abusing youths for military training but clearly is using them as human shields to inhibit possible security force action"

What does that mean?

GEN MEIRING: It could well mean that wherever a target it and a number of youths might be located, to prevent action being

taken because the people are normally not wanting to attack a facility where youths and women are present, this could well be what's happening.

MR MAGADLA: Ja, the problem with that, why I would ask a question on that is because it is perceived or it is being said that the people who were found killed there were young people and therefore it seems then, if this was your understanding of the thing or this was actually what you say about it, it seems that there was knowledge of the fact that the people who were there were members of the youth or were young people because there had been this - it says:

"but clearly is using them as human shields to inhibit possible security force action"

How could one place this?

GEN MEIRING: I think Mr Magadla, one must now again try and look at this in perspective. When these statements were made it was either at the press conference or at the World Trade Centre, I'm not sure, but it was after the fact became known that these were youths and I think Mr Coetzee tried to point out at the time that even if they were youths it is not uncommon, it was common knowledge at the time that APLA did use youths but the intention was never to go out and kill youths. There was no order for that, there was no plan for this, it happened.



MR MAGADLA: But General, further on page 10, the second paragraph on page 10 it says:

"Therefore, given the fact that APLA abuses juveniles for terrorist purposes, the only way to prevent further incidents of this nature in future would be for APLA and the PAC to abandon their armed struggle"

it's to abandon or to be forced to abandon the armed struggle I don't know but in a follow-up to what you've just said I'm saying, but there is also this now that says:

"Given the fact that APLA abuses juveniles for terrorist purposes, the only way to prevent further incidents of this nature in future would be for APLA to abandon their armed struggle"

Is this that it had now been admitted in fact that those were children?

GEN MEIRING: I think it was common knowledge at the time that they were youths. It was so reported in the media by the Transkei media at the time. You must remember that this was being said at a later stage, either at the media conference or at the World Trade Centre. It was also said by a politician which is the Minister of Defence.

He has tried to say in this - and this is my submission and I'm not sure because I'm not a politician Sir, and looking at hindsight I'm answering you, not as what happened at the time,

that I knew but thinking back. I think he said that this happened but it would not happen if APLA ceases their operations because if they do there would be no necessity to execute raids like this nature. I think you must look at it in that context.

But I cannot speak for Mr Kobie Coetzee but this is what I would think was being said because being a politician he would want to get something at APLA. Being part of the negotiation process he might then have said this to try and get APLA to cease the attacks but this was not said by the military and I cannot answer you any further than this.

MR MAGADLA: But this could also be construed by people as an admission that a mistake happened with the authorization, that as people ... [intervention]

GEN MEIRING: I think it was common knowledge Sir, that what happened actually - and it was also stated so by the government at that time, that they were unhappy that they were youths, that the operation couldn't have been successful in terms of apprehending APLA people and that there were youths killed in the case. We're never happy with that and this was I think as far as I know, stated.

So it was never stated otherwise that youths were not killed. This again is a politician speaking. From our side we didn't feel happy about the fact, we would have much rather taken someone, capturing someone.

Could I just mentioned on thing which is not concerning your questions directly. Mr Magadla, a man with a weapon is as big an tall as the weapon, he kills whether he's young or old he kills just as good with a weapon than when he were a trained soldier. If he pulls the trigger, the weapon has got no age limits to it.

So if a man feels himself threatened he will act against that and this is all I can say there. And there were weapons found in among these people in the house, under the bed, on themselves, ~~loaded pistols, loaded R1 with a round in the barrel.~~

MR MAGADLA: Ja, thank you for that but I think this line of questioning was with regard to the perception that although the army and the police were claiming that this was, they were acting upon an intelligence checked and rechecked and they were satisfied that it was 100% foolproof but in actual fact this was not the case because there you are, you don't have fine fullblown terrorists there and people who really would not have been having just one man sitting there with a gun in the hand.

There would have been a skirmish or - I mean it would - one would not think it would be a situation where nobody was interfered with and all the people came back without any problems. There's also the fact that the people were asleep at the time when this attack took place.

I think that causes really a situation where there is an urge from us to maybe hear the operators themselves as to what exactly happened in that house when they entered and what happened, who they found and how they found people. I think where there has been this kind of clamour from our side, that really we would like to hear from those people themselves arises from that kind of situation. Thank you.

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS BY MR MAGADLA

CHAIRPERSON: We have only one last member of the panel who wants to ask a couple of questions. - I'm aware that you've been questioned for quite a long time ...[intervention]

GEN MEIRING: Sorry Sir, can I just ask for three minutes just to go for a quick walk please.

CHAIRPERSON: Take five.

COMMITTEE ADJOURNS

ON RESUMPTION

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Maqekiza?

MR MAQEKIZA: Thank you Chair. Chair, this is just a follow-up from the concern that was raised by Mr Magadla.

You were saying that you received information from the police which prompted the army to give instructions for a raid in a house in Umtata but you took it upon yourselves to make sure that that information was correct, you tried to cross-check it. When you went to that house, you said earlier on this morning

that you were sure that the house was actually full of weapons, some 30 or more AK47's and some other weaponry, which means that you had all this information at your disposal.

Now the question is if you had all this information, why didn't you liaise with the Transkei Police and request them to perhaps to raid the house alone or you raid the house together with them?

GEN MEIRING: Chairman, at that time it was not thinkable because to the best of our knowledge the Transkei Government was assisting and abetting APLA. ~~In fact they issued rifles out to~~ them, they - according to information, trained APLA, they gave them facilities. From time to time we had reports that either the police and/or the military transported them from point A to point B, so it would have been useless from our point of view for any success of this operation of any kind, to request the Transkei Government to assist us, whether it be their police force or their military, in executing such a raid or such an action on this house.

It was therefore considered that the only way of doing it was to do it in a international defensive action, in other words to cross and to get at this house with own means. This was the reason why it was done like that.

MR MAQEKIZA: I assume General, that the house, after you gave an order that it should be raided, was always under surveillance, in other words you could see who was getting in,

who was getting out of the house. Am I correct in that assumption General?

GEN MEIRING: No. The house was under observation until rather late that evening when the people who had it under observation left to act as guides for the incoming force, to guide them on the best route to the house. So there was about 8 hours more or less which this house was not under observation. It ceased to be under observation from round about 8 o'clock onwards, I'm not sure of the time but that is how I was told.

~~MR MAQEKIZA: So in a nutshell, it was not possible to know whether the weapons were taken out shortly before the attack?~~

GEN MEIRING: We could never ascertain from observation whether there were weapons in the house or not. I pointed this out in my reading into the record yesterday. We could ascertain many aspects surrounding this information but we couldn't see inside the house, therefore the weapons could have been taken out some time ago, the people could have left in these 8 hours. According to the information that we received later in this police docket and in interrogation that they had on this previous APLA person, it was the day before that this was taken out. Now if the house is under observation it wasn't under observation for 24 hours. You had a limited number of people so they were there and they had to go back otherwise they would have drawn attention to themselves. So it wasn't constant observation

throughout the time, so I'm not sure if and when these things were taken away.

MR MAQEKIZA: In your knowledge General, you are aware of anyone of the soldiers, including the commander who is I believe, Venter, have applied for amnesty for this act?

GEN MEIRING: No, Sir, I do not know and I wouldn't know. I have from time to time asked the TRC from a nodal point of view to enable us to assist with the legal aid to various people who have asked for amnesty and from the lists that we got we could not ascertain whether anybody asked for amnesty for the Umtata raid. As far as I know nobody did.

MR MAQEKIZA: General, in terms of the Act which is the Promotion of National Unity and the Reconciliation Act of 1995, Section 4 reads as follows: I would assume that perhaps your Advocate has got it in front of him. Can I continue? This section reads as follows:

"The functions of the Commission shall be to achieve its objectives and to that end the Commission shall facilitate and where necessary initiate or coordinate inquiries into gross violations of human rights including violations which were part of the ...[indistinct] system pattern of abuse, the nature causes and extent of gross violations of human rights including the ...[indistinct], circumstances, factors,

contacts, motives and perspectives which led to such violations. The identity of all persons, authorities, institutions and organisations involved in such violations. The question whether such violations were the result of a deliberate planning on the part of the State or a former State or any of the organs or of any political organisations, liberation movements or other groups or individuals"

I'm going further:

~~"Accountability, that is to facilitate accountability, political or otherwise for any such violation.~~

Facilitate and initiate or coordinate the gathering of information and the receiving of evidence from any person including persons claiming to be victims of such violations or the representatives of such victims which establish the identity of victims of such violations, their fate or present whereabouts and the nature and the extent of the harm suffered by those victims"

I will stop there.

In my opinion it looks like the Act does not, it's silent as to whether that violation should be legal or not legal. Now on the part of the Commission, the Commission has actually received the story from the victims. If I'm interpreting this correctly General,



I believe that it since the information that has been received from the side of the victims, it also becomes necessary to disclose the names, as you have disclosed the name of your commander, the names of the foot soldiers who were physically involved in the operation at Umtata at A C Jordan 47.

GEN MEIRING: That's your opinion Sir. You have not asked me a question, that's your opinion and you're welcome to it.

MR MAQEKIZA: What do you think of this opinion as supported by the Act General?

GEN MEIRING: ~~I'm not a legal person. I gave you all the names that I have available and I have none further. I can only~~ say that I agree with what General Liebenberg in his affidavit, read in yesterday concerning the identities of the people concerned who were actually the so-called ground troops. He made a specific affidavit concerning the names of those people and I agree with him but that is my personal opinion but that is my personal opinion and I have given you all the names I have available.

I've given you all the information I have available so I think if you want to know what I think, I think I've done my duty towards this TRC, towards this hearing. I gave evidence as far as I could and what I could remember and what I know and what I could find from records which were in my possession. We did

extensive research into this and what I gave you is what I have today.

MR MAQEKIZA: So General, am I reading you correct when you say that you are prepared to disclose the names of the foot soldiers?

GEN MEIRING: I did not say that. I don't know, I don't know their names. I said to you that I agree with General Liebenberg not to have their names mentioned but I don't know who they are. I knew whom I gave orders to, I don't know who the specific people were.

MR MAQEKIZA: Just one more question General, on what basis General are you agreeing with General Liebenberg in not disclosing the names of the foot soldiers?

GEN MEIRING: In our job we rely heavily on the loyalty of our soldiers. The soldier acts on a command which he gets, specifically soldiers of the nature of these operators that were used and they may be serving or not, it doesn't matter, it means that people who are being given orders to do a specific job are now confronted by, in the legal execution of their jobs, confronted later on by a civil action and by legal actions, will of necessity if this become known feel unwilling to execute a military order, feel as if their military commanders were neglecting them, feel as if they were disloyal towards them, feel as if they will not like to be entering into any such operation in

~~the future, which could lead to a military disaster in terms of~~  
looking after, the safeguarding of the Republic of South Africa.  
And that is why I say I agree with General Liebenberg. This is  
my reasoning and I think he reasons similarly. I can't remember  
in detail what his affidavit said but I am in spirit agreeing with  
him.

MR MAQEKIZA: One last question General, ...[intervention]

CHAIRPERSON: Could you make this the last one, you've  
already said this is the last one, this is the last one, please?

MR MAQEKIZA: Well General, if you do not know the names of  
~~the foot soldiers, how would you have ascertained whether or not~~  
they have applied for amnesty?

GEN MEIRING: I have looked to see who has applied for  
amnesty and on what grounds. There was nobody that asked  
amnesty for the Umtata raid to the best of my knowledge.

MR MAQEKIZA: Thank you Chair.

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS BY MR MAQEKIZA

CHAIRPERSON: General Meiring, I told you that the panel had  
now completed its questions, it's only for me to try and sum up  
and also underline a few of the, I think pertinent questions, some  
of which have already been raised. I just want to perhaps take  
them a little further.

To begin with I want to refer to your affidavit or your  
opening remarks and on page 20 you set out the planning which

~~you believe was in accordance with the State President's~~  
instructions. It's on page 20, the bottom of the page. Have you  
got that?

GEN MEIRING: Are you now referring to my submission?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, page 20, the paragraph beginning:

"At the time I was"

GEN MEIRING: Yes, I've got that.

CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Now:

"The President's instruction was to disrupt APLA and  
prevent future attacks"

~~and you continue along those lines:~~

"and in order to make that possible, to seize all  
weapons and documents at the facility and to make  
captive APLA members found there for the purpose of  
questioning. All this had to take place as a  
~~clandestine infiltration operation with minimum loss~~  
of life"

Now in terms of what actually happened, surely the plan went  
very badly wrong. It seems to me from everything I've listened to  
from General Liebenberg's affidavit and your own comments and  
in particular your discussions with the then State President and  
Minister, there was a very deep feeling that, understandably, that  
a great deal of killing was taking place, that it was necessary to  
strike a blow and to make it almost as public as possible and

~~therefore bring people back and let people see and know that we~~  
have captured these people, bring Goldstone there, bring the ANC  
people.

This was a propaganda exercise as well, I'm not saying you, I'm saying it seems to me that this was an attempt, whether it's right or wrong is immaterial, I'm not worried about that. And when you bear in mind the comment made to you by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, the mood was, certainly in terms of his language, pretty tough. I mean this wasn't going to be a Sunday school picnic, this was going to be, to make a raid and I don't know how you do what he suggests that you should do but nevertheless it's not a mild exercise.

But the State President is on record as you know as saying that his instructions were that they were quite clear that there should be capturing, there should be weapons taken, confiscation of documents and so on with a minimal loss of life. And I gather he made another statement last night.

Now taking that together with the apology which was made some time later, which according to Mr Omar was drawn up in consultation with President Mandela and Deputy President de Klerk, and the paragraph in the public apology reads as follows:

"The raid on the house in Umtata was authorised on the strength of the intelligence provided by the security forces, that it was being used as an armed

cache for attacks against civilians in other parts of South Africa. That information was inaccurate at the time of the operation and the killing of the youthful occupants was unjustified and inexcusable"

Now I'm not sure whether - and you won't know either and I don't expect you to, how much of those exact words were the words of then Deputy President de Klerk but certainly he was consulted and I have never seen him being on record as going against that.

I'm just wondering, as the man who was very directly responsible for organising that particular raid on instructions from the State Security Council, how you feel (a) about the fact that the planning of the then State President seems to be quite different from the outcome and second, that the outcry which took place not only in this country but throughout the world, whatever you say about whether the youths had weapons or not, the sensitivity of the time and then the actual apology, how do you feel about it now as the man who was in charge?

GEN MEIRING: Chair, I have stated previously and I also mentioned in my opening statement that I am always perturbed at the loss of life. I mean, I am a soldier and this is my occupation, I never like to see people hurt or people killed, this is so. But I also am a realist and I know that in a time like this you have split second decisions to be taken at various times and people were

drilled and drilled and drilled into specific quick reaction drills and what happened inside this house, and I pointed it out to you in some of the aspects that I read into here, the actual shooting took about 15 seconds as was construed later in the debriefs.

So in 15 seconds one has got to determine whether you're going to shoot or not, whether you're going to - whether there are some more people, whether your lives are being threatened further or not, you got to clear the house. The whole operation since arriving until leaving, if I remember correctly, was around about 15 minutes.

~~So in that anything could go wrong or could go right but split decisions could be taken. And I'm of course unhappy that we couldn't get a captured terrorist, I'm of course unhappy that we couldn't find all the weapons in there, I am of course unhappy that so many people lost their lives, whether they were youths or not, lives are still lives Sir. I am perturbed about that but that is a fact that we had to live with.~~

And in the course of the execution of our task this actually happened and it would not help and would assist nobody if sat back and cried the whole time. I felt bad about this at the time, I still do but it was one of the facts of life that actually happened. I wasn't there to do it by myself, perhaps I would have done exactly the same, I'm not sure but I can't say, I've not been in this particular situation.

So you ask me how I feel, of course the whole operation was not as successful as set out to be, it never really is. Some are more successful than others, some are less successful than others but it is not a set piece of play, it is an operation in which people could be killed and this was accepted by everybody concerned, that if people go in there people might get killed otherwise they wouldn't have used the military to do a thing like that. So yes, Sir, I don't feel good about that but on the other hand I had a job to do and I did it.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you General Meiring. There's been a lot of speculation and difference of opinion regarding the exact ages of the five people who were killed. Have you ever been able to ascertain yourself, because I'm sure you would have been concerned about this, as you've indicated, as to what the ages were?

GEN MEIRING: Chairperson yes, of course we were because the operators construed the fact that these were youths and not children. Photographs were taken of them, they were handed to the police. We had no library of photographs to measure them against. I can't very well remember how the photographs looked, I know I've looked at some of them. The ones I looked at did not seem to me to be overtly young, young yes, but it looked like the same age as our national servicemen. Some look younger than others but they're 16 to 20 years old.



I had a national serviceman that served with me that was 15 years old. So I wasn't particularly struck by the photographs which we saw but those of course were not good photographs and was handed over to the police. They were taken under difficult circumstances.

We have had the reports from the Transkei at the time and we were not sure whether those reports were correct because of the large propaganda value that this had at the time and still exists. We tried from the police dockets, to determine the ages later when it became available to us. In there it was stated that some were 18, 16 and 12 years old. No-one really looked to me, it wasn't struck to me that they looked 12 years, as far as I was concerned, looking quickly at the photographs.

The operatives, if I remember correctly, being told by the officer commanding, was of the opinion that they were not children, that they were of age, if I can use that term. So, yes, we tried to ...[indistinct] but we had no access to these people, we had no real evidence, objective evidence to really tell us. We were concerned about the fact of course but we had no means of determining the exact ages, we still don't have.

CHAIRPERSON: So if the parent of two of the children or young people who were killed had to argue that one was 12 and one was 15, you wouldn't be able to dispute that nor would you be able to confirm that?

GEN MEIRING: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Did you know that the owner of the house, that two of his children as he called them or let's use the word young people, were amongst those that were killed?

GEN MEIRING: No, it became known to me later from the matters recently, from the police docket. I didn't know it at the time, no, of course not.

CHAIRPERSON: But you are aware now that was so?

GEN MEIRING: That this was mentioned as such.

CHAIRPERSON: Ja.

GEN MEIRING: Ja.

CHAIRPERSON: I want to, my colleague raised the whole question of the use of language and the use of words and I've already referred without specifically mentioning it the words of

~~our former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and I couldn't ask you to~~

~~interpret that, I would have to ask him, which is fair enough.~~

GEN MEIRING: Knowing Pik so it's easy. It was just ... (intervention)

CHAIRPERSON: Ja, okay. But let's take a much more serious reference and that is in your Annexure D, and you've already told us how long the actual operation took to, as they say **neutralise** the people. Now you've already stated on record that **neutralising** can of course mean different things, but if you look on page 3, 16,

"Die huis is opgeruim en geen ander persoon is in die huis gevind nie".

And then it goes on -

"That the **neutralising** of the five members took thirty seconds".

Well they were killed weren't they, so I mean the **neutralise** means kill?

GEN MEIRING: Not necessarily Sir. They were rendered ... (intervention)

CHAIRPERSON: But in this instance?

GEN MEIRING: No Sir not necessarily, because this was construed by the operators, by debriefing the operators. They were fired at and they ceased to make any move. They could have been lying quietly. They did not go to them physically and determine whether they were dead or not.

CHAIRPERSON: When this was written you, I mean one knew that there were five people killed.

GEN MEIRING: We knew later Sir, but the word was then used in the parlance of what the operator said they were **neutralised**, in other words they were rendered ineffective. They did not determine - they didn't carry out a specific doctor's investigation at that time. There was no doctor with them in any case. So they couldn't say they were killed because they were not completely sure.

CHAIRPERSON: But when this document was actually put together, this Annexure D ...(intervention)

GEN MEIRING: Yes Sir, with the 10th of October.

CHAIRPERSON: That's right, so people, we all knew ...(intervention)

GEN MEIRING: We knew, yes.

CHAIRPERSON: That five people had died. And I don't know who wrote this ...(intervention)

GEN MEIRING: I did.

CHAIRPERSON: I don't know who the author is - you did?

GEN MEIRING: I did, yes.

CHAIRPERSON: Well then when you say that the neutralising of these five people took thirty seconds you knew that they were dead. You were not relying on somebody before they got the doctors.

GEN MEIRING: Yes I did - no, no.

CHAIRPERSON: So you use, your use of the word neutralising is equivalent to killing, in this particular document.

GEN MEIRING: It could be Sir, yes.

CHAIRPERSON: Ja. I don't know what else it could be because they actually were dead.

GEN MEIRING: No of course they were dead but ...(intervention)

CHAIRPERSON: Ja, so neutralising people who died meant killing?

GEN MEIRING: Sir it does not always mean killing.

CHAIRPERSON: No I accept that. But in this instance.

GEN MEIRING: It could well, at that point in time when I wrote this I could have used **neutralise** for killing. I didn't use it, perhaps I didn't want to use the word killing. I am not sure in what frame of mind I was.

CHAIRPERSON: So that it's interchangeable in this regard?

GEN MEIRING: I could well be yes.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I've had a question from one of my colleagues, in fact two of them in relation to the people who actually went into the house and reported that because in the darkness someone had sat up with a pistol, they believed their lives were in danger and therefore they opened fire, and you have

~~you weren't there, you're quite right, and you've made that clear~~  
that this is as far as you are concerned hearsay, or evidence or given at a debriefing. You will appreciate that one of the things that we have to do is to make findings and we've got to check out as far as is humanly possible to make sure that everybody's side is heard. One of my colleagues I think put that very well. And Mr Magadla I think also referred to that.

We are not anxious to have some kind of witch-hunt, of tracking down who was involved in every single operation, it just

would be totally impossible. We have had requests, however, from parents, family of the young people concerned, they dispute - now for them they weren't there either, they dispute whether someone actually sat up with a pistol in their hand. It is their view, I am not saying it's the correct view, it is their view that the people concerned kicked the door open and opened fire, and that these kids were fast asleep. This is their feeling. It may well have been mine if I was a parent. But nobody can prove that.

We are understandably anxious therefore to talk to the people who were directly involved so that we can lay this to rest once and for all. Now you have stated that you don't know the names of the people concerned, but for the record I think I must tell you that we are going to try and find out who did know and to find out the names so that we can possibly in a Section 29, ask

~~the person who was in charge of that operation who, as it were,~~  
kicked the door open, to describe to us exactly what took place.

I am not saying by doing that we will actually get to the whole truth. Who can ever, and who knows who says what after an event. I am also very aware that when people are in an operation ~~their lives are at stake, well aware of that~~

But I just want you to know that we had hoped that you would have the names so that we could pursue this. You have told us you don't have the names. We are not sure exactly how

we are going to do this because it's a long time ago. Many records have been destroyed as you know, but for the record I want you to know that we are going to pursue this to find out exactly, as far as is humanly possible, what took place on that particular early morning in Umtata.

Having said that I want to thank you for your response to our request for you to come here. For your willingness to answer questions fully. To thank, through you, your legal representatives for their cooperation and assistance. We will eventually have to make a finding about this and obviously that will be contained in our report. In the meantime, on behalf of my colleagues here I would like to thank you for your presence and for your cooperation.

The Commission is now adjourned.

GEN MEIRING: Thank you very much.

HEARING ADJOURNS