LESOTHO - GENERAL

1996 — 1997

King is dead

Sowetan 16/1/96 (218) (167)

Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho killed in car crash

MASERU – Lesotho's King Moshoeshoe II was killed in a car accident yesterday

Moshoeshoe was travelling from his royal village in Matsieng to Maseru when the accident occurred at about 9am His chauffeur, who was not identified, was also killed

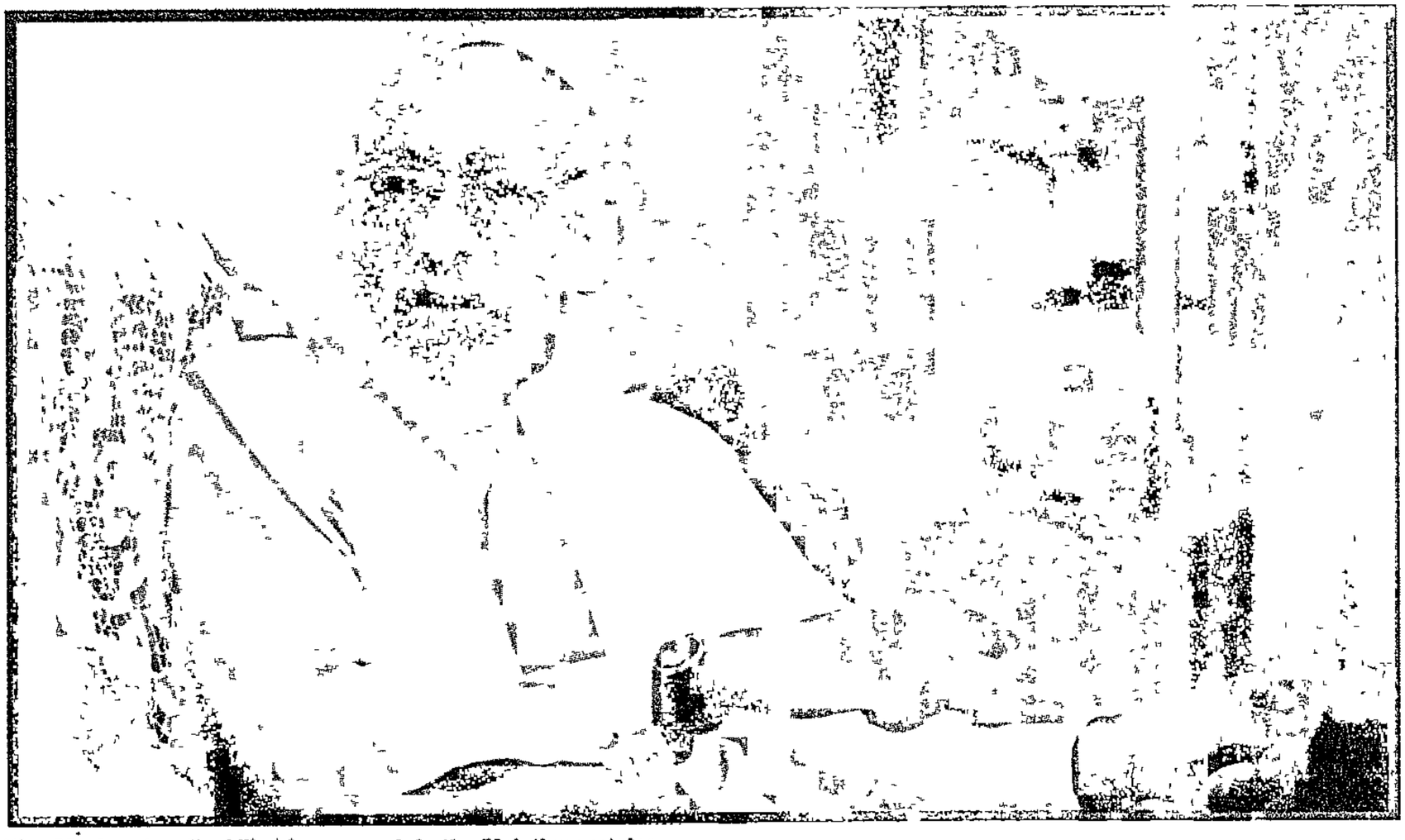
His death was announced in a radio broadcast to the Basotho nation at 4pm by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle who said the accident occurred in the Maluti mountains between the villages of Ha Noha and Marakabei in the Mantsonyane area of the Maseru district The king had visited some of his cattle posts in the mountainous area

Flags flew at half-mast at all public buildings in Lesotho, and the country was declared to be in a state of mourning until the burial

President Nelson Mandela said Moshoeshoe's tragic death was a great loss to the Basotho nation, the people of South Africa and the whole continent.

"King Moshoeshoe II was a great friend of the people of South Africa, an able leader and one of the world's reigning monarchs who unequivocally embraced democracy within the context of the history and traditions of their nations," he said

The African National Congress the National Party and the Pan Africanist Congress all expressed shock at Moshoeshoe's death and expressed their condolences to Queen Mamohato the royal family, the Lesotho government and the Basotho nation



King Moshoeshoe II – killed in car crash in the Maluti mountains.

Moshoeshoe, eldest son of Seeiso Griffith, late Paramount Chief of Basutoland, and 'Ma-Bereng, was born on May 2 1938

He married Princess Tabitha 'Masentle, daughter of the late Chief Lerotholi Mojela, in 1962.

He became paramount chief in March 1960 and assumed the title of king in 1966 when Lesotho became independent

He obtained an LL B degree during a scholastic career that included attendance at Corpus Christi College, Oxford University

King Moshoeshoe II was deposed by the country's ruling military council in November 1990 and replaced by his eldest son King Letsie III

Following the abdication of Letsie III, who had been proclaimed king by traditional chiefs Constantine Bereng Seeiso Motlotlehi regained the throne in January 1995 as Moshoeshoe II

Heir apparent to the throne Crown Prince David Mohato is expected to succeed his father as king - *Supa*

Lesotho king's funeral date set

BS CT 18/1/96 (167)

MASERU. The state funeral of Lesotho's King Moshoeshoe II, killed in a car accident on Monday, will be held at the Thaba'Bosiu traditional shrine outside the capital on January 26, a government official said yesterday.

The date, decided by Lesotho chiefs and authorised by the kingdom's cabinet, has been released to heads of diplomatic missions and international organisations working in Lesotho, the official said.

Thaba'Bosiu, 35km east of Maseru, is the national shrine of the Basotho people

It served as a stronghold for them during their 19th century wars against the British and the Boers

Lesotho's College of Chiefs began discussing arrangements for the state funeral on Tuesday, after the king and his driver were killed when the car veered off the road and plunged down a hillside in the Mantsonyane area of Maseru district

King Moshoeshoe's wife, Queen Mamohato, will act as regent until the College of Chiefs appoints a successor.

It is expected that the king's son, Letsie, will succeed him.



SHRINE: King Moshoeshoe will be buried at Thaba'Bosiu.

English-educated King Moshoeshoe, 57, returned to the throne a year ago, replacing Letsie, after having been ousted in 1990 by military rulers.

Letsie gave way to his father last January under pressure from South Africa and other regional states after having sparked a constitutional crisis by sacking Dr Ntsu Mokhehle, the country's first democratically-elected prime minister in two decades. — Reuter

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Coronation of Prince Mohato after funeral

JOE MOLEFI
Independent Foreign Service

Maseru – The coronation of Crown Prince Letsie David Mohato as King of Lesotho will take place as soon as the period of mourning for King Moshoeshoe II is over.

This was announced in a broadcast over Radio Lesotho by Deputy Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili this morning following speculation about the succession to the Lesotho throne

Mosisili said the College of Chiefs had designated the crown prince as successor to the office of the king at a meeting they held recently

The appointment has been published in an Extraordinary Lesotho Government Gazette

The announcement by the deputy prime minister dispelled reports of tension between Prime Minister Dr Ntsu Mokhehle and the royal family over the question of the succession.

Mosisili said the swearing in and coronation of Prince Mohato would be arranged by the government and the royal family.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry in Maseru has confirmed that the presidents of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe will be among the dignatories to attend the State funeral of King Moshoeshoe on Friday

Other dignatories who are expected to arrive tomorrow are the secretary-general of the Commonwealth, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the prime minister of Nambia, Hage Geingob, the prime minister of Swaziland, Prince Mbilini Dlamini, and the Pope's representative in Pretoria, Archbishop Ambrose de Paoli

President Clinton will be represented by the deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Regina Brown

Star 24/11/96 (167)

Basotho pay respects to dead king

(167)

MASERU: Thousands of subjects of the late King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho yesterday queued to pay their last respects at the royal palace where his body is lying in state

The king, who died in a car accident last week, at the age of 57, will be buried today on the plateau of the Thaba'Bosiu national shrine, east of Maseru. It served as a stronghold for the Basotho during 19th century wars against the British and Boers.

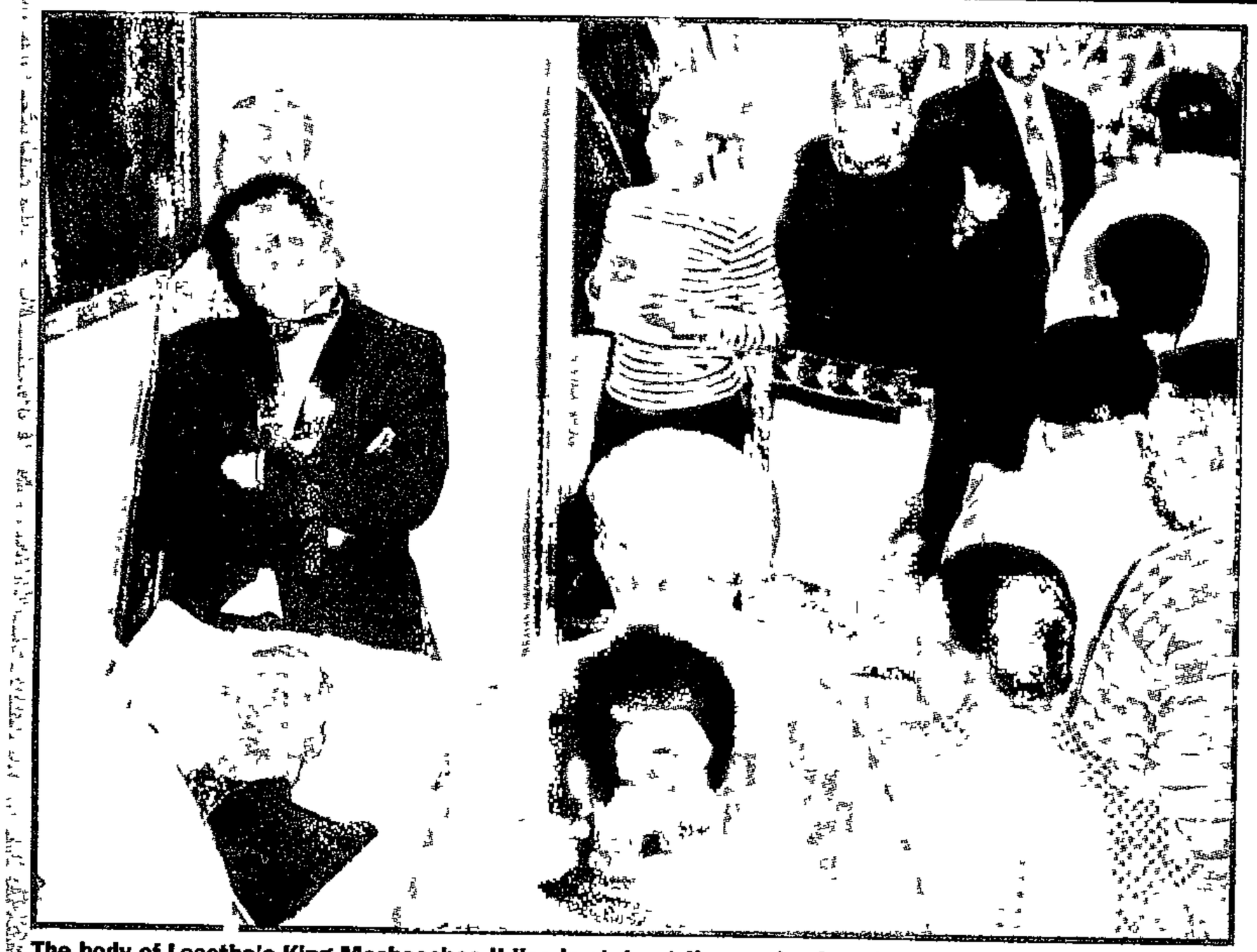
The king's body was due to be carried on a gun carriage later yesterday to the royal village outside Maseru, where an all-night vigil was to be held

Among the heads of state due to attend the funeral are the presidents of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Crown Prince Letsie David Mohato was named as his father's successor by deputy prime minister Mr Pakalitha Mosisili on Wednesday, but no date has been set for the coronation His mother, Queen Mamohato, will serve as regent until then —Reuter

CT 26/1/96

Farewell to the King



The body of Lesotho's King Moshoeshoe II lies in state at the royal palace in Maseru yesterday as mourners file past to pay homage. It was later taken to the royal village of Matsieng for a requiem mass and an all-night vigil. He will be buried on the plateau of Thaba Bosiu today. PIC PAT SEBOKO

(167) Sowetan 26/1/96

By Themba Molofe and Joe Molefi

MASERU – The Basotho nation was in deep mourning yesterday as thousands of people filed past the body of King Moshoeshoe II at the Royal Palace to view their monarch for the last time before his burial today

The king was killed in a motor vehicle accident in the Maluti Mountains last week

Peasants from the mountains of Lesotho and townsfolk formed kilometre-long queues which snaked through the capital to pay homage to the king after gates were opened to the public yesterday morning

Highly regarded

Their numbers swelled after government offices closed at mid-morning People moved in droves along the main street to the palace

"We have been here since 7am We are waiting to see the remains of our Morena," said a citizen

Another citizen said Moshoeshoe was a highly regarded monarch who had striven to unite the nation

At the palace where strict security is normally observed, people moved freely into the grounds to pay homage to the king

The government had made elaborate arrangements so that mourners entered the palace grounds from the main gate at the south end and left from the east gate to avoid congestion

The heads of state of Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe are expected to fly into Maseru today

Among statesmen who arrived yesterday are South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, Tanzanian vice-president Omar Juma, Namibian prime minister Hage Geingob and Pope John Paul II's representative in Pretoria, Archbishop Ambrose de Paoli

Moshoeshoe's body lay in state from 8am and at lunch-time left for the royal village of Matsieng on a gun carriage

A requiem mass was held last night at Matsieng and was followed by an all-night vigil

The body will leave Matsieng by motorcade to Ha Ramarame, near Thaba Bosiu, and will be escorted by a column of the Lesotho Armed Forces and Basotho horsemen

After the funeral orations, the king's body will be interred at about 1pm



LAST RESPECTS King Moshoeshoe's funeral parade heads for the mountain-top grave

PHOTOGRAPH AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Dignitaries and masses pay final tribute to Moshoeshoe

Star 27/11/96 (167)

Maseru – Lesotho's king Moshoeshoe II who died in a car crash, was laid to rest in pouring rain on a mountaintop yesterday, watched by thousands of people including President Nelson Mandela

Mandela stood solemnly as the king's body was lowered into his grave on top of Thaba Bosiu at 3.30pm

The burial followed a four-hour interdenominational church service and a funeral ceremony which included speeches by Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Botswana President and Southern African Development Community chairman Sir Ketumile Masire, and other speakers

The burial service was carried out in pouring rain but that did not deter thousands of Basotho and dignitaries from climbing the mountain to pay their last respects to their monarch

The regent, Queen Mamohato, and the royal family, Lesotho government dignitaries, local clergymen, and Mandela and his entourage were saved the ordeal of climbing the mountain. They were airlifted to the burial place in Lesotho Defence Force helicopters

Queen Mamohato obviously overcome by grief stood and watched as the casket was lowered into the grave to the strains of martial music played by a combined military and police band. The band played *Abide With Me* and the *The Last Post*

Father more than 500 Basotho horsemen wrapped in colourful blankets thronged Thaba Bosiu to say farewell to their king who was a great lover of horses. He was both a horse breeder and racehorse owner

The cortege was led by a Royal Lesotho Mounted Police escort carrying lances with blue-and-gold pennants, the colours of the police force

The car in which the king had been travelling on January 15 left the road and crashed in the Maluti mountains – Sapa

Rabasotho leaves a nation in grief

Sowetan 29/1/96 (167)

Many Basotho are unhappy with the explanation of the king's death

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

KING MOSHOESHOE the founder and father of Basotho, has a special place in the hearts of the monarchy' s subjects in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho

And it was a sad day indeed when the more than 80 000 subjects of his successor and great-grandson Moshoeshoe II – otherwise known as Bereng Seeiso – went to bury their king, who was laid to rest atop Thaba Bosiu, the mountain shrine of the nation where marauding Boer and British settlers were repelled

"The king is dead and we are here to put his remains away and not to bury him," said an elderly mourner

At the crack of dawn, when the sun came up on Friday, the peak of Thaba Bosiu could be seen silhouetted against the clouds The throngs of Basotho who had painstakingly climbed the mountain were waiting

In fact, the top of Thaba Bosiu cannot be reached except on foot or by helicopter Of the four Southern African heads of state present, President Nelson Mandela was the only political leader who ascended the mountain, albeit by a Lesotho National Defence Force helicopter as protocol so demanded

Also attending were presidents Sir Ketumile Masire of Botswana, Frederick Chiluba of Zambia and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe

While mourning the death of Rabasotho, the name given to Moshoeshoe 11 by his subjects, the nation is dissatisfied with reasons given as the cause of his death

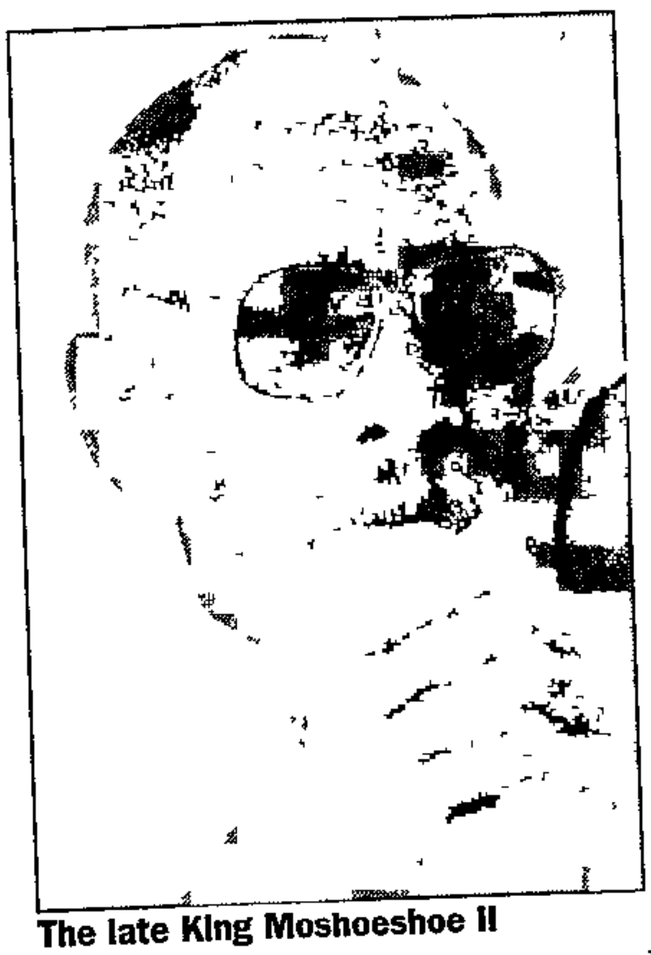
Chief Thesele Mohato said the royal family was satisfied with the explanation given on Moshoeshoe's death

He based this assertion on the report mourners received that Moshoeshoe's four wheel-drive truck had accidentally veered off the road in the Maluti mountains and hurtled him to his death on January 15 after the driver fell asleep

"Why should the king's driver fall asleep on the wheel because he is used to the route and the routine?" asked a citizen

The king travelled to Maluti once or twice every month to his cattle posting at Ha Noha, 40 km east of Maseru

He preferred travelling at dead of night because he wanted to see his cattle first thing at dawn



The late King Moshoeshoe II

During a Radio Lesotho interview early this year, he may have predicted his own death when he said "As a holy nation you should go and preserve the peace and refrain from violence who knows, one could get killed in a car accident"

Moshoeshoe II and his driver, identified only as Moshe, died when the car in which they were travelling to his cattle post went down the hill

Two policemen, Sergeant Pitikoe Mohlomi and Trooper Kopano Manyali, sustained serious injuries and are recovering at an unknown hospital

However, earlier reports were that Manyali, who sat behind the driver at the time, said he did not know what happened

The king had asked along the way why the car was swaying to one side Eventually, the car rolled down the mountain, and according to Manyali, King Moshoeshoe said shortly before the car overturned "Moshe, you are overturning us"

Meanwhile, all eyes are looking to the Crown Prince Mohato Seeiso, the 32-year-old bachelor who reigned on behalf of his father during the two occasions the king fled to exile

This time Mohato, already appointed by the College of Chiefs, is the successor to the throne and will reign as Letsie III

He is popular with the nation but many are concerned that he is not married yet Traditionally he has to get betrothed to royalty but word is that Letsie has not even started looking

In the meantime, Queen Mamohato Seeiso will hold fort as Regent until Letsie's formal coronation in about a month

The Royal Palace in Maseru, the scene of activity since the king's death was announced at 4 pm on the fateful day, stood empty save for four royal guards on Saturday morning

Mamohato, who has been deeply affected by the death of the 57-year-old king, will hand power over to her son in terms of Lesotho's constitution which provides that her son take over immediately following Moshoeshoe's demise

The king is dead, so say many Basotho but the legend remains

● See page 17.

Toxic waste puts flamingoes to flight

(167)

■ Flamingoes are fleeing Kenya's environmentally unfriendly Lake Nakuru in their thousands, which in turn has had a devastating effect on the tourist industry. **JOE KHAMISI** reports from Nairobi.

THE grand finalé of what ornithologist and artist Peter Scott described as the greatest bird show on earth may be close as thousands of flamingoes abandon their natural home in Kenya's Rift Valley for other saline lakes beyond

They are fleeing Lake Nakuru, an increasingly environmental unfriendly water patch 150km northwest of Nairobi

Scientists consider the flight of the unusually large numbers of flamingoes to Simbi Nyaima, a small lake in Western Kenya, as temporary But they are taking no chances.

Early last month they launched a R720 000 research project to find out why the birds were leaving their habitat in such huge numbers

The study will take three years under the supervision of Egerton University nearby It involves a team of chemists, biochemists, veterinarians and natural resource managers

In the past few years thousands of flamingoes have died at Lake Nakuru after consuming toxic waste flowing into adjacent ponds from nearby plants The effects of the dangerous waste and the diminishing amounts of the blue green algae on which the birds feed, appear to be threatening the survival of flamingoes

Once numbering two million, a third of the world's entire population of lesser flamingoes, their population has now plummeted to 100 000, according to the latest census conducted last year

The population has dwindled further during the past few months with the migration pattern

But scientists are unruffled "From the carcasses we have seen at the lake we cannot conclude that there is imminent danger to animal and plant life," said Oliver Nasirwa, an ornithologist

But focus is on the town's sewerage project being carried out nearby by the Japanese government

The plant is said to be partly responsible for the deterioration of the lake's ecosystem

Rotting carcasses around adjacent ponds are now a health hazard

But experts also want to know why the lake has dried up by as much as two thirds.

Scientists say the movement of the birds from Lake Nakuru is survival instinct Hoteliers around the lake are complaining that tourist business at the usually busy national park has dropped by 30 percent in recent months as a result of the migration, necessitating staff cutbacks

Although the birds normally migrate to other lakes whenever there is an environmental problem at Lake Nakuru, this year's outpouring is considered the most serious

In the past the flamingoes have flown to as far away as South Africa, according to scientists This year, however, they appeared too weak for such a journey because of lack of food and poor health

Many birds have flown to Tanzania for breeding at the highly saline Lake Natron and others are camping at lakes along the Rift Valley

ARG 3/2T96

Lake Nakuru Park is considered a birds' mecca It has more than 450 recorded species, including many migratory species which leave England during the northern winter.

During the past decade the reserve has also distinguished itself as the sanctuary of the Rotchschild's giraffe and, more recently, the South African white rhino

Ten of the 20 rhinos given by the Natal Parks Board have made Lake Nakuru their home The others were relocated to Masai Mara Game Reserve in the southeast

Easily accessible from Nairobi, the park of 188 square kilometres also features hippos and several snake species, including the python But it is the flamingoes that attract thousands of tourists

"The flamingo is the lifeblood of Nakuru and without it there will be no tourism in the town," says hotelier Joseph Muya

Flamingoes are not edible but their pink feathers, used for decoration, were once profitable export — Independent Foreign Service

Letsie succeeds his father as Lesotho monarch

(167)
ARG 7/2/96

MASERU — Lesotho's King Letsie was sworn in as monarch of the southern African nation today, succeeding his father, who died in a car crash last month

Letsie, 32, took the oath of office in front of his mother Queen Mamohato and Lesotho's Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle during a solemn public ceremony at the Royal Palace in the capital here

He succeeds the late King Moshoeshoe II, who was killed when his car veered off a mountain road on January 15 while he was on his way to visit one of his cattle farms



King Letsie

Letsie has already been king, replacing his father at one stage for five years.

As he took the oath administered by Chief Justice Joseph Kheola, he undertook to "abstain from involving the monarchy in any way in politics or with any political parties or groups".

Letsie was installed as king by the country's then military rulers in 1990

In August 1994 he sparked a constitutional crisis by sacking Mr Mokhehle in a palace coup widely rumoured to have been orchestrated by his father.

Order was restored after an agreement, which included the return of King Moshoeshoe to the throne in January 1995, was brokered by Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa. — Reuter.

INSIDE: Stock Exchange — page 14; Motoring — 12; Reader's letter — 15; Comics and crosswords — 16.

Lesotho's mountain people can see few benefits in the Highlands water scheme

(167)

Star 20/2/96

PICTURES BY JOHN FLEMING



Promise of power ... the imposing Katse dam will provide electricity to all of Lesotho and earn millions in foreign currency.

By John Fleming
Independent Foreign Service

The remote Lesotho highlands practically ooze progress these days Transport trucks ply a new tarred highway along a trail that just a few years ago was little more than a footpath The road leads to the massive Katse dam, part of the multibillion-rand Lesotho highlands water scheme, which dominates a valley that was once a lonely cattle outpost Thousands of workers and their families have moved into the empty landscape New settlements dot the hillsides around the new reservoir. There is talk of a tourist boom

Everything about what is going on in the highlands is impressive: the 185m dam wall is the highest in Africa; a tunnel system burrows under the dizzyingly high Maluti mountains some 84km before delivering over 18 cumecs of water into the Vaal reservoir The cost too is impressive, with the price tag of the dam and transfer tunnel alone pegged at R9,8-billion Engineers will soon begin work on another phase of the project, the Mohale dam and tunnel system near Katse

All involved in this project stand to benefit Lesotho will be paid royalties on water exported to South Africa, equal to about 5% of the current $2-billion (R7,54-billion) GNP of the country A power station built along the tunnel will generate enough electricity to run the whole of Lesotho In return, Gauteng will get enough water to keep up with demand, at least until 2005.

Everyone seems to be benefiting, that is, except the people who live in these hills and valleys For them the rapid development of the area has forever changed their isolated way of life and, according to many, has bypassed them in favour of outsiders

"I cannot say that the people like this project," said Sister Helen Molelle, the administrator of the Mamohau mission hospital in the village of Poli about 40km from the dam

"The lake has taken away their land and their homes"

Already the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority has relocated 25 households By the time the project is completed over 70 households will have been moved But the LHDA reckons about 5 000 people will be directly affected, mostly farmers and herders, by the time the project is complete

Officials at the LHDA in Maseru argue that much has been done to soften the impact of rapid development on the highland people They have introduced skills training ranging from brick masonry to sheet metalworking, fish farming and even swimming lessons Officials say they have also started lending money to peasants who want to start their own agricultural enterprises.

> **"I cannot say that the people like this project"**

The LHDA is building new homes for all those displaced and paying compensation to farmers in the form of maize – 1 000kg for every hectare lost for 15 years

People in the area, says Boketol Sibolla, the principal rural development officer for the LHDA, are responding positively to the training with nearly all skills classes full and some 600 people applying for credit

Still, Sibolla says, the highland people are having a hard time adjusting to the changes

"It is my understanding that the local people there do not like what is happening," said Sibolla "Being an inland and mountain people we have misgivings about water as soon as it gets to knee high"

Sibolla explained that people around the reservoir have fears of giant water snakes nesting in the lake, of a monstrous snake with a horse's head that already lurks there No different really than the legend of the Loch Ness monster, Sibolla declared

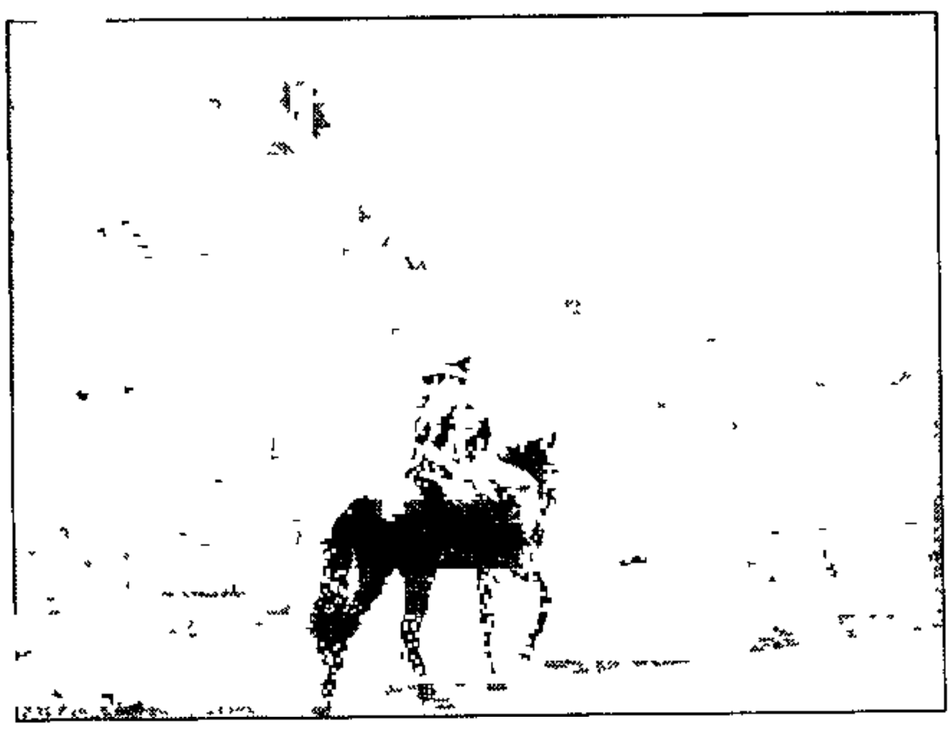
Peter Sefahi, a rural judge in a village overlooking the dam, doesn't have a fear of water monsters He fears that the LHDA will never pay him the compensation for his four fields that were flooded Sefahi, who has 14 children, says the LHDA owes him 25 bags of rice of 80kg each for his lost land

"They have promised to pay me but I have not seen anything yet," said Sefahi.

The LHDA recently completed an operation to address outstanding claims and 570 people received compensation.

Sefahi and others complain that the most jobs on the project have gone to outsiders "We are treated better now than before but we are not satisfied because we are not getting any of the jobs that come with this project"

But for Sister Helen Molelle the most noticeable change to come to this area is the impact outsiders have had on the ways of the local population "Already there are not as many horses around and you don't see as many people walking anymore. Now if someone wants to go somewhere they take a taxi Before, people walked a very long way to come to church here but today they won't come if they can't catch a ride"





A changing world ... locals have mixed feelings about the development. While there is the prospect of cheap irrigation and a tourist boom, some have lost their land and had to move elsewhere

NEWS FEATURE

Kenyan women create platform to air their views

(167) Sowetan 1/3/96

By L Muthoni Wanyeki

KENYAN women have decided to establish a forum to ensure that their concerns feature strongly in general elections scheduled for late 1997 and that more women run for political office

A meeting of more than 30 women, civil education and non-governmental organisations, and female parliamentarians organised by the National Commission on the Status of Women – a lobby group for greater female participation in public life – agreed to the initiative recently

"Women need a platform to express their political views from a gender perspective," says Dr Maria Nzomo, chairwoman of NCSW "The other platforms are dominated by men The principle of coordination and cohesiveness has been accepted

"We have two choices to create a non-partisan, political lobby group which will bring together women MPs, women from civil society, women from the grassroots, or to create a partisan political party"

Only six of the 200 parliamentarians and 24 of the 1 029 municipal councillors in this East African state are women, far short of the 30 percent target endorsed by the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing last September

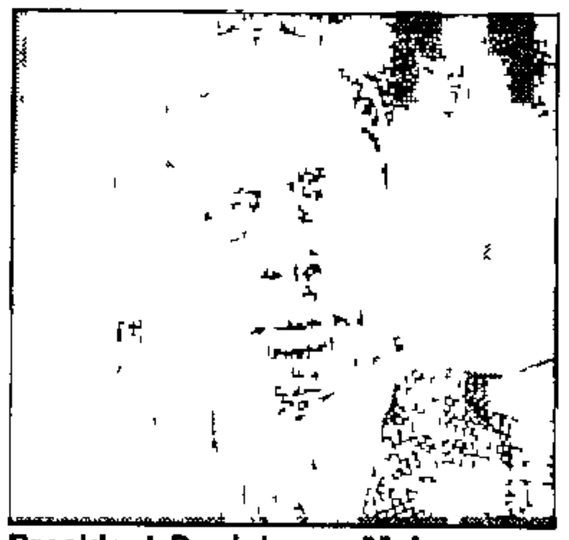
Posters bearing the exhortation "Go women go! To parliament or we are lost" have been posted up on the walls in Nairobi, but there are still many obstacles to female participation in politics, including sexist beliefs and behaviour, family and child-care responsibilities, high costs and fear of running campaigns

"The real violence experienced by women during elections and the implied violence which hovers over the heads of women any time they come out to challenge unjust structures are barriers to women's effective participation," says Wasye Musyoni head of the Women's Desk of the National Council of Churches

"Most communities in Kenya do not recognise women's leadership This also means that men from such communities are not supportive of women who would want to stand for an elective post"

"Women are not expected to be outspoken or to talk about politics," says Lillian Mwaura, head of the National Council of Women of Kenya "We need training in public speaking, in campaign management and money to finance our campaigns"

A report by the National Election Monitoring Unit on Kenya's first multiparty general elections in 1992 said



President Daniel arap Moi .. more women want to run for office.

More women could have won parliamentary and civic positions were it not for electoral malpractices targeted specifically against women"

These included harassment of women candidates and disruption of their campaign meetings by male opponents, according to the report, which also found that parties invariably accepted women candidates as a last resort.

Parties also gave them less financial support than their male counterparts Violence against women voters was common too, preventing many from venturing to the polling stations which opened late – *Sapa-IPS*

Lesotho opposition hijack broadcast

MASERU: Three opposition party supporters in Lesotho were arrested yesterday after they forced their way into a Radio Lesotho studio here and broadcast that the government had been dissolved

One of the trio, Mr Matsoso Bolofo, broadcast a message

He and two other men, who were armed with pistols, forced their way into the studio as an announcer was reading the news

They made staff to lie face-down on the floor while Bolofo read out his message

He listed several grievances against the Lesotho government, among them a claim that the government had ruled the country unconstitutionally since it took over in 1993

Soon afterwards army officers walked in and arrested the men. — Sapa

(167) CT 1/3/96



HIGH AND DRY: the 180m Katse dam, centrepiece of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, whose further stages are in doubt

Tide may turn for Lesotho's water

ST (BT) 24/3/96 (167)

By THABO KOBOKOANE

TEN years since work began and three months behind schedule, the first phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is nearing completion.

But although the scheme will begin delivering water to Gauteng by early 1998, further phases of the R18,5-billion project are hanging in the balance.

Department of Water Affairs officials have indicated that these phases are likely to be scrapped after researchers found that estimates of water levels in the Orange river failed to take into account evaporation, irrigation and industrial use.

"The implementation of other phases depends on the availability of surplus water in the Orange-Senqu river catchment area," said Willie Croucamp, the Department of Water Affairs' managing engineer of international projects

He said the department was undertaking studies to verify the amount of surplus water available to the scheme, and that these would be completed by the end of the year.

Wynand Maartens of the Joint Permanent Technical Committee, which represents the Lesotho and SA governments, said he was hopeful the project's later stages would still go ahead. "This option remains the cheapest water supply for Gauteng."

In terms of a treaty signed by Lesotho and South Africa in 1986, both countries are committed to the completion of Phase 1A and 1B.

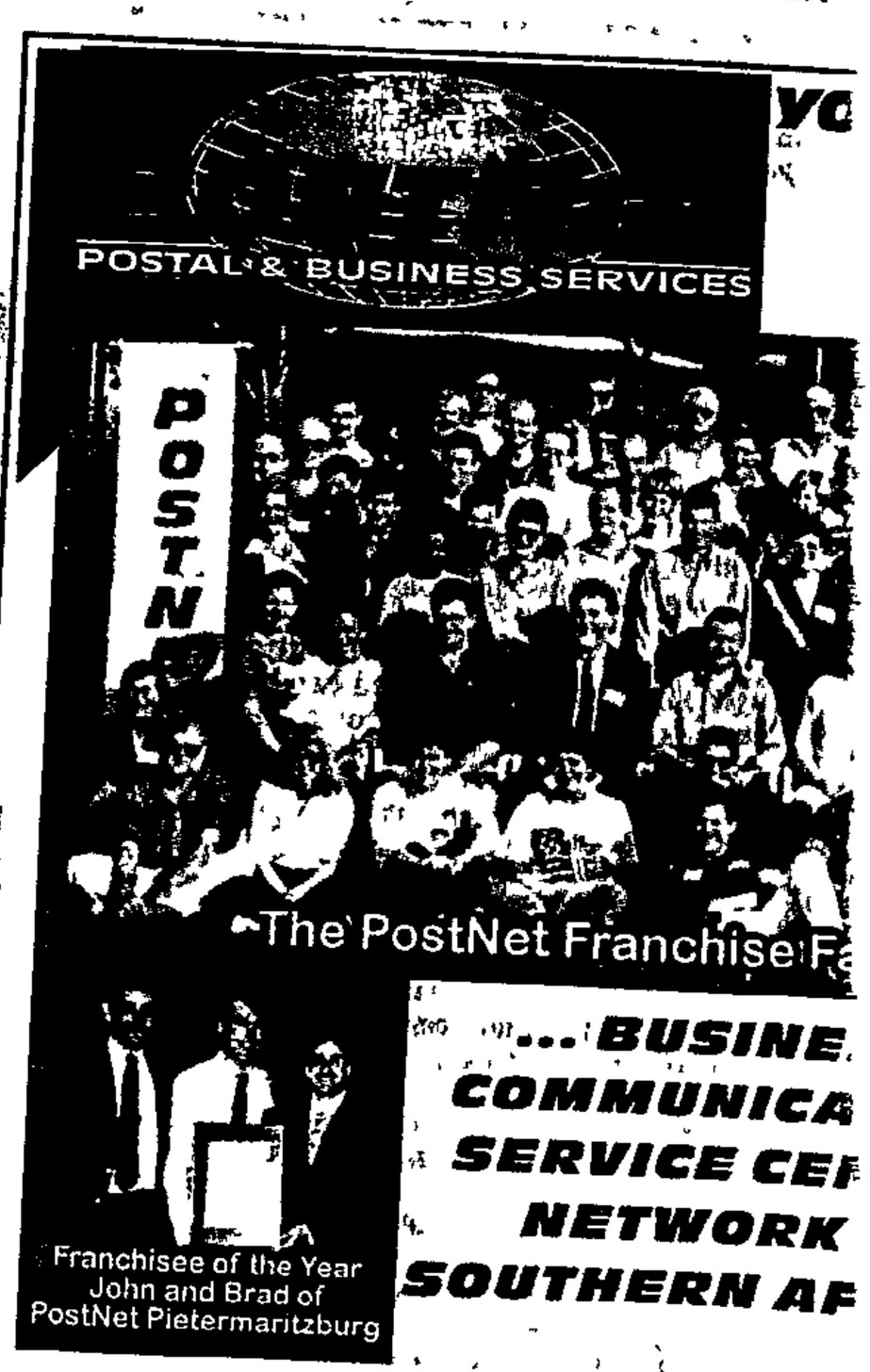
Phase 1A, which involves the construction of the 180m-high Katse Dam and Muela Dam in the Maluti mountains, is nearing completion and will supply an estimated 18m^3/second (cumecs) of water into the Vaal system and 72MW of hydroelectricity for Lesotho

Preparatory work is already under way for Phase 1B. This phase, at a cost of R2,5-billion, will involve the construction of the 60m-high Mohale dam and a small weir and diversion system at Matsuko and will add a further 12 cumecs to the Vaal, said Mr Maartens. This phase is scheduled to be completed by 2003

The main components of Phase 1B are a 45km transfer tunnel from Katse to Muela, a 55m-high dam at Muela, a 15km delivery tunnel from Muela to the crossover point into South Africa and 200km of access roads.

Conceived in 1959, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, will allow for the storage and transfer of water through an 80km series of dams and tunnels from Lesotho to South Africa.

When complete, it is expected to send 70 cumecs of water into the Vaal water system to alleviate water shortage in Gauteng. In return, Lesotho will benefit from job creation, improved infrastructure and the equivalent of $55-million a year in royalties.



Lesotho seeks R580m in aid from international donors

CT(BR) 28/3/96 (169)

BY JOE MOLEFI

Maseru — Lesotho will request a financial assistance package of R580 million from the international donor community this week for development programmes in five sectors over the next five years

Moeketsi Senaoana, the minister of finance and economic planning, said an international gathering in Maseru this week would hear motivation for projects in the health, population, agriculture, environment and tourism sectors

"These are considered crucial for promoting sustainable growth and for alleviating poverty," he said

The meeting this week is a follow-up to the seventh round-table conference between the Lesotho government and the international donor community held in Geneva in January last year

The minister said the five areas showed a "financing gap" of R579,4 million over the next five years that Lesotho hoped to close by mobilising resources from donors, government and private entrepreneurs 'both national and foreign"

The breakdown of the investment required is agriculture, R287,2 million, environment, R140,6 million, health, R101,8 million, population, R34,2 million, and tourism, R15,6 million

The Geneva conference decided that Lesotho should convene several consultative meetings to review sectoral programmes

Principal

The sectoral programmes would be submitted to the donors by the government of Lesotho for implementation

The principal aims of the proposed programmes are to improve the health status of all the Basotho people, to slow the rate of population growth, to revitalise agriculture and reverse the downward trend in agricultural production and productivity, to protect and rehabilitate the environment, and to promote the full development of Lesotho's eco-tourism potential

This week's donor conference was organised by the government of Lesotho with the support of the United Nations and Lesotho's other key development partners

NEWS FEATURE

Rumblings in Lesotho's ruling party

(167) Sowetan 29/3/96

By Violet Maraisane

MASERU – A legal battle among factions of Lesotho's ruling Basotholand Congress Party has exposed deep-seated rivalries within the party and heightened tensions in the tiny mountain kingdom

Trouble started three days after the BCP's annual general meeting between March 8 and 10, when the High Court granted three constituencies an order declaring null and void the meeting's election of a new National Executive Committee

Representing Khubelu, Thabanamorena and Mokhotlong constituencies, lawyer Zwelakhe Mda argued that the NEC had been fraudulently elected as the normal secret ballot method had been abandoned

He noted that, in violation of the BCP constitution, constituencies were denied the opportunity to present their reports or discuss the speech of party leader and Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

The showdown appears to be between a BCP faction called the Pressure Group, headed by outgoing deputy party leader Molapo Qhobela and Lingaka Tsa Pressure, led by Mokhehle's brother Shakhane, who was elected secretary-general of the new NEC

A local newspaper, *The African*, regards the new NEC as a bid by backers of the ailing Ntsu (76) to pass the torch on to Shakhane after he retires

The newspaper notes that in terms of the national constitution, in the event of a vacancy in the office of the prime minister, King Letsie III may instruct parliament to elect a replacement from within the NEC

A staunch BCP backer confirms this likelihood, saying that some BCP supporters believe the party belongs to the Mokhehle family and that its leader should be succeeded by his brother

He notes that proposed changes are often met with the retort. "This party belongs to Ntsu If you want to start making changes, establish your own party"

Party stalwart Moeketsi Tsatsanyane has also slammed the new NEC for unprocedural elections, alleging that the AGM was highly influenced by "thugs" who nearly went on the rampage

Branding these "thugs" as Shakhane's "people", Tsatsanyane accuses them of intimidating participants and thereby hijacking the meeting "Eventually they ran the conference according to their precepts"

Tsatsanyane, who has championed the welfare of ex-Lesotho Liberation Army cadres who fought the Basotho National Party's 23-year government, also slated Ntsu's prolonged failure to appear in public.

He warns that unless the election results are annulled, the BCP should forget about winning the 1998 general elections

BCP in shambles

Some people, especially opposition members, agree wholeheartedly, noting that given the shambles within the BCP, people such as the three *coup* plotters thwarted early this year, need not have bothered

The attempted *coup*, when three opposition party members walked into the national radio station and declared a change of government, came two weeks before the AGM and the culprits are in police custody awaiting trial

Instability has bedevilled Lesotho and undermined the Mokhehle's government since he won the general elections in 1993, sweeping all 65 constituencies – *Sapa-IPS*

Lesotho sees difficulties ahead in privatising plan

BD 17/4/96 (167)

MASERU — The Lesotho government intends to sell its equity holdings in 51 local companies as part of a plan to attract greater private investment into an economy that is largely controlled by the state

Mothusi Mashologu, director of the government's newly created privatisation unit, said eight companies would initially be put on the block by late May He expected the privatisation programme to last several years

"The government recognizes that it should get out of things that could best be done by the private sector," said Mashologu

Up for grabs are stakes in, or outright ownership of, hotels, banks, telecommunications concerns, electricity utilities and the national airline Earnings performances range from long-term loss-making companies to highly profitable monopolies

The most appealing companies on auction are thought to be the state-run Lesotho Telecommunications Corp and the Lesotho Electricity Corp, which have captive markets but require equity investment to boost efficiency and technology

But the government recognises that it faces a challenge in mobilising private sector capital to take part in the economy

Few foreign companies "have been knocking down doors" in search of investment in Lesotho firms, a Western diplomat said

And domestically, tapping the considerable but officially unknown private sector capital base in Lesotho will be difficult

"The Basotho have traditionally believed the government is there to provide for them," said Mashologu "Encouraging them to invest in what are government corporations is something new"

Authorities fear local citizens will be more comfortable collecting bank interest than taking a leap into the unknown world of equity shareholding To reduce these concerns, the government is looking at beefing up corporate management, particularly in its basket of parastatals

Mashologu said an Australian firm recently won a three-year contract to manage state-owned National Abattoir & Feedlot Complex Ltd, another of the companies on the block

Establishing a mechanism for Lesotho citizens to invest in local companies is the task of Checchi & Co, a US-based consultancy hired by the government

A stock exchange and a mutual fund listing privately held Lesotho companies are just two of the options being proposed

"We need to educate people on the buying and selling of shares," said William Jacobson, a Checchi consultant.

But liberalising the state's grip on the Lesotho economy will be "an uphill battle", said Jacobson

"It's a cultural thing. The Basotho do not trust the motives of outsiders or interlopers," Jacobson said, referring to the Basotho's centuries-old track record of repelling domination by other tribes or governments. — AP-DJ

David and Goliath in diamond lease dispute

Multi-million Lesotho Highlands Water Project could face bigger bills if they lose court challenge

ANDREAS VLACHAKIS

By Shirley Woodgate

A R1-billion damages claim and a threat by Swissborough Diamond Mines (SDM) to attach the water from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and claim royalties due to the Lesotho government from South Africa, are at stake in the Lesotho High court today

The court will be asked to rule on an application by Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), challenging the validity of SDM's Rampai diamond mining lease

Part of a multimillion-rand five-year legal battle leading up to the augmentation of Gauteng's water supply from neighbouring Lesotho in 1998, the string of court cases have been conducted since SDM's Josias van Zyl took on the Lesotho and South African governments, the LHDA, the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and the Joint Permanent Technical Commission (JPTC)

Van Zyl related the sequence of events after five mining leases were registered to SDM in October 1988 along courses of major rivers in Lesotho

"SDM commenced mining in all five lease areas, Rampai, Patiseng, Matsoku, Orange and Motete and applied for a further seven mining leases

"In September 1990, the Lekhanya Military Council, the Mining Board and the Council of Ministers agreed to grant the extension mining leases and for SDM to abandon that part of the Rampai lease which may be affected by the LHWP

In 1990/91 SDM built a R10-million bulk sampling pilot recovery plant in the Patiseng lease area

"Shortly after General Ramaema came to power in 1991, military personnel told SDM that unless it paid $14-million, the extension mining lease agreements would not be registered by the new government

"In April 1991, SDM was granted an urgent application in the High Court of Lesotho stopping all LHDA unlawful activities in its Rampai lease area

"The LHDA launched a counter application to set the order aside

It was agreed that SDM would uplift the interdict which it had won, and that both parties would embark on a programme which would include bulk sampling under joint supervision

"The Lesotho government issued a prohibitive entry order against me and the mining commissioner cancelled all five SDM registered mining leases in August 1991

"In November 1991, the SDM brought an urgent application in the Lesotho High Court for an order declaring invalid the Lesotho government's unlawful cancellation of the five leases

"An interim order was granted in favour of SDM on November 20, restoring the leases and preventing the LHDA and the Lesotho government from interfering with SDM's rights

"The SDM application interdicting the LHDA from continuing its unlawful interference of SDM's rights in respect of the Rampai lease, was to be heard in the Lesotho High Court on March 23 1992"

Van Zyl said "But then the military regime cancelled by decree all SDM's mining leases without compensation or recourse to the courts

"All pending applications brought by SDM to protect its rights were stopped and removed from the court roll

"SDM's application for setting aside the Revocation Order was heard in Lesotho in May 1992, when judgment was reserved by the then Chief Justice BP Cullinan

"Later that month, the SDM Patiseng processing plant valued at some R15-million was destroyed

"In September 1994, the Chief Justice of Lesotho, Cullinan, delivered a landmark 700-page judgment declaring invalid the Revocation Order passed by the Lesotho government and ruling the leases to be valid

"He interdicted the LHDA from interfering with SDM's rights in Rampai, ruled that SDM's leases could not be impugned

In January 1995, the Lesotho Appeal Court ruled that the Revocation Order cancelling by decree SDM's leases was unlawful and should be set aside

"But nevertheless, the Lesotho government refused to guarantee the safety of SDM's personnel and equipment during the evaluation process at Rampai, also rejected an SDM invitation to conduct joint evaluation studies in Rampai

"They promptly appealed to the Lesotho High Court to declare SDM's Rampai lease invalid on the grounds that the government of Lesotho had not followed all the prescribed procedures when it granted the lease in 1988

"SDM opposed the application and while the case was pending, the Lesotho government passed expropriation legislation in August 1995, aimed at SDM's Rampai lease, and authorising SDM to claim compensation only if it was the holder of a mining lease that was duly granted and executed

"In terms of the LHDA application, it was stated the Lesotho government did not properly grant the Rampai lease in 1988 and SDM was therefore not entitled to compensation

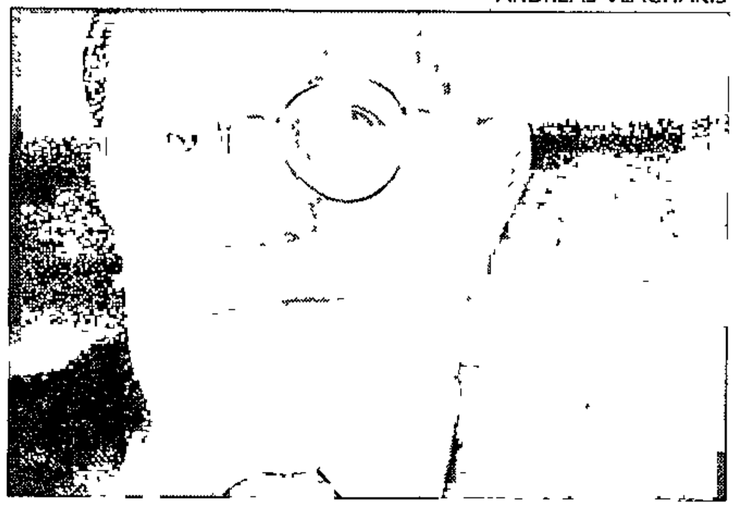
"This application by LHDA declaring invalid SDM's Rampai lease will be heard in the Lesotho High Court today

Van Zyl said "The South African Government has stated in public that it does not wish to be involved in SDM's court cases in Lesotho, but SDM has JPTC documents and minutes of meetings which show the Government condoned, supported and promoted the LHDA's action in declaring invalid SDM's Rampai lease

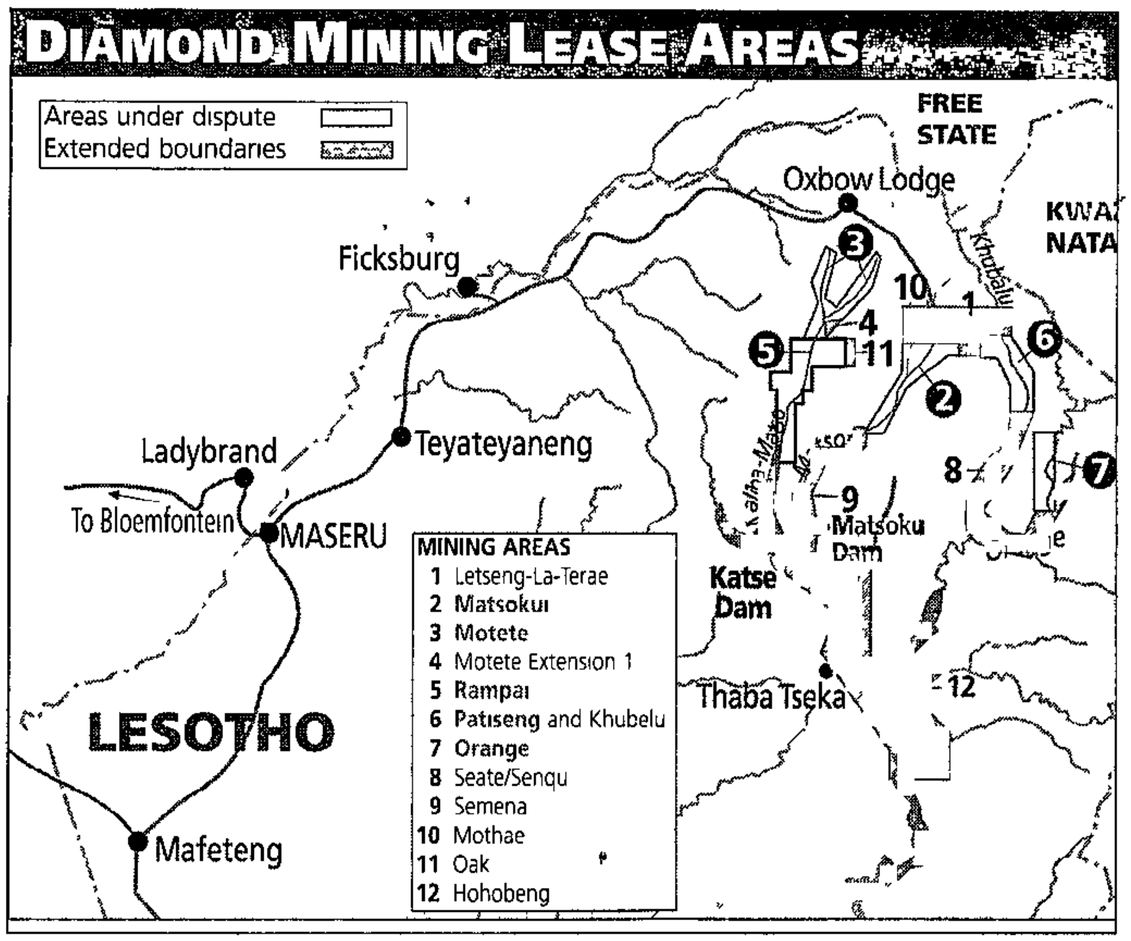
"SDM has issued summons for damages of R1, 59-billion resulting from the Lesotho government's repudiation of SDM's mining leases

"Statements by Lesotho government officials that SDM obtained the leases merely to obtain compensation are nonsense and the officials are being sued for defamation in the High Court of Lesotho for R60-million

"In October 1995 the Katse Dam started filling up and the Rampai lease area is now under water," Van Zyl said



Resilient . prospector Josias van Zyl taking on the big guns



'SA officials were not in on any corruption' – Govt

Star 22/4/96

By Shirley Woodgate

The South African Government has reacted to SDM claims

Water Affairs spokesman U S Hiddema stressed that although SDM had had some successes in Lesotho, they were against that government which passed legislation cancelling all their mining rights.

He said Josias van Zyl had no realistic chance of success in his cases against South Africa and the TCTA and had lost all interest in pursuing them.

The South African Government had rejected offers of settlement because of serious allegations of fraud and collusion against the government and certain officials. "It wants exoneration in a court of law," he said

He stressed that the department had a duty on behalf of taxpayers and water users to hold a watching brief over court cases involving the LHDA. "No evidence of any improper conduct has ever been produced by Van Zyl," he said

Hiddema said despite claims by SDM, the LHDA had sworn affidavits by various international experts that there were no economically minable diamonds in the Rampai area. SDM had never done sampling in Rampai nor produced any diamonds.

"The mining rights in Rampai are considered valueless and SDM is no longer claiming compensation for their value, only compensation for alleged losses"

He said a working group had been asked by the ministers for the two government departments responsible for implementing the treaty, to explore the feasibility of a compromise

The SA Department of Water Affairs said "Van Zyl usually claims vast amounts of money in litigation Whether the most recent claim of R1 059-billion is derived from litigation in process or constitutes a new claim is unknown.

"Van Zyl's sequence of events is to some extent included in court papers and to that extent is known to the department All allegations of complicity, collusion or improper conduct by the RSA officials have been and still are denied.

"The department has no knowledge of Van Zyl's dealings with the Lesotho government or of the existence of relevant mining leases prior to the urgent application in 1991 and, besides taking note of Van Zyl's attempt to gain publicity, the department has no comment

"The matter is in the hands of the courts in Lesotho and South Africa and will be finalised there in due course"

Lesotho announces package of incentives to entice SA manufacturing companies

CT(BR)25/4/96(167)

FROM SAPA

Johannesburg — The Lesotho government has announced incentives for South African manufacturing companies relocating to Lesotho

Shakhane Mokhehle, the Lesotho trade and industry minister, said yesterday that his country was committed to helping South African firms compete against the sharp rise in cheap imports into South Africa

"We are offering manufacturers, particularly those in labour-intensive industries, an incentive package that will enable them to regain their competitive edge and break into new markets worldwide," he said

"Furthermore, we have minimised red tape, paving the way for investors to set up factories in our country"

The incentives include preferential market access to the European Union and free access to Southern African Customs Union countries, a maximum permanent corporate tax rate of 15 percent for manufacturers, with no secondary or withholding taxes when dividends are distributed, and preferential loans and loan guarantees for capital equipment and export finance

Mokhehle said other advantages included relatively low wages, a strong infrastructure and easy access to South Africa

He said trade unions in Lesotho had recognised the need to create employment and were working with the government to maintain manufacturing competitiveness

Lesotho business is unhappy

Sowetan 13/5/96

By Bethuel Thai

MASERU – Lesotho collects up to 80 percent of its total annual revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) but local business people are unhappy, saying SACU undermines them.

SACU is a trade protection agreement between South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Namibia which eliminates import duties on goods passing between member countries

Opponents of SACU in Lesotho say that access to cheaper goods from South Africa kills the incentive for Lesotho's own industries. They also argue that SACU subjects indigenous industries to unfair competition and that it is a hindrance to the establishment of new industries

South Africa, the dominant partner in SACU, produces almost 100 percent of what the other four members consume. Lesotho, which is entirely surrounded by South Africa, is totally dependent on the South African economy.

Lesotho Finance Minister Moeketsi Senaoana says the SACU agreement is currently being renegotiated and there are indications that major changes will be made. New institutions, such as a SACU secretariat, have been proposed. – *Africa Information Afrique*

Star 18/7/96

Japanese boost aid to Lesotho

(167)

By Norman Chandler
Pretoria Bureau

Japan has signed an agreement with Lesotho which boosts its total aid so far to the mountain kingdom to just under R100-million.

The Japanese embassy said in Pretoria this week it would be supplying Lesotho with about R6-million for the second phase of a water supply and sanitation project for primary schools.

The first phase began last year with the procurement of equipment and materials The second phase involves the building of 31 more hand-pump wells, 10 small scale water supply facilities and additional toilet facilities at schools.

It will also result in the provision of safe water facilities for drinking, school feeding and irrigation purposes.

"By providing sanitation to about 17 000 pupils, the schools will improve hygiene and greatly contribute towards the betterment of health, cleanliness and the environment," the embassy said

This package brings the total amount provided by Japan to Lesotho to about R100-million.

SA reviews Lesotho highlands water project

MASERU — Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal delivered a letter from President Nelson Mandela to Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle yesterday on the need to assess the giant Lesotho highlands water project to supply water to SA

Asmal, speaking in Maseru during a one-day visit for talks on the project with Lesotho Natural Resources Minister Shakhane Mokhehle, declined to give details

He said for the past two years the SA government had been reviewing "a whole range of policies, fiscal and financial, in its relations with Lesotho on the highlands water scheme"

"The water treaty launching the Lesotho Highlands Water Project was signed at a particular period of SA's hegemony and when SA was unable to raise money directly for the implementation of the scheme," he said There was now a need to look at the whole governance of the scheme, in terms of the new situation

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Joe Modise is to visit Lesotho today as part of a tour of the Southern African Development Community region, in his capacity as the current chairman of the interstate defence and security committee —Sapa.

(167) BD 19/7/96

Missing govt files suggest 'corruption at highest level'

Star 15/8/96 (167) ~~30cpl~~

By Shirley Woodgate.

The Chief Justice of Lesotho has labelled the disappearance of government files vital to the issue of disputed diamond mining leases in the vicinity of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) as indicative of "corruption at the highest level"

The comments by Mr Justice J L Kheola were made last week during the latest in a string of court cases involving South African businessman Joe van Zyl's Swissborough Diamond Mines (SDM) and the LHWP's implementing body, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA)

Since 1991, Van Zyl has been locked in a dispute with the LHDA and the Lesotho government over the validity of SDM's Rampai diamond mining lease, one of five allegedly granted to him by the Lesotho government

The LHDA applied to the court to have the lease declared invalid The land is in the catchment area of the Katse dam

For the purposes of the court cases, Van Zyl has bracketed the LHDA with the Lesotho and South African governments, the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and the Joint Permanent Technical Commission (JPTC), the controlling body of the project

The Lesotho government alleged in court that files containing the mining applications had been removed by the Ramaema military government in 1993

The files included details of procedures followed when the earlier Lekhanya government registered the SDM leases in 1988

The LHDA submitted in court that the JPTC had been declared an international organisation with immunity and special protection, which included the protection of documents, Van Zyl said

SDM has alleged that the SA Government was the key player behind a revocation order passed by the Lesotho government in 1992, whereby SDM's leases were summarily cancelled

The case was adjourned to September 2

In May, SDM withdrew its application relating to the *issue estoppel* matter in the Lesotho Appeal Court which accepted its offer to pay costs on a scale as between attorney and client which would include the cost of two counsel

Key Lesotho operations grind to a halt

(167) CT(BR) 18/9/96

By James Lamont
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

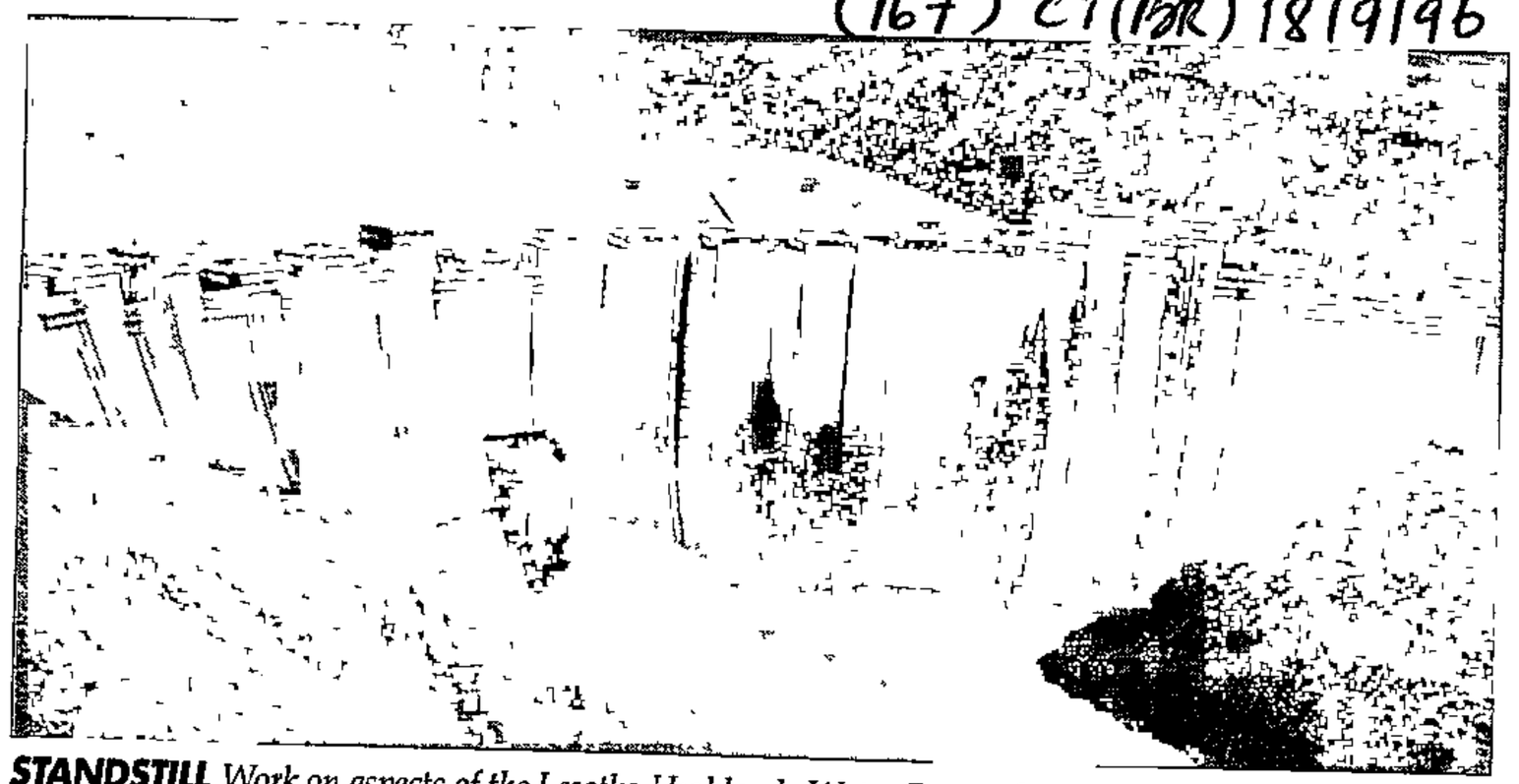
Butha Buthe, Lesotho — Operations have ground to a complete halt on the key water transfer and hydro-electricity components of the $4billion Lesotho Highlands Water Project after the sacking last week of half the project's workers and a bloody weekend clash with police

Six sites, from the Katse Reservoir intake tunnel in the highlands to the South African border, administered by the project's five international and South African contractors, have been at a standstill for the past 10 days Local workers went on strike after four people were arrested for stealing cement, and since then workers have complained of harassment by the police

About 600 sacked workers have sought asylum in the Catholic mission at Butha Buthe, saying they feared for their lives

They are seeking outside intervention and are trying to communicate with international donors and President Nelson Mandela to resolve the troubles between them, the police and the contractors

Yesterday there was little indication here that work would resume soon The atmosphere among management in Maseru is also tense David Darcy, the project director representing contractors, said he was "very distressed" by what had happened



STANDSTILL *Work on aspects of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has come to halt after local workers went out on strike The Katse dam is the project's flagship*

The illegal strike, which led to the sacking of 2 300 workers, ended in a bloody clash with Lesotho police on Saturday Four people were reported killed but witnesses said the number of fatalities was much higher

Darcy said management would consider hiring from among those who had been dismissed but would not rehire "agitators"

"We are losing time because of this," Darcy said Industrial action would interrupt progress towards scheduled completion of the main 50km-long tunnel from the reservoir in the highlands late next year The project is designed to draw water to Gauteng

Makase Marumo, the chief executive of the Lesotho Highland Development Authority, the Lesotho agency implementing the project, said he expected work to resume in the next seven to 10 days, but Mpho Mofolo, the attorney representing workers, said this was "optimistic" and conditions would only normalise in a month

Discontent has been simmering among the workforce since May Last week's strike, illegal under local law, was the third this year

Mofolo said strike action was taken because workers feared local security forces But Joseph Peete, a member of the Workers' Representative Committee, said wages were at the heart of the issue He said expatriate workers were being paid more than locals

Peter Streng, the human resources manager for the contractors, said relations between labour and management had become "totally adversarial and unmanageable"

BUSINESS DAY, Thursday, September 19 1996

Highlands project go-ahead 'depends on stability'

(167) BD 19/9/96

Edward West

THE go-ahead for the multibillion-rand phase two of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which could be given by the end of next year, rested on political and labour stability in Lesotho, SA's permanent delegate to the project's joint technical commission, Hans Pettenburger, said yesterday

Work on the project has halted following the shooting by police over the weekend of four workers, who were killed after an illegal strike when 2 300 workers were fired Last month it also emerged that various social and environmental targets set for Phase 1A of the project by the World Bank had not been met

Pettenburger said it might have been better to build the entire project on the Orange River, but regional development aspects had been taken into account when the original site was chosen

The latest development surrounding the project had reinforced the SA government's view that it wanted to have a greater say on the project

There were already a number of "voices" in SA who wanted further phases of the project to be brought to the Orange River.

Pettenburger said the SA government wanted to renegotiate its treaty on the project. "We want a say more or less commensurate with our financial input."

The treaty should also be changed, so that concessionary finance available to SA could be used for development projects, in SA and Lesotho, he added

"The political appointments change so rapidly in Lesotho it is difficult to operate in that environment." Initial studies on phase two had already been delayed, and bridging water sources have had to be found, he said

He "firmly believed" phase two would go-ahead, but slightly smaller than originally envisaged, providing possibly about 20m³/sec instead of 35m³/sec Communication and environmental shortcomings in phase 1A of the project were being addressed in phase 1B, which was already under way, but it could take up to six months before major changes occurred due to planning, manpower and procedural constraints

He it was currently impossible to make any decisions regarding the second phase because of the consequent restructuring process in the LHDA over the next six months "Contractors on the project are fully able to manage their labour and wage matters, but only if an environment of law and order is maintained," he said

Phase two of the project involves the construction of 3 306m³ dam, the Mashai Dam, a pump station to pump water from the 1 950m³ Katse Dam contracted in phase 1A. Phase 1A and phase 1B were expected to cost about R12bn on completion in 2003

Asmal attacks scheme's chief SA delegate

New storm gathers over water project

CT(BK) 20/9/96(167)

By James Lamont
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

Johannesburg — The political and industrial crisis gathering over the $4 billion Lesotho Highlands Water Project designed to draw water from the mountain kingdom to Gauteng by 1998 deepened further yesterday

■ DPA, the German news agency, reported that newly discovered bodies of labourers shot by Lesotho police last Saturday were being fished out of reservoirs and ravines close to Butha Buthe, a construction site near the South African border.

■ The former chief executive of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, the agency in charge of the project, has been recalled to a top position in a ministry that has direct involvement in the scheme.

■ An angry Kader Asmal, the South African water affairs minister, recalled Hans Pettenburger, South Africa's permanent delegate to the project, to Pretoria to explain his "unwarranted" statements about the possibility that the project's second phase might still go ahead.

DPA spoke of a massacre at Butha Buthe, though it did not claim to have seen any bodies. The incident took place after contractors on the project sacked half the workforce, about 2 300 people, bringing most of the scheme to a halt. Police said only four people had died

DPA said Lesotho's Royal Palace had called the state council to an emergency meeting on the crisis surrounding the project.

Meanwhile, the Lesotho press has reported that Masupha Sole, the development authority's former chief executive who lost his position after a management audit uncovered irregularities in the agency, has been appointed as chief engineer to Shakhane Mokhehle, the natural resources minister

Mokhehle, the brother of Ntsu Mokhehle, the prime minister, has responsibility for the water project. Makase Marumo, the new chief executive of the authority, said yesterday that he had not been officially briefed about Sole's appointment, but said appropriate steps would be taken to avoid a conflict of interest.

According to sources in Lesotho, ministers who had called for the management audit which exposed the irregularities were dropped from the Cabinet in a reshuffle last May.

There was speculation last night that Asmal might fire Pettenburger. A statement from his office expressed his "extreme displeasure at purported statements to the media by Mr Hans Pettenburger" and said he was being "urgently recalled" to explain himself.

Asmal's office also said that the minister "repudiated the statement that a decision had been taken to proceed with Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project" Reports from Pettenburger's briefing in Pretoria on Wednesday did not suggest that a final decision had been taken.

Asmal said problems on the project would not deter South Africa and Lesotho from completing the first phase on schedule He said no decision had been taken on the further phases, including the construction of the Mashai dam.

☐ **See New move to end strike and Business Watch, Page 16**

Work on Mashai dam could begin in two years' time

SA ready for next phase of Lesotho project

(167) CT(BR) 19/9/96

By James Lamont

INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

Johannesburg — The government indicated for the first time yesterday that it was prepared to press ahead with the second phase of the controversial Lesotho Highlands Water Project, but warned that security around the project would have to be guaranteed

In spite of severe labour disruption and the killing last weekend of up to 10 project workers by Lesotho police, construction of a third reservoir could go ahead, Hans Pettenburgha, the South African representative on the binational body overseeing the project, said yesterday

He said the privatisation of the multibillion-rand scheme was under consideration by the parties governing the project, but a decision would only be made some years in the future

Work on the additional phase, which will cost hundreds of millions of dollars but has not yet been given the green light by Lesotho and South Africa, could start in two or three years It involves the construction of the Mashai dam with a pumping station to lift water to the higher Katse reservoir to increase the flow of water through a transfer tunnel to South Africa

The Mashai reservoir will have a capacity of 3,3 billion cubic metres, and will be nearly double the size of the Katse dam reservoir, which is 90 percent complete

Pettenburgha, South Africa's permanent delegate on the Joint Permanent Technical Commission, said he "firmly believed there will be development of a further phase in Lesotho"

His statement came after the degeneration of relations between international and South African contractors and the local workforce, which led to the sacking of 2 300 Lesotho workers and the death of about 10 people last weekend

He also said concessionary loans could be raised on the back of the project for development work in Lesotho and South Africa

The Mashai reservoir would succeed the completion of the Katse reservoir and transfer tunnel to South Africa and the building of the Mohale dam, which will bring water to Gauteng from the beginning of 1998 and earn Lesotho royalties worth $55 million a year

He said that, having committed itself to the $4 billion first phase, South Africa should develop the Lesotho highland resource rather than seek to source water downstream of the Orange River



SANCTUARY *Sacked Lesotho water project workers seek refuge in a church at Butha Buthe*

PHOTO JOHN WOODROOF

☐ **See Blood mixes, Page 16**

Water project official stands by his statement

BD 23/9/96 (167)

Lukanyo Mnyanda

A DEFIANT Hans Pettenburger, SA's permanent delegate to the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, has said he stands by his statements on the possibility of SA proceeding with the R10bn second phase.

He declined at the weekend to comment further until he had discussed the issue with Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal whom he is scheduled to meet today. Asmal recalled Pettenburger for "urgent discussions" on his comments reported in Business Day and Business Report

Pettenburger said he had no problem with the reports of his statement, and that the project's future would depend on stability and other factors under investigation by the department.

Water and Environmental Affairs deputy director-general Paul Roberts said Pettenburger's statements were his personal opinion Government was investigating other possibilities and a final report would be available only towards the middle of next year

"The issue is still wide open," he said It was difficult to comment on Pettenburger's reported comments as he did not know "exactly what he said".

Roberts expressed concern about the conflict in which at least five workers were killed. "We are extremely sympathetic, with the loss of life, injury and loss of time, and we are keen to rectify the situation as soon as possible," he said However, the labour instability would not have a bearing on a final decision on the project's future.

LTA — one of the SA contractors working on the project — said it was concerned with developments in Lesotho but declined further comment. MD Colin Campbell said the group was "only a 20% partner" in a joint venture

Meanwhile, two Lesotho opposition parties have called on President Nelson Mandela, the World Bank, EU and Lesotho government to ensure the suspension of officials implicated in striking workers' deaths The Basotho National Party and the Maremotlou Freedom Party also called for a commission of inquiry into the incident.

Government puts hold on Highlands water decision

(167) ST(BT) 29/9/96

'Unauthorised' talk about the scheme has led to swift retribution, writes THABO KOBOKOANE

The government has confirmed that a decision on Phase 2 of the multibillion-rand Lesotho Highlands Water Project will be taken only in the first half of next year, laying to rest speculation that SA was planning to go ahead before vital research had been completed

Willie Croucamp, managing engineer for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, told Business Times that a decision on further phases of the project would be taken once the Orange River Re-planning Study, which was looking at the available river catchment in the Orange River, had been completed, possibly in the first half of next year

"Until we have determined available water resources for ourselves, we cannot make any decision on further phases of the project," he said

Croucamp's comments follow this week's dismissal of Hans Pettenburger, South Africa's representative to the joint technical commission of the project, because he made "unauthorised statements"

However, sources have indicated that Pettenburger, who has worked on the project for more than 13 years, could have been fired from his present position for other reasons The department remains resolute

"Pettenburger overran his brief As an official facing the media, he cannot express personal views on matters of policy Unfortunately that is the rule — there is a limit on what one can discuss with the media," said Croucamp, showing irritation about persistent questions regarding Pettenburger Earlier in the interview he declared that the "matter was closed"

Pettenburger is to be replaced by Alan Davies until further notice

Pettenburger had suggested to a group of journalists that Phase 2 of the project would go ahead Attempts to get comments from Pettenburger and his successor were futile Both said the "book was closed"

However, the matter may not be quite so cut and dried with regard to continued participation in the water project by the World Bank The bank, which provided credibility for the project during the apartheid years, has expressed unhappiness about the implementation of certain social and environmental elements of the project It has threatened to stop funding further phases of the project South Africa has said it would bear all costs if the bank pulled out

'Until we have determined available water resources, we cannot decide on further project phases'

Croucamp said the SA government was "satisfied" with the environmental action plan, but conceded it was not "entirely happy" with other social and environmental elements of the project

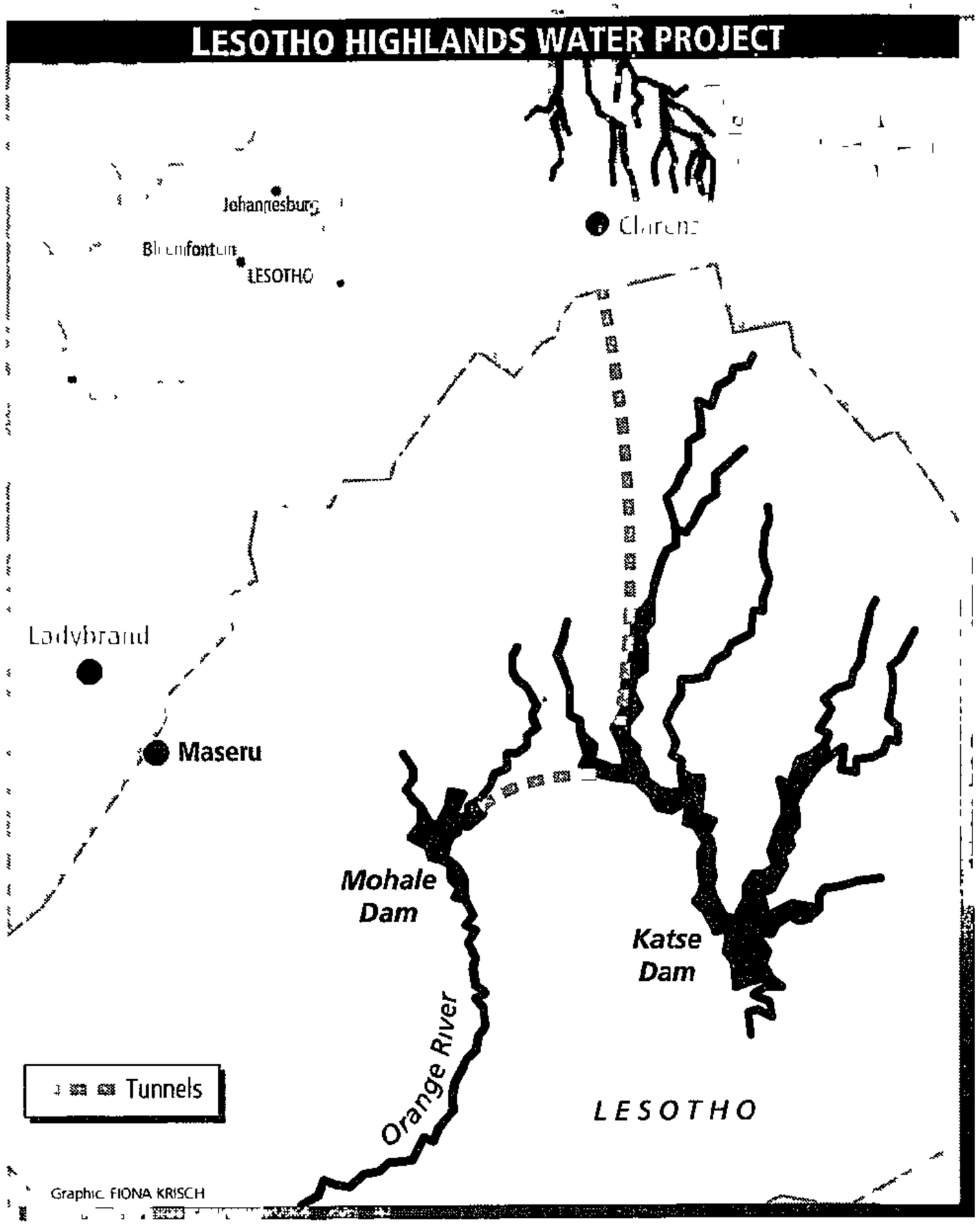
"We are slowly getting there The critical problems now facing us are communicating properly with people on the ground, as well as the income-generating schemes, which are not producing the desired results," he said The project has been hit by a work stoppage in the water transfer tunnel and the hydroelectric component of the scheme, following the dismissal of 2 300 workers The strike, which left 10 people dead in Butha Buthe last weekend, is still unresolved

Conceived during the apartheid years, the Lesotho Highlands project is expected to deliver 70m³ a second (cumecs) of water to Gauteng when fully complete.

In terms of a treaty governing the project, Lesotho and South Africa have committed themselves to Phase 1A and 1B, both of which will supply about 30 cumecs into Gauteng Further phases of the project still hang in the balance following South Africa's review of the availability of water supply in the Orange-Senqu river catchment area

Phase 1A is nearing completion and preparatory work is already under way for Phase 1B

Phase 1B, expected to be finished in 2003, will involve the construction of the 60m-high Mohale dam and a small weir diversion system at Matsuko This will cost about R2,5-billion



LESOTHO PRIVATISATION (167)
FM 4/10/96

MOUNTAINOUS GROWTH

Tiny, land-locked Lesotho could teach its giant neighbour a thing or two It achieved 11,2% GDP growth last year and increased exports by 292% between 1990-1994 Now it has launched a R500m privatisation programme

Potential SA investors can sit up and take note — Mothusi Mashologu, director of the newly formed Privatisation Unit, says provisional estimates indicate that only about R180m could be generated from inside Lesotho



Pako Petlane

In principle, there is nothing to stop SA investors from gaining control of Lesotho enterprises

However, Mashologu says that though would-be investors have until the middle of October to reply, a number of possible joint venture partners have already begun preliminary discussions with Lesotho officials

More than 40 enterprises, in which either the government or the Lesotho National Development Corp holds part or full control, are being looked at as potential targets for privatisation

Closely linked to the sell-off of State assets — backed by the World Bank — the mountain kingdom has now also set the ball rolling to establish its own capital market by mid-1997 — which might yet evolve into a small domestic stock exchange.

"Lesotho is encouraging an investment- and export-driven, private-sector-led economy to create the jobs and prosperity we need," says Development Corp CE Pako Petlane

Lesotho's *Government Gazette* recently listed the public corporations to be sold off They include government-owned Lesotho Airways — which owns three aircraft and has regional routes to Johannesburg, Swaziland, Maputo, Zimbabwe and Durban — Lesotho Flour Mills, Lotti Brick, the Marakabei and Quthing Lodges and generic medicine manufacturer Lesotho Pharmaceutical

Development Corp shares in three retailers which it co-owns — Smart Centre, OK Bazaars and Cashbuild — will be transferred into an investment holding company

"We want to enable the Lesotho public to become shareholders but outside investors are also invited to participate," says Mashologu

Plums like the highly profitable local brewery and Maseru's two money-making Sun hotels — Maseru Sun and Lesotho Sun — are being kept quietly in the background as they are generating valuable revenue for the government and the Development Corp

"But both Sun hotels are definitely on the future privatisation list," confirms Mashologu

Why the drive to privatise? Obvious benefits for Lesotho include the attraction of foreign capital, broadening public participation in national economic growth, reducing government subsidies and State controls, developing entrepreneurial skills and introducing competitive pressures and fiscal discipline into the economy

"We are looking for strategic and technical partners We want these companies to grow and are looking for entrepreneurs to drive the businesses further," says Development Corp adviser John O'Brien

Mashologu adds that the percentage equity on offer could differ among enterprises "For example, we would like to keep a strategic stake in Lesotho Airways"

Adds Petlane "In some cases, the Development Corp would like to keep a share of, say, 10%, so that we can eventually sell this off to the Lesotho public"

Though an economic midget compared with its giant neighbour, Lesotho offers additional investment incentives to potential South African — and offshore — investors

These include a 15% company tax rate, free transfer of dividends, relatively cheap and trainable labour (Lesotho boasts a 75% literacy rate), tariff-free access to the European Community market through the Lome Convention, and quota-free access to the US market for clothing and textile exports ■

Lesotho gets R12-m grant from Japan

(167)

ARG 30/11/97

Pretoria – The Japanese government has granted 300 million yen (about R12m) to Lesotho to help the mountain kingdom increase food production, the Japanese embassy said.

"The purpose of this general grant aid is to increase food production by means of purchasing fertiliser, chemicals, agricultural machinery and equipment for the people of Lesotho," the embassy said in a statement

The grant was aimed at uplifting the community and enhancing their quality of life by helping them become self-sufficient through agricultural activities

An exchange of notes for the grant was signed in Maseru by Japan's ambassador to Lesotho, Yoshizo Konishi, and Lesotho Foreign Minister Kelebone Albert Maope. It was the third such grant the Japanese government has made to Lesotho since 1994 – Sapa

SA pledges to help Lesotho end mutiny

Star 10/2/97 (167)

Government assessing situation after takeover of Maseru headquarters by eight officers, Foreign Minister Nzo says

REUTERS, SAPA-DPA
Maseru

South Africa would support the Lesotho government in defusing the siege of the police headquarters taken over by eight members of the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday

Despite negotiations with the government and church leaders, the eight officers – who are resisting arrest over the killing of three fellow officers in October 1995 – still controlled the command in the capital Maseru for the fourth day yesterday.

"The matter is receiving urgent attention. We're fully in support of the democratically elected government in Lesotho," Nzo said in Namibia, where he is at a Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) conference

He did not explain what kind of support was meant, but Foreign Ministry spokesman Pieter Swanepoel disputed a newspaper report that South African police specialising in hostage situations and urban warfare had been placed on standby.

Swanepoel said the SA Government did not yet see the situation as a crisis because the Lesotho government was not affected by the siege. Lesotho ministers at the conference constantly updated Nzo on any new developments.

A Lesotho government statement on Saturday said the mutineers had "attempted to relieve a number of senior officers of their duties" since taking over the station on Thursday

State radio quoted the dissidents as saying they had rounded up the senior officers, including the acting police commissioner, and dismissed them

The mutineering officers are claiming amnesty under Lesotho's Pardons Act, which stipulates that security force members may not be charged for any crimes committed from 1993 to 1995

"This illegal action appears to have been taken as an attempt to further delay the appearance of the suspected officers in court," the statement said

Local news reports said the officers were also retaliating for the alleged killing of a junior policeman who had supported their refusal to stand trial. He was shot dead in Maseru last weekend.

Lesotho's police commissioner, Major-General Bolutu Makoaba, who returned from the SADC conference on Friday, said on Saturday he did not want to provoke the policemen and therefore would not go to his office until the situation returned to normal

He said he had received a fax message on February 5 in which he was informed of his dismissal as commissioner of police, but he said he still regarded himself as the commissioner of police.

After the deadlock in negotiations between the government and the suspects, the officers appealed to heads of churches, non-governmental organisations and political leaders to intervene

The various mediators recommended that there should be fresh investigations, that an inquest should be held and that the public prosecutor and police commissioner should find an amicable solution to the issue The government has rejected the recommendations

Lesotho tense after cop's death

(167)
Sowetan 11/2/97

MASERU – Tension was running high in Maseru, the capital of the southern African mountain kingdom of Lesotho, yesterday as heavily armed police and soldiers in operational gear patrolled the streets following the death of another policeman on Friday night

Eleven members of the now defunct Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) have since been arrested in connection with the shooting of the policeman, trooper Nthako, while sitting on the veranda of his house His wife was seriously injured

The eleven suspects were arrested during a brief police raid at the offices of the ruling Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) Youth League in Maseru

Maseru was awash this weekend with rumours that a number of cabinet ministers were arrested as part of the continuing saga following a protracted feud between the government and nine police officers who are refusing to be arrested in connection with the shootout at Maseru's central police station in October last year

It is alleged that trooper Nthako supported the nine policemen who refused to be arrested and police avenged the death of their colleague by arresting the cabinet ministers

The government in December last year instructed the police commissioner to arrest and prosecute the nine police officers who were identified by a one-man commission of inquiry to be responsible for the death of three senior police officers during the shootout While the government is adamant that arrests must take place, the nine policemen threatened to arrest some members of the cabinet on a number of unspecified charges – *Sapa-DPA*

Lesotho mutineers threatened with troops

(117) Star 13/2/97

STAR FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – The week-long Lesotho Police mutiny crisis was heading for a showdown yesterday The government warned rebel police officers that it might use the defence force to expel them from the police headquarters building they have occupied since Thursday.

The government said Lesotho police commissioner Major-General Bolutu Makoaba was locked in discussions with the defence force about dealing with the mutineers

The government also closed the police training college, which rebels have been using as a meeting place.

Lesotho Deputy Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said the government would not rule out defence force action against the eight mutiny leaders if they did not immediately comply with the law.

The eight – who have been resisting arrest for their alleged involvement in the murder of three colleagues at the Maseru Central police station in October 1995 – seized control of the headquarters of the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police.

They also "dismissed" Lesotho Police Commissioner Major-General Bolutu Makoaba and other senior policemen

"Military aid to the civil powers is a proper function of an army in peace time and is provided for in the laws and constitution of Lesotho," said Mosisili.

"In a democracy no-one is above the law and that principle applies very strongly to police officers who are entrusted with the solemn duty of upholding the law for the benefit of all"

In Pretoria the Department of Foreign Affairs said 14 South Africans arrested in Lesotho on Tuesday were a group of teenagers from Botshabelo in the Free State who had apparently entered Lesotho for purposes of smuggling dagga to South Africa. Earlier reports said the 14 had been arrested on suspicion of being members of a South African Police Service unit that had come to restore order within the Lesotho Police.

"These persons have been charged for illegally entering Lesotho," the DFA said. "The Department of Foreign Affairs wishes to stress that at no stage had members of the SA Police Service entered Lesotho for purposes of intervening in the ongoing dispute within the Lesotho Police"

Lesotho's foreign ministry also dismissed as baseless the reports that SA policemen had been arrested.

▶ **Marching to SA's drum** Page 23

Crisis-ridden Lesotho still marches to

(167) Star 13/2/97

The latest upset in the mountain kingdom is apparently nothing more than a group of men trying to avoid prosecution, but it

By Greg Mills

The siege at the headquarters of the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police is the latest in a line of upsets on the political landscape of the mountain kingdom.

The rule of Chief Leabua Jonathan ended in a military coup in 1985. In the interim, Jonathan had himself overturned the democratic process by refusing to recognise the results of the 1970 general election.

Democratic government was reinstated in March 1993 with the election of Ntsu Mokhehle's Basotho Congress Party (BCP) However, since then, there have been at least two abortive coups, one palace coup, as well as large-scale revolts within the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF)

Within an environment occasioned by police, civil service and teachers' strikes, a volatile dialogue has also ensued between the government and opposition parties, principally Evaristus Sekhonyana's Basotho National Party (BNP)

The latest mutiny was carried out by eight officers who are resisting arrest over the killing of three fellow policemen in October 1995 The men are claiming amnesty under Lesotho's Pardons Act announced in April 1996, which stipulates that dissident security force members may not be charged for any crimes – excluding murder – committed between 1993 and 1995

The latest act was also apparently sparked by the shooting of a junior officer who had supported their refusal to stand trial The announcement last year of the creation of a new military police unit within the defence force as a means of improving discipline may also have exacerbated tensions within the police, perhaps fearing a dilution of their authority and role

The South African Foreign Minister, Alfred Nzo, has given his full support to the democratically elected government

Engulfing Lesotho both in geographic and economic terms, South Africa has always been in a position to shape events in Maseru In addition to the imposition of border sanctions which ultimately toppled Jonathan, during the apartheid years South African intervention took also the form of cross-border attacks on ANC activists

There may be more diplomatic intervention

During a papal visit to the kingdom in 1986, an SA Police task force intervened to bring a bloody end to a bus kidnapping drama carried out by members of the BCP's armed wing, the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA).

Since 1994, the South African approach has taken a more diplomatic route President De Klerk and then President Mandela met Presidents Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Masire of Botswana at a meeting convened in Gaborone in January 1994 designed to end fighting between loyalist and rebel Lesotho army factions

After King Letsie III effectively seized power in a royal coup, dismissing Mokhehle and his cabinet on August 17 1994, Presidents Mandela, Masire and Mugabe opened talks with the king which resulted in the reinstatement of democratic rule in September

There is little doubt, too, that the minds of dissident elements were concentrated by South African military exercises held on the South African bank of the Caledon River that September

In November 1994, after a further southern African summit, it was announced that King Letsie's father, King Moshoeshoe II, who had been deposed five years earlier, was to be restored to the throne King Moshoeshoe II died in a car accident in January 1996, a year after his reinstatement

If Basotho mediators are unable to break the current deadlock, expect still more southern Africa diplomatic intervention South Africa can ill afford any upsurge of political unrest in Lesotho which could spill over into the Free State in the form, particularly, of increased stock thefts and general criminality.

But the relatively easy manner in which South Africa can influence events in Lesotho underscores the political problems faced by the Maseru government.

Lesotho's almost total dependence on the South African economy has led to growing fears for the future and divisions within the BCP itself

Dependence on larger neighbour raises fears

Almost half of Lesotho's GNP is derived from the 90 000 migrant Basotho mineworkers in South Africa. The income from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) – a tariff-sharing system involving Botswana. Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland – accounts for over half of Lesotho's government revenue.

The SACU formula is currently under review and, along with South Africa's plans to negotiate a free trade area with the European Union, could adversely affect Lesotho's income from this source.

The government's relations with South Africa also reputedly lie at the heart of recent discord within the ruling BCP Prime Minister Mokhehle is in poor health, and appears unlikely to see out his full five-year term

The jockeying for succession has put his brother, Shakane Mokhehle, on the inside track at the expense of long-time favourite, Molapo Qhobela. The challenge of younger contenders such as the former minister of education, Tseliso Makhakhe, appears to have been negated through a comprehensive cabinet reshuffle in May 1996

The two BCP factions appear to be divided between an "old guard", which is more suspicious of South Africa, and a younger, more pragmatic group which favours an economically stronger working relationship with their large neighbour.

Lesotho's latest stand-off appears to be motivated solely by a group of police officers attempting to avoid criminal prosecution. But this could have wider implications if viewed from within the maelstrom of Lesotho's political landscape. If so, history suggests that South Africa will inevitably become involved.

■ *Dr Greg Mills is the National Director at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) in Johannesburg. He writes in his personal capacity*

SA's drum could have wider implications

BULLETIN BOARD

Star 15/2/97

Rebel Lesotho policemen tighten grip

(167)

Maseru – Mutinous Lesotho policemen tightened their grip on this tiny mountain kingdom yesterday, with the armed rebels increasing their presence on the capital's streets

Dozens of policemen in paramilitary uniforms, carrying handguns and with magazines strapped to their chests, patrolled Maseru's main business district as the mutiny entered its eighth day

Most shops and offices in Maseru remained closed

About two-thirds of the 3 000-strong Royal Lesotho Police have joined the mutiny since February 6, when eight junior officers, accused of murdering three colleagues, seized control of police headquarters in Maseru

On Wednesday the Basotho Congress Party ordered the country's army to prepare to take action against the 400 policemen still occupying the headquarters

This move was rejected, however, by some of the BCP's own parliamentarians as well as opposition groups, who urged the government to continue peaceful negotiations

The officers leading the mutiny claim they are innocent of the 1995 murders and are demanding indemnity for the crime in terms of a 1995 act which provides for amnesty for members of the armed forces.

President Nelson Mandela, chairman of the 12-nation Southern African Development Community, discussed the Lesotho mutiny on Thursday with his Zimbabwean counterpart Robert Mugabe and Botswana's Ketumile Masire.

Opposition parties, business leaders and church groups have called on the SADC, of which Lesotho is a member, to send a fact-finding mission to the kingdom

Pretoria this week offered to assist the Lesotho government but South African Foreign Ministry spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said yesterday the Lesotho government had not yet replied to the offer.

Swanepoel strongly denied reports that elite South African police forces had already been deployed in Lesotho to oust the mutineers Lieutenant Phajiso Molise, a rebel spokesman, claimed that Lesotho had recruted South African mercenaries to attack them

Meanwhile, Mandela held talks in Maputo yesterday with Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano on what he called the "almost explosive" two-week national strike in Swaziland – AFP

SA in bid to defuse Lesotho crisis

SOUTH African Foreign Affairs director-general Rusty Evans left for Maseru on Friday as mutinous Lesotho policemen tightened their grip on the country..

He would "explore whether any contribution could be made" – within the context of efforts by Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa – to resolve the Lesotho crisis, Foreign Affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said

"The Lesotho government has communicated with the South African government and Mr Evans is currently on his way to Lesotho," he said

Lesotho's ruling party and opposition groups on Thursday warned of an impending "civil war" involving army and police factions

About 400 mutinying police officers last week seized control of Lesotho's police headquarters, and the governing Basotho Congress Party ordered the army "to prepare to take action" against them. –Sapa

(167) SP 16/2/97

MONDAY
FEBRUARY 17, 1997

'WE HAVE ARRESTED 30 PEOPLE'

Lesotho troops crush mutiny in dawn raid

(167)

(367)

MASERU: About 30 rebel policemen have been arrested and are being held at a Lesotho Defence Force camp outside Maseru after a shoot-out with government troops.

Lesotho army troops ended an 11-day-old police mutiny yesterday, overwhelming the rebels with a dawn onslaught of heavy gunfire after which at least 30 officers surrendered to troops

"Now everything is okay It is over. They (the renegade police officers) have all been taken," an army major on the scene told Reuters. He said nobody was hurt.

Heavy gunfire erupted in the southern African kingdom's capital early yesterday as army troops moved in to end the mutiny Western diplomats had earlier said the crisis could lead to a coup against Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle's government

Two armoured cars sped around the police headquarters firing at the building with mounted machineguns amid bursts of shouts over a loudhailer to the rebels. "Come out, come out "

"We have 33 people who have given themselves up including (Second Lieutenant) Modise, who is the leader of the rebels," a Western diplomat said

The major, who refused to give his name, said the rebel police officers were being held at an army base some two kilometres outside the capital Maseru

"Nobody was killed and nobody was wounded We have arrested about 30 people They were taken to the Lesotho Defence Force camp," he said He would not give details of the operation.

A Reuters correspondent said police used heavy-calibre machineguns, automatic rifles and hand grenades in the attack The policemen fired back, apparently using mainly semi-automatic rifles Intermittent gunfire echoed around the capital some three hours after shooting started with a heavy 15-minute barrage at 6 30 am

The road in front of the charge office was littered with spent cartridges The walls were pockmarked with bullet holes and the windows were shattered Inside the charge office there were also cartridge casings and empty ammunition cases

Curious spectators were walking into single-storey offices and milled outside as the soldiers were preparing to move out

The headquarters building, a tall office block some 100 metres further, had shattered window panes but seemed to have sustained little damage

The mutiny began when eight officers seized control of the police headquarters in Lesotho

Up to 60 other policemen were reported to have joined them in occupying the police headquarters since their siege began, but this figure appears to have been exaggerated.

South Africa on Saturday threw its weight behind the Lesotho government and said it should quell the mutiny which had led to a police strike late on Thursday

The army major said they had first tried to negotiate with the policemen

"We tried to convince them to come out and that we wouldn't fight them We started shooting about an hour later to get them out of the offices We were not trying to kill them but just trying to frighten them," he said

The Lesotho government has not yet commented publicly on yesterday's offensive — Reuter

LORI WASELCHUK

Gunfire shakes Maseru as army routs rebel police

Star 17/2/97 (167)

11-day mutiny ends as explosions rock capital and

33 renegades, including leader, surrender to armed forces

SAPA-AFP
Maseru

Lesotho military units defeated a rebel police faction yesterday with heavy artillery and automatic weapon fire, ending a tense 11-day police mutiny in the mountain kingdom

Fighting ended just after noon yesterday and residents began resuming their activities

Armoured military units seized control of Lesotho's national police headquarters and another station in the capital that had been taken over on February 6 by a rebel police faction, according to Maseru and SA press reports

Raging gunfire and explosions rocked Maseru in the early morning during an attack by the military on the two stations, which had been barricaded by several hundred heavily armed mutinying officers, clad in brown paramilitary uniforms

Explosions, followed by huge black clouds of smoke, were seen near Lesotho's national police headquarters in Maseru's central business district.

The headquarters was the scene of intermittent artillery and automatic gunfire from 6am, after troops took positions against around 400 policemen who captured the offices 10 days earlier

Soldiers blocked entrances to Maseru's city centre and took up positions in armoured vehicles near the headquarters and the other police station

State-run Radio Lesotho said the leader of the mutinous policemen, Second Lieutenant Phakiso Modise, was among 33 rebels who surrendered to the Lesotho army after the attack.

"Armed police who were still occupying the central charge office were requested by the army to lay down their arms and to surrender peacefully to avoid bloodshed," the report said

The radio station, which did not report any casualties, appealed to all citizens of the tiny mountain kingdom surrounded by South Africa to remain calm and avoid moving about

> **"Urged to give up peacefully to avoid bloodshed"**

Maseru's city centre

Earlier in the morning, dozens of people were holed up in one of Maseru's largest Roman Catholic churches near the city centre and feared to go out

"The situation is very tense, and it isn't safe for our people," Father Patrick Sekome said

The army took over Maseru's border post with South Africa from police late on Saturday, and restricted all movement to and from the country

Lesotho's government, which faced a growing mutiny by two-thirds of the 3 000-strong Royal Lesotho Police and threats by some politicians of an impending civil war, ordered the army on Wednesday to prepare to act

Opposition parties and some senior members of the ruling Basotho Congress Party (BCP), however, rejected the decision, and urged the government to open peaceful talks with the mutineers

About two-thirds of the police force had joined the mutiny since February 6 when eight junior officers, accused of murdering three colleagues, seized control of police headquarters in Maseru

The mutineers were also reported to have captured several police stations throughout the country, although this could not be confirmed.

The eight officers have claimed innocence, and demanded indemnity under a 1995 act granting amnesty to members of the armed forces

Since Lesotho's independence from Britain in 1966, policemen and soldiers have been implicated in several coup attempts and bloody insurrections in the country

The death of the country's monarch, King Moshoeshoe II, in a car accident in 1996 has aggravated a political crisis linked to the succession of an ailing Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

In recent months the 77 year-old premier has gradually abandoned his daily duties to his deputy Pakalitha Mosisili

Senior members of the BCP, meanwhile, have challenged the legitimacy of the government, and instituted a court challenge last year, protesting against the party's top political appointments

Gunfire shakes Maseru as army routs rebel police

Star 17/2/97 (167)

11-day mutiny ends as explosions rock capital and 33 renegades, including leader, surrender to armed forces

SAPA-AFP
Maseru

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The headquarters was the scene of intermittent artillery and automatic gunfire from 6am, after troops took positions against around 400 policemen who captured the offices 10 days earlier

Soldiers blocked entrances to Maseru's city centre and took up positions in armoured vehicles near the headquarters and the other police station.

State-run Radio Lesotho said the leader of the mutinous policemen, Second Lieutenant Phakiso Modise, was among 33 rebels who surrendered to the Lesotho army after the attack

"Armed police who were still occupying the central charge office were requested by the army to lay down their arms and to surrender peacefully to avoid bloodshed," the report said

The radio station, which did not report any casualties, appealed to all citizens of the tiny mountain kingdom surrounded by South Africa to remain calm and avoid moving about

> **Urged to give up peacefully to avoid bloodshed**

Maseru's city centre

Earlier in the morning, dozens of people were holed up in one of Maseru's largest Roman Catholic churches near the city centre and feared to go out

"The situation is very tense, and it isn't safe for our people," Father Patrick Sekome said

The army took over Maseru's border post with South Africa from police late on Saturday, and restricted all movement to and from the country

Lesotho's government, which faced a growing mutiny by two-thirds of the 3 000-strong Royal Lesotho Police and threats by some politicians of an impending civil war, ordered the army on Wednesday to prepare to act

Opposition parties and some senior members of the ruling Basotho Congress Party (BCP), however, rejected the decision, and urged the government to open peaceful talks with the mutineers

About two-thirds of the police force had joined the mutiny since February 6 when eight junior officers, accused of murdering three colleagues, seized control of police headquarters in Maseru

The mutineers were also reported to have captured several police stations throughout the country, although this could not be confirmed.

The eight officers have claimed innocence, and demanded indemnity under a 1995 act granting amnesty to members of the armed forces

Since Lesotho's independence from Britain in 1966, policemen and soldiers have been implicated in several coup attempts and bloody insurrections in the country

The death of the country's monarch, King Moshoeshoe II, in a car accident in 1996 has aggravated a political crisis linked to the succession of an ailing Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle

In recent months the 77 year-old premier has gradually abandoned his daily duties to his deputy Pakalitha Mosisili.

Senior members of the BCP, meanwhile, have challenged the legitimacy of the government, and instituted a court challenge last year, protesting against the party's top political appointments

Mutiny ends after police stations are seized

MASERU — Lesotho military units defeated a rebel police faction yesterday with heavy artillery and automatic weapons fire, ending an 11-day police mutiny in Lesotho.

Armoured military units seized control of Lesotho's national police headquarters and another station in the capital that was taken over on February 6 by a rebel police faction.

Gunfire and explosions rocked Maseru in the early morning during an attack by the military on the two stations, which had been fortified by several hundred heavily armed mutinying officers, clad in brown paramilitary uniforms

Explosions, followed by huge black clouds of smoke, were seen around 9am near Lesotho's national police headquarters in Maseru's central business district.

The headquarters was the scene of intermittent artillery and automatic gunfire from 6am, after troops took positions against about 400 mutinous policemen who captured the offices 10 days earlier.

Soldiers blocked entrances to Maseru's city centre and took up positions in armoured vehicles near the headquarters and another police station where mutineers armed with automatic rifles and clad in brown paramilitary attire had barricaded themselves in

Fighting ended at around 1pm yesterday, and residents began resuming their daily activities

State-run Radio Lesotho said the leader of the mutinous policemen, Second Lieutenant Phakiso Modise, was among 33 rebels who surrendered to the Lesotho army following the attack

"Armed police who were still occupying the central charge office were requested by the army to lay down their arms and to surrender peacefully to avoid bloodshed," the report said

The radio station, which did not report any casualties, appealed to all Lesotho citizens to remain calm and avoid moving about Maseru's city centre

Earlier in the morning, dozens of people were holed up in one of Maseru's largest Roman Catholic churches near the city centre, and feared to go out, a priest said.

The army took over Maseru's border post with SA police late Saturday, and restricted all movement to and from the country

Lesotho's government, which faced a growing mutiny by two-thirds of the 3 000-strong Royal Lesotho Police and threats by some politicians of an impending "civil war", ordered the army on Wednesday to prepare to take action.

Opposition parties and some senior members of the ruling Basotho Congress Party argued against the decision, and warned of an imminent "civil war" unless the government opened peaceful talks with the mutineers

About two-thirds of the police force had joined the mutiny since February 6 when eight junior officers, accused of murdering three colleagues; seized control of police headquarters in Maseru The mutineers were also reported to have captured several police stations throughout the country.

The eight officers have pleaded innocence for the murders, and demanded indemnity under a 1995 act granting amnesty to armed forces' members — Sapa-AFP

Lesotho army (167) 20/7/92

Lesotho's king 'helped mutiny leader escape'

Tensions deepen as prime minister tells parliament that mutineer was given refuge at palace and later released

AFP
Maseru

Lesotho King Letsie III gave refuge in his royal palace to the leader of a police mutiny and allowed him to escape, Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle claimed in parliament yesterday.

"As government, we are concerned that the king would do such a thing, to harbour a man wanted for criminal activities," Radio Lesotho reported him as saying

On Sunday, troops ended a tense 11-day police mutiny with an onslaught of heavy artillery and automatic weapons fire on national police headquarters, where the rebels were holed up

Mokhehle told parliament the army had successfully quelled the police rebellion and that no deaths were reported

He added that during the military action, the leader of the mutiny, Second Lieutenant Phakiso Modise, took refuge along with 24 other police officers at the royal palace in the capital

The other police officers were later handed over to the army in front of two clerics – the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Archbishop Bernard Mohlalisi, and the head of the Anglican Church, Bishop Philip Mokuku

The king, however, refused to hand over Modise, Mokhehle said

Radio Lesotho added that the king's office yesterday told the government that Modise and another, unidentified rebel leader, who later also sought refuge at the palace, had since disappeared

Tension between the prime minister and the king came to a head in August 1994 when Letsie ousted Mokhehle in a royal coup

Pressure from southern African leaders, led by Nelson Mandela, saw the prime minister reinstated and, eventually, Letsie abdicating in favour of his father, King Moshoeshoe II, who was himself deposed in 1990 for interfering in the politics of the country

With Moshoeshoe's death in a car accident in January last year, Letsie returned to the throne and the tension between state and crown was rekindled

Soldiers patrolled the streets and occupied one of the main police stations in Maseru yesterday.

Police gathered early yesterday at national police headquarters in the city's central business district, which was shelled during Sunday's action, for a lengthy meeting, after which they all went home

Most police refused to speak to the media but those who did said they were uncertain whether the mutiny was indeed over

An unknown number of police were arrested during Sunday's action but many were released yesterday, a police officer said Others were still in detention and likely to be charged

The mutiny began on February 6 when eight junior officers accused of murdering three colleagues seized control of the police headquarters.

According to reports, the mutineers captured several police stations throughout the country, although this could not be confirmed

The eight have claimed innocence in the murders, and demanded indemnity for the crime

The Lesotho government, faced with a rebellion by two-thirds of the 3 000-strong Royal Lesotho Police, last week ordered the army to prepare to take action

Opposition parties and some senior members of the ruling Basotho Congress Party, however, opposed the decision and warned of an imminent "civil war" unless the government opened peaceful talks with the mutineers

Lesotho's troubled political landscape

ARG 18/2/1997 (167)

IF LESOTHO'S CURRENT UPHEAVALS ARE MORE THAN JUST THE WORK OF RENEGADE OFFICERS, SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION WILL FOLLOW, WRITES GREG MILLS, DIRECTOR OF THE SA INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, FOR THE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

The siege at the headquarters of the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police which was vanquished at the weekend was the latest in a long line of upsets on the political landscape of the mountain kingdom from the time of its independence from Britain in 1966

The immediate post-colonial rule of Chief Leabua Jonathan ended in a military coup in 1985

In the interim, Chief Jonathan himself overturned the democratic process by refusing to recognise the results of the 1970 general election

Democratic government was reinstated in March 1993 with the election of veteran activist Ntsu Mokhehle's Basotho Congress Party (BCP)

However, since then there have been at least two abortive coups, one palace coup, as well as large-scale revolts within the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF)

The latest mutiny was carried out by eight officers who are resisting arrest over the killing of three fellow policemen in October 1995

The men are claiming amnesty under Lesotho's Pardons Act announced in April 1996 which stipulates that dissident security force members may not be charged for any crimes – excluding murder – committed between 1993 and 1995

The latest act also apparently was sparked by the shooting of a junior officer who had supported their refusal to stand trial

The announcement last year of the creation of a new military police unit within the Defence Force as a means of improving discipline also may have exacerbated tensions within the police, perhaps fearing a dilution of their authority and role

South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo has reacted predictably to the crisis, giving his full support to the democratically elected government

Since 1994, the South African approach has taken a more diplomatic route conducted in concert with other southern African leaders

Lesotho's almost total dependence on (and vulnerability to) the South African economy has led to growing fears for the future and divisions within the BCP itself

Almost half of Lesotho's GNP is derived from the 90 000 migrant Basotho mineworkers in South Africa, for example.

The government's relations with South Africa also reputedly lie at the heart of recent discord within the ruling BCP

Prime Minister Mokhehle is in poor health, and appears unlikely to see out his full five-year term

The jockeying for succession has put his brother, Shakane Mokhehle, on the inside-track at the expense of long-time favourite, Molapo Qhobela

The challenge of younger contenders such as former Minister of Education Tseliso Makhakhe appears to have been negated through a comprehensive cabinet reshuffle in May 1996

The two BCP factions appear to be divided between an "old guard" which is more suspicious of South Africa, and a younger, more pragmatic group which favours an economically stronger working relationship with their large neighbour

Seen in isolation from its turbulent political history, Lesotho's latest stand-off appears to be motivated solely by a group of police officers attempting to avoid criminal prosecution

But this could have wider implications if viewed from within the maelstrom of Lesotho's political landscape

If so, history suggests that South Africa will inevitably become involved

LESOTHO

BYZANTINE BASOTHO

(167) FM 21/2/97

Opposition parties in Lesotho — as well as the executive committee of PM Ntsu Mokhehle's ruling Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) — accuse SA of prevailing on the Lesotho Defence Force to storm the police headquarters in Maseru last Sunday to end the 11-day siege by mutineers

The allegations follow a visit to Lesotho last Friday by Foreign Affairs DG Rusty Evans, representing the SADC

Evans met LDF chief Maj-Gen Mokhula Mosakeng in Maseru Mosakeng had only days earlier ruled out the army's intervention He also said he'd been advising the government and the police commissioner on ways to find an amicable settlement but that both had turned a deaf ear to his proposals

The mutiny arose out of government attempts to arrest eight police officers for the murder of certain colleagues in 1995 The eight had resisted arrest, claiming the commissioner of police should have been accused number one, challenging the government to reopen the investigation and accusing it of a cover-up

They allege the commissioner, Deputy Prime Minister and the PM's brother, Shakane Mokhehle, who is Minister for Natural Resources, would emerge as the conspirators in those and other murders, including the shooting of demonstrating Highlands Water Project workers at Butha Buthe last September

Foreign Affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel describes the Lesotho charge against SA and the SADC as an oversimplification, though it may earlier have left itself open to the accusation

Pretoria said in a statement last Saturday the matter should be resolved internally by the Lesotho government taking "timeous and appropriate action to restore orderly administration in the police services" SA "cannot accept an unconstitutional challenge to the democratic order in Lesotho," it added

Mokhehle's BCP won all the seats in parliament in the 1993 elections But it seems to have created an opposition from within its ranks And though Mokhehle returned from exile as something of a saviour, his reputation has been damaged by revelations last year that he resided at the notorious Third Force training camp Vlakplaas in the early Eighties This has been confirmed by Vlakplaas operatives Joe Mamasela and Dirk Coetzee

"The Vlakplaas connection has crippled the integrity of Mokhehle," says Molapo Qhobela, deputy leader of the BCP and an obvious contender for the leadership "It has also been revealed that Mokhehle was involved in handing over certain Lesotho Liberation Army cadres to the Boers in the early Eighties, who in turn handed them over to Leabua Jonathan in exchange for ANC refugees"



Referring to the army action against the police last Sunday, Qhobela says "We are all surprised by what has happended in Lesotho" He says the last time the police went on strike, in 1994, Mokhehle, assisted by then Home Affairs Minister and Qhobela (then Foreign Minister), invited the police to hold talks and the matter was amicably resolved within two days This time, however, "we are surprised that Mokhehle turned his face to the wall"

He adds "The Rusty Evans mystery has not been unravelled in Lesotho"

Qhobela says that without informing the party the government had earlier sent two Ministers to see (President) Nelson Mandela as SADC chairman They told him the executive committee of the BCP was behind the police mutiny — "a shocking suggestion," says Qhobela

"I want to take this opportunity to say that only an ill-bred mental defective can accept the fairy tale that the executive committee of the ruling party can overthrow its own government It would be like Mandela saying the same of the ANC's executive committee Only an idiot can rationalise like that"

Was Qhobela calling into question his leader's judgment? "It's as though you were interviewing (Deputy President) Thabo Mbeki speaking about Mandela," Qhobela replies

He says the BCP executive and the leaders of all parties in Lesotho, the council of churches, nongovernmental organisations and the chamber of commerce all pleaded "cap in hand on bended knees" for the government to meet the rebel police and hear their grievances "But Mokhehle turned himself into a Sphinx and refused until the army moved in and bombed a police establishment of the Crown"

Qhobela makes three observations

- "Whether the Prime Minister likes it or not, he has wittingly or unwittingly sown seeds of dissension between the army and the police,
- "He has also made the army aware of its strength One day it will turn that strength against him, and
- "An extremely irresponsible statement was made by the Deputy PM when asked why the police mutiny was not put before parliament for discussion He said parliament is not a serious institution in Lesotho but a picnic I hope he is aware of the serious constitutional implications of his statement" *Amarnath Singh*

EDUCATION

PEDAGOGIC CROSSCURRENTS

"A train smash" will probably best describe teaching in most of SA's public secondary schools during the next seven years

Indications are that Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu and his department have

not worked out how to move formally from traditional subjects and teaching methods, to the "learning areas" and "essential and specific outcomes" they have decreed will be introduced to schools from next year

Those involved in the transformation are also bemused over where the money for what promises to be an expensive exercise is going to come from

The new, "learner-centred" approach has, in theory, much to recommend it Instead of being taught to shut up, listen, memorise and regurgitate, pupils will be required to think, produce arguments and communicate them

Trouble is, few SA teachers understand that approach, let alone can use it In black schools especially, weak subject competence and a collapse of discipline have most teachers relying on "talk and chalk" To have to evaluate daily each pupil's capacity to think, rather than reflect, is likely to be so daunting that even fewer teachers than now would bother to appear in class

Their white colleagues, too, may well become dismayed by the new approach They are already strained by classes that are getting bigger and are occupied by black pupils whose competence in English or Afrikaans is often below par

It's not as if the new approach is quickly acquired Nongovernmental organisations have been working with it in black schools for several years Their experience, says Nick James, senior manager of the National Productivity Institute's Centre for Productive Education, is that it takes two to three years for a teacher even to understand and accept the new concept fully, and a further two years to become competent in it

Therein lies the rub for pupils entering standard five next year, and secondary school in 1999 — and for those a year or two younger The new approach and curriculum will be introduced to standard five (and grade one) next year But teachers won't, on present showing, have the foggiest idea how to employ them That's because their subject advisers will still be trying to understand the whole thing They'll do that, says James, by trying the new approach on each other

That could give them a false idea of how easy it is to use The real challenge will come when they have to persuade teachers of the new approach's value, then help them use it

Teachers will have to be given a high level of continuing support But where are the people capable of giving it, let alone the money to pay them?

There are, for example, 3 500-4 000 math teachers in Gauteng, about half of them teaching in primary schools The latter, says interim convenor of the province's "learning area committee for maths" Prof Paul Laridon, will get a 16-hour training course in the new approach this year Thereafter they will need continuing classroom support for several years from subject advisers who themselves will still be gaining confidence in their understanding and employment of the new approach



Sibusiso Bengu

Next year will see secondary school teachers being thrown into the deep end Who will be available to induct them and hold their hands, given that primary school teachers will still need plenty of attention?

And what is a pupil graduating to secondary school in 1999 to make of yet another batch of teachers battling to stay upright amid pedagogic crosscurrents? The answer from England, Canada and New Zealand, where it has been used for years, is not reassuring, according to James "It's a continuing transformation battle that has not yet been fully won anywhere," he admits "We must recognise that the changes are not trivial and will take years to achieve"

He and his university and NGO colleagues are therefore pinning their hopes on SA's education authorities phasing in the new approach, not merely in terms of when it is introduced to each grade/standard, but also the number of schools that, at any given grade, will adopt it each year That way, a steadily increasing number of teachers who have shown special aptitude in the new approach can be deployed to induct and support teachers in other schools

Present policy, however, is to introduce it simultaneously to all schools — grade seven next year, grade eight in 1999 and so on That's a recipe for disaster, James believes

The final question, therefore, is whether Bengu, who has to show some practical improvement to the schooling system by the end of 1998, will be so persuaded *John Collings*

NATIONAL PARTY

KNIVES OUT FOR DE KLERK

National Party leader F W de Klerk is at the centre of a political storm Having had to endure condemnation as a *volksverraaier* by Afrikaner rightists, he now finds himself under attack from Afrikaners who supported his momentous 1990 decision to negotiate a settlement with the outlawed ANC

The catalyst which triggered the latest round of criticism was a speech De Klerk made in London he spoke of the pain caused by the decision to "surrender the right to national sovereignty" during the settlement negotiations

His admission that he had been forced to sacrifice the Afrikaner's right to national sovereignty touched a raw nerve A succession of articles criticising De Klerk's failure to secure better protection of minority rights — particularly those of the Afrikaner — followed in the Afrikaans press

First into the fray was political philosopher Hermann Giliomee He described the outcome of the negotiations as "an overwhelming defeat" for the NP and a decisive rejection of the notions of power-sharing and cultural self-determination He attributed the NP's failure to "weak strategic planning" and the absence on its agenda of non-negotiables, except private property

Giliomee — who accused the Afrikaner middle class (and by implication the NP leadership) of betraying their poorer brethren — substantiated his argument by quoting from a draft of a forthcoming book on SA's transition to democracy by former *Financial Times* correspondent Patti Waldmeir Extrapolating from Waldmeir's analysis, he concluded that the NP might have been able to wring important concessions from the ANC for the Afrikaner's language and culture had it adopted a tougher stand

Waldmeir offered a different perspective in an interview with the *FM* "The big picture was that the balance of power

Ten Lesotho policemen tried 'to bring the government to its knees'

AKU 22/2/97 (167)

Maseru – Ten Lesotho police officers have been charged with trying to overthrow the government in an 11-day mutiny which ended in a gun-battle with the army.

An indictment read to the accused in a Maseru magistrate's court yesterday alleged the policemen sought "to bring the government to its knees and cause its downfall" when they occupied the national police headquarters on February 6.

The accused are part of a group of 100 policemen detained by the Lesotho army after a five-hour battle at the police headquarters early last Sunday

The leader of the renegade band, Lieutenant Pakiso Molise, is still on the run from police, who have extended their search across the border into South Africa

The Lesotho government, headed by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, said Lieutenant Molise had sought refuge at the palace of Lesotho's King Letsie III after the raid but fled as the army closed in on him.

King Letsie, with the support of the army and police, dismissed Mr Mokhehle and his cabinet in a royal coup in August 1994

Mr Mokhehle, 78, was reinstated a month later after intervention by southern African leaders led by South Africa's President Nelson Mandela – Reuter

Kenya's divestiture 'too slow'

(167)
CT(BR) 24/2/97

JOE KHAMISI

Nairobi — The divestiture programme in Kenya, which began with much enthusiasm in 1992, appears bogged down in bureaucratic confusion as two arms of the government differ over its performance

The snail's pace of privatisation of money-guzzling public corporations has also been censured by the IMF and the World Bank which are overseeing the country's economic reform process.

Harold Wackman, the bank's country director, said last month that the divestiture pace was too slow

Last December, the IMF sent a mission to Nairobi to review the country's economic performance. It left without releasing an anticipated $37 million, the second tranche of the $220 million Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility

The money had been negotiated over many months and was only released mid-last year when satisfactory progress had been made on a number of earlier conditions

Observers say the pace of privatisation and unsatisfactory measures to end corruption were cited as some of the reasons for the IMF decision. — Independent Foreign Service

Furore over dismissal of Lesotho's premier

Star 4 Feb 97

(167)

Maseru – A heated exchange took place in the Lesotho National Assembly yesterday when the Speaker, Dr Teboho Kolane, told the House he had received a letter from the national executive committee of the ruling Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) on Sunday informing him that Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle (78) had been dismissed as party leader

Leader of the House Shakhane Mokhehle, the prime minister's brother, said events that took place outside parliament should not be discussed in the Assembly

Several members interjected on points of order when another member said he had been badly reported by state radio, which said he had firearms at the party's conference on Saturday when it was resolved to remove Mokhehle as head of the BCP.

The member said he sought protection from the Speaker, otherwise he would protect himself. That inflamed other members, who interjected

The Leader of the House said he would present a motion to debate the matter later.

The BCP secretariat in Maseru announced on Sunday that the national executive committee had endorsed the decision to dismiss Mokhele. It said his dismissal had resulted from a report by the BCP secretary-general that showed his weakness as party leader

In terms of Lesotho's constitution, the leader of the majority party in parliament or the leader of a coalition of political parties should form the government. – Sapa.

Lesotho power struggle looms

(167) BD 5/3/97

MASERU — Rival members of parliament of Lesotho's ruling Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) clashed in the national assembly yesterday when a motion of support was introduced for Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, who was removed as BCP leader by the party's executive committee at the weekend.

Parliamentary members on the committee walked out of the house amid jeers of "Out, out" when the motion was introduced.

Deputy speaker Ntlhoi Motsamai repeatedly called the house to order as opposing groups of MPs shouted each other down.

The solitary non-BCP MP in the 65-member house, Chief Bofihla Nkuebe of the Sefate Democratic Union, was also shouted down when he said that a motion dealing with BCP matters was unacceptable in parliament.

The parliamentary clash suggests that the BCP — by far Lesotho's largest party — is about to face a renewed internal power struggle that could reduce its effectiveness and possibly end in a split. — Sapa.

Basotho seek refuge in SA

(167)

By JOE MOLEFI

Star 8/3/97

Maseru – The leader of Lesotho's rebel police and another policeman have fled to South Africa, where they have sought political asylum at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Pretoria

This was announced in Maseru yesterday by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs responsible for police, Pakalitha Mosisili

He said the government of Lesotho had received the information from the Department of Foreign Affairs early this week. Second-Lieutenant Phakiso Molise and Sergeant Motlatsi Makateng had sought political asylum from the UNHCR but no further details were released.

Molise escaped from the royal palace in Maseru on February 16 when members of Lesotho's defence force forcibly ended an 11-day mutiny in the Lesotho police force

The mutineers had occupied police headquarters and the Maseru charge office and used them as bases to conduct anti-government operations in protest against the impending arrest of Molise and seven other police officers wanted on criminal charges

Mosisili said Molise and his colleague were wanted for criminal activities which included the alleged murder of two police officers inside the Maseru central charge office in October 1995

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday his department was aware of the policemen's presence in South Africa They had been interviewed by the Department of Home Affairs and their request for asylum in SA "had been noted by foreign affairs". – Independent Foreign Service

3 plead guilty to sedition in Lesotho

(167) Star 11/3/97

Maseru – It was unimaginable what three men who pleaded guilty to sedition would have done if they had obtained power, so low was their level of education, prosecutor Sipho Mdhuli said yesterday

Former policeman Matsoso Bolofo (59), former Lesotho defence force member Lelingoana Johanathan (38) and the leader of the small opposition United Party, Makara Sekautu (64), pleaded guilty to sedition before Mr Justice Michael Ramolibeli and two assessors in Lesotho's High Court Another accused, Lepoqo Molapo, pleaded not guilty to all charges and will stand trial separately

Mdhuli said even the group of six educated men and women, who ran Lesotho's affairs for six weeks after the palace coup in August 1994, were unable to pass a single regulation The men were arrested after Bolofo announced on Radio Lesotho on February 29 last year that he had overthrown the government – Sapa.

Division in Lesotho's ruling party played down

Star 22/3/97 (16)

By ALLAN SECCOMBE

Durban – Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's brother said yesterday that a bitter rift in the ruling party would not weaken the government or jeopardise a general election next year

Shakhane Mokhehle, Lesotho Minister of Natural Resources, said support for the premier remained strong despite his age and frailty

He dismissed the threat of deputy Basotholand Congress Party leader Malopho Qhobela "There is a lot of support for the government, and Qhobela's faction poses no challenge at all"

Diplomats say Ntsu Mokhehle, elected in 1993 as the first democratic leader in two decades, retains support from voters and party members

But constant wrangling between opposing factions in the ruling BCP and ineffective leadership by the 78-year-old premier has left a negative impression, it is being said

Furrowed brows

The prime minister is currently fighting in court to overturn a resolution passed by the Qhobela faction in the BCP to dismiss him as party leader

The premier announced last week he would not seek re-election in the March 1998 poll

"He has had enough and he has said it is time he makes room for younger people," Shakhane Mokhehle said

The announcement was greeted with furrowed brows in the diplomatic community, with some sources saying it indicated a lack of effective leadership when it was most needed

"The announcement has negatively affected the credibility of the government," one diplomat added

The BCP split is between a minority of educated, urban voters for Qhobela's faction and larger rural support for Mokhehle, said Khabela Matlosa, political scientist at Lesotho University

"The conflict between the two factions runs so deep now that they are unable to negotiate a settlement It is now a question of whether the winner takes all" – Reuters

Benefits to flood in — if Lesotho project remains on tap

CT 1/4/97 (167)

KATSE, Lesotho: Life for thousands of villagers living around Katse Dam, taking shape in Lesotho's remote water-rich mountains to supply the thirsty industries of South Africa, will never be the same

Mr Vula Rafutho, 46, who lives in the small town of Katse that overlooks what will be Africa's highest dam when it is finished late this year, says an age-old way of life has been transformed rapidly

Before, little more than a dirt track led over the Maluti mountains and was passable only on foot, horse or four-by-four vehicle Then, a 120km road was blasted out of the mountain and tarred — and Southern Africa's ubiquitous minibus taxis, tourists and workers from across Lesotho and South Africa came to the once-quiet valleys

The Lesotho Highland project, agreed to in 1986 by Lesotho and South Africa, is one of the world's biggest water projects but has raised little high-profile environmentalist concern

More than 13 000 people will be affected by the first two stages of the project.

As the water level rises, villagers have had to set up homes higher on the hillsides, some families being moved by project authorities into new modern homes above the water level Schooling, health facilities and electricity have also been supplied to villagers, often for the first time

The project's first sub-phase includes the construction of the main Katse Dam (which can hold 1 950 million cubic metres of water), 86km of delivery tunnels, a smaller dam and a hydroelectric plant

Compensation and resettlement costs for villagers affected by the first stage totalled R32,4m between 1988 and 1996 The loss of grazing areas and fields have been compensated in kind with deliveries of fodder, maize and pulses.

Not counting the plant, the capital costs, including interest payments, of the first phase are expected to be about R9,7 billion by completion in March next year

Lesotho was given about R190m by the European Union to build the 72 megawatt hydroelectric plant

The second stage of the project, costing about R7,16bn, will include two smaller dams and delivery tunnels to Katse to boost the dam's initial delivery

But fears have been raised by Water Affairs Minister Mr Kader Asmal that political uncertainty in coup-prone Lesotho could affect water delivery to South Africa

World Bank president Mr James Wolfensohn said last month that talks with Lesotho on the project's second phase had been suspended because of uncertainty after unrest But the chief resident engineer at Katse, Mr Ron Hagen, said Lesotho had a vested interest that was too far advanced to be jeopardised by politics

Last September Katse filled to 1 993m above sea level which was the trigger for the first royalty payment of $55m (about R243m) to Lesotho, four months early. Monthly instalments on royalties will last for 50 years and the initial payments will represent about five percent of Lesotho's gross national product. — Reuter

SA, Lesotho negotiate water project disputes

BD 9/4/97 (167)

Edward West

SA AND Lesotho have entered negotiations over the need for future phases of the Highlands water project, and the royalties payable to Lesotho, after plentiful rains and snow filled the Katse Dam to capacity in record time

Also being negotiated is a two-year-old tax dispute over more than R300m in revenue collected from consultants, contractors and expatriates working on the project, payable by Lesotho to SA. Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority spokesman George van der Merwe indicated that these talks had progressed to the point where resolution was imminent However, no documents had been signed

He said that according to the treaty the net benefit of building the water project in Lesotho instead of a similar project in SA was shared 56% to Lesotho and 44% to SA. Lesotho's benefit was payable in the form of a fixed royalty of R5,4m a month at 1995 prices

Continued on Page 2

Water

Continued from Page 1

There was also a variable royalty calculated according to the expected pumping and operational costs that would have been incurred to transfer a similar amount of water from a comparable scheme in SA. The royalty would be lower if the final hydrology indicated fewer dams were needed

The 12-month delay in the completion of the dam was of no consequence as SA did not require the water because of the good rainfall. "We did not expect SA's dams to be 100% full."

In terms of the treaty SA is obliged to pay the royalty once the water level in the dam reaches 1 993m above sea level, which occurred in September last year Since then the level has risen to 2 037m, where it is being stabilised

He said the project had been delayed because the 86km tunnel from Katse had to be relined with concrete and steel after underground basalt formations proved weaker than expected. Inaugurating phase 1A of the project, which was to have been this year, would now take place in January. Construction of the last few metres of the main spillway was being completed.

He said construction of Phase 1B was expected to start early next year, with contracts to be put out to tender in the latter part of this year Katse Dam was already 73% full, way ahead of the construction plans, which allowed for the dam to fill over five years

About 400m³ of water a second was being drained at night, the equivalent of the daily inflow

DEVELOPMENT *Katse dam nears completion, but not without social disruption*

CT(BR) 21/4/97

Lesotho pays a price for slaking SA industry's thirst

(167)

HEIKE SCHNEIDER

Katse, Lesotho — When an earthquake shook their simple houses in the mountain village of Mapeleng in Lesotho's Maluti mountains in October 1995, the 650 villagers were deeply shocked

They knew that the 1,5km surface crack that caused damage to their rondavels was because of the new Katse dam at their doorstep, which had just been filled with water and had changed their environment dramatically

But while engineers tried to explain the seismic activity as a common occurrence in the first years of newly built dams caused by the pressure of the reservoir, the local Basotho people's traditional beliefs still prevail in their explanation and many of them are sceptical of the new lake

They attribute the earthquake to a "mythical water snake, which used to live in the small stream and was now trying to escape from the huge mass of water" kept back by the 185m Katse dam wall, the highest in Africa

Katse dam, the centrepiece of the R14 billion Lesotho Highlands Water Project, is nearing completion It should be finished by May, Makase Marumo, the chief of the Lesotho Highland Development Authority, said

The dam is part of one of the biggest and most ambitious multipurpose water projects in the world, which will supply neighbouring South Africa with water and make the tiny mountain kingdom, which is totally enclosed by South Africa, self-sufficient in energy

In addition, the binational project will give Lesotho a healthy injection of cash in the form of royalties, which amount to an average of $55 million a year.

That was agreed in the treaty of 1986 when South Africa and Lesotho joined forces to quench the increasing thirst of South Africa's industrial heartland around Johannesburg, which could not be satisfied any more by its drought prone Vaal river.

In terms of the treaty, South Africa bears the cost of the project as well as associated debt, except for the hydro-electric power component

Much of the foreign finance was raised from commercial banks, mainly underwritten by export credit agencies of the European contractors' countries. The World Bank and the European Union also provided funding

While poor in minerals and fertile land, Lesotho, one of the poorest countries in Africa, has water in abundance

By next year, the water from Katse dam, which has a capacity of almost 2 000 million cubic metres and can provide 18 cubic metres of water a second, is to be delivered through an 82km tunnel system north to the Vaal river

The hydro-electric power station at Muela dam about 45km north of Katse should provide Lesotho with energy by mid-1998, Marumo said

Though the environmental effect of the dam is said to be minor compared with other dam projects in Africa, the project has been far from being trouble free.

'Mythical river snake is trying to escape the mass of water of the lake'

Lesotho's mountain police interfered last September in a strike by 2 000 workers on the project, leaving at least five people dead

About 1 000 people, including the ones from Mapeleng who were affected by the quake, had to be relocated or resettled

Some of these households lost agricultural land, the only resource base for their living, which they were compensated for by guaranteed deliveries of maize and beans for 15 years

For people seriously affected by the project, a rural development programme also offers training in new income-generating activities such as handicraft, poultry, plumbing or bricklaying

Lesotho's development authority hopes that the stunning mountain scenery with the new lake will attract tourism to an area, which for the first time is connected by road to the rest of the world

Katse dam and Muela power station are only part of the first of four phases envisaged in the treaty

The entire project, planned over a period of 30 years, could eventually comprise five dams, 220km of tunnels, a 152MW hydro-electric power station, 278km of new roads and could deliver approximately 70 cubic metres of the mountain kingdom country's water a second to South Africa

However, whether all that will ever come off the ground is uncertain

The treaty commits the partner only to the first phase of the project aimed to be completed by 2003 It also includes the construction of Mohale dam, about 32km west of Katse, a tunnel connecting the two dams, a diversion structure and a shorter dam on the river — Sapa-Dpa

☐ LESOTHO

(167)

Citizens warned to stockpile staple cereals

Lesotho is expected to suffer an estimated 300 000-ton shortage of its staple maize and other cereals this year, the country's disaster management authority said on Friday The authority warned Lesotho inhabitants to stockpile grains ahead of severe winter conditions, after a dry spell in February stunted summer crop development and production

Leteketa Molapo, the authority's chief executive, said preliminary estimates showed a shortfall of some 216 000 tons of maize, 69 400 tons of wheat and 29 400 tons of sorghum

Matthew Okai the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation representative in the country, blamed the smaller crop on the reduction in land suitable for agriculture and a depletion of soil fertility — *Reuter, Maseru*

ET(BE) 5/5/97

Lesotho PM hands over govt to his newly formed party

CT 10/6/97 (167)

MASERU: Lesotho Prime Minister Mr Ntsu Mokhehle declared a handover of government yesterday to his newly formed political party from the long-ruling Basutholand Congress Party (BCP)

Mokhehle and senior ministers split from the BCP at the weekend

The prime minister said his new Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) had taken over the reigns of power from the BCP, and had a majority in parliament with the support of 41 of 64 MPs

Mokhehle's cabinet ministers would all remain the same, having made the jump to the new party along with their leader, he said.

Foreign Minister Mr Albert Maope, a new member of the self-declared LCD government, said Lesotho's constitution allowed members of parliament to "align themselves with any other political movement in parliament"

A spokesman for the BCP, which tried to expel Mokhehle as leader in March, condemned the move as a "coup d'état", adding that the prime minister showed "disrespect . for the people who elected him"

Several small, extra-parliamentary parties, including the Basutho National Party (BNP) and the National Progressive Party (NPP), also condemned the move, which they termed unconstitutional

The two parties said they would consider protest action against the government after holding meetings with members

The country's supreme court had ordered the BCP to elect a new leader at its annual congress at the end of July, after several senior members tried unsuccessfully to oust Mokhehle earlier this year.

Mokhehle said one reason for the formation of the new party was that "it had been difficult to realise objectives as government within BCP"

"The BCP was not a party formed for ruling, it was a party formed (in 1952) for the liberation of Lesotho (from British colonial rule)," Mokhehle said

In recent months, the 77-year-old prime minister, who is believed to be ill, has gradually abandoned many of his daily duties to his deputy, Mr Paka-litha Mosisili

Mokhehle has said publicly he will not run in Lesotho's next elections, expected to be held in January

Yesterday, however, the prime minister said his new party would contest future polls, but he did not say if he would step down

Lesotho, which held its first democratic elections in 1993, has been ruled on and off by the BCP for several decades.

Since Lesotho's independence from Britain in 1966, policemen and soldiers have been implicated in several coup attempts and bloody insurrections

Lesotho military units put down a police rebellion in February, ending an 11-day mutiny that paralysed the country, which is dependent almost wholly on South Africa for its foreign currency — Sapa-AFP

MPs walk out after Lesotho 'coup'

(167) BD 12/6/97

MASERU — Twenty-two MPs from the Basutoland Congress Party walked out of the national assembly yesterday, saying the speaker had legitimised a coup by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle on Monday.

Mokhehle called a meeting of BCP members over the weekend, announced the formation of a new party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), registered it on Monday and immediately transferred government powers to it.

Yesterday's walkout took place just before the tabling of a motion of confidence in Mokhehle and his new government by Lesotho Deputy Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, who is deputy leader of the new party

The LCD has 40 MPs; the rump of the original BCP, which has kept the name, has 22; and there is one independent. Two members of the original BCP have not yet declared their new allegiances.

BCP MPs wanted to know why the Speaker approved new seating arrangements in the National Assembly after BCP members who had not joined the new party were sent to the opposition benches

They raised several points of order also about the speaker's remarks on Monday that the BCP should appoint a leader who would be accorded the priviledges enjoyed by the leader of the official opposition.

There were several verbal attacks by members of the BCP on the speaker, accusing him of bias. — Sapa

Feelings run high over Lesotho's new party

Star 30/6/97 (167)

KHUTLISO SEKOATI
Maseru

A recent move by Lesotho's Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle to form a new political party, and immediately transfer power to it, has resulted in opposition parties burning pictures of Mokhehle and calling for his resignation.

Mokhehle took 65 existing members of parliament with him to form the Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party

Mokhehle said that splits in the Congress Party ranks had obstructed national progress and posed a threat to the achievement of true democracy. "We tried to resolve the dispute within the Congress Party but to no avail," he said

This was in part a reference to complicated disputes in court by party members who had said the election of the executive committee was fraudulent

The deputy leader of the Congress Party, Molapo Qhobela, said the prime minister had staged a political coup

"A coup is not accepted in any way in a democratic government Mokhehle is still a member of the Congress Party"

He said King Letsie III had two options dismissing Mokhehle or dissolving parliament. "There is no opposition in parliament. All the 64 MPs but one were elected under the Congress Party card We don't recognise Mokhehle's coup"

The ruling party members staged a walk-out from the National Assembly in protest, saying they would not be involved in debate under a government they did not recognise



Transferred power ... Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

"We will deploy all means to bring this government down and we cannot accept any opposition offer from the usurper," said party chairman Tseliso Makhakhe.

A majority of the opposition parties are rallying behind the Congress Party and promise to impose tough measures, including demonstrations and stayaways from work.

The opposition coalition said: "Mokhehle has given himself and his ministers executive powers contrary to the constitution and without the people's mandate"

Despite requests for the diplomatic community to withdraw recognition of the new administration, the South African High Commission in Maseru, Japhet Ndlovu, said: "The matter is an internal issue of Lesotho. If some Basotho are not satisfied, the matter can be negotiated."

The leader of the opposition Basotho National Party, Retselisitsoe Sekhonyana, said that the assumption of powers by Prime Minister Mokhehle "is the worst political sin" yet to grip Lesotho

"There are no democrats who can agree with this change The parliamentary procedure was totally infringed

"There should have been a resolution by parliament to test whether the new party enjoyed a majority support or not. So this new government is not legal," Sekhonyana stated.

But general secretary of the Lesotho Communist Party Mokhafisi Kena said: "The creation of a new party is a pinnacle of democracy It is unfortunate that some politicians don't accept this

"The move has created no constitutional crisis. In fact the formation of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy will enhance democratic process because there will no more be a one-party legislature." – Star Foreign Service/Africa Information Afrique.

Lesotho opposition to step up mass action

BD 4/7/97 (167)

Candi Ratabane Raminoane

MASERU — Lesotho's opposition parties intend to escalate their programme of mass action to protest against Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle's decision to transfer the powers of the ruling Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) to his new political party.

There have already been three mass demonstrations, including one by 12 000 people on Wednesday, since Mokhehle transferred power to his Lesotho Congress for Democracy on June 9, and more protests are planned

Chairman of the coalition against government, Moeketse Malebo, said yesterday civil disobedience would escalate The success of Wednesday's march was a signal "that the nation is not happy with this government, which must resign immediately to avoid an escalation of civil disobedience"

In a related move, the BCP Women's League has written to SA MP Winnie Madikizela-Mandela "appealing to the women of SA to lend support to our efforts to restore Basutho faith in democracy". It said Mokhehle was sidelining important political parties and undermining the constitution in preparation for general elections next year

The letter follows a recent meeting between Madikizela-Mandela and league president Khauhelo Ralitapole.

Mokhehle's supporters say his new government is legitimate as he still commands a majority in parliament

As part of the mass action, the league will hold a service today to commemorate the Lesotho Liberation Army cadres who died fighting against Chief Leabua Jonathan's government. Ralitapole said the plan had previously been frustrated by Mokhehle, the former liberation army's commander The league accuses him of collaborating with SA Police at Vlakplaas Mokhehle denied these links

Basutho National Party deputy leader Khetla Rakhetla said "the illegal usurpation of power by Mokhehle's government is as deplorable as his former Vlakplaas connections We are going to do everything possible within the scope of the law to bring down his government" The police and Royal Palace staff have also defied the June 21 ban on political demonstrations around the palace and on petitions to King Letsie Natural Resources Minister Shakhane Mokhehle said last night government would ensure such demonstrations did not happen again.

Privatised telecoms 'vital' to SA's IT progress

(167) (BR) 22/7/97

FROM REUTER

Cape Town — The accelerated privatisation of all telecommunications services was vital if South Africa wanted to keep abreast of international developments in information technology (IT), two University of Cape Town (UCT) academics said in an article published yesterday.

James Hodge and Jonathan Miller said in the latest edition of UCT's Trade and Industry Monitor that the decision to partially privatise Telkom with a five-year exclusivity period could harm the development of other information infrastructures

"For instance, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research's community information delivery system based on wireless technology has run into problems with Telkom when attempting to move beyond the pilot stage," they said

The present arrangement did not provide a level playing field in all services, they said

"An example is the role of Telkom as a network provider and Internet service provider, which has already led to allegations of unfair competition through hidden subsidies"

Telkom responded to the allegations by asking the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority to classify Internet access as a basic service This application had failed

These developments highlighted the need for government to adopt a regulatory environment that allowed for the rapid growth of all telecommunications networks, Hodge and Miller said

They said that while the financial services and retail sectors appeared to be making the most effective use of information technology, manufacturing was lagging behind and needed to get up to speed if it was to become competitive around the world

Given the low level of computer literacy in South Africa, especially among blacks, the professional training and education of IT users would also be important, they said.

'Industry central to Lesotho's growth'

ARG 5/8/97

(167)

Maseru – The industrial sector in Lesotho would remain an important stimulus for economic growth, Lesotho National Development Corporation's chief executive Sophia Mohapi said.

Speaking at the LNDC's 30th anniversary in Maseru, Ms Mohapi said the successful development of the manufacturing sector would depend on the co-operation and support of all government ministries, the private sector and international financing institutions in the implementation of the corporation's objectives.

Foreign investors continued to respond to the country's investment overtures. At the end of last year the LNDC had 21 possible projects estimated to be worth R57 million. The projects had an employment potential of 6 500 jobs

The clothing and footwear sectors would continue to act as the main source of investment into the country

"This is yet another positive indicator to the acceptance of Lesotho's attractive incentives package by potential foreign investors," Ms Mohapi said – Sapa

Lesotho's ailing economy gets huge boost

(167) Sowetan 6/8/97

By Shadrack Mashalaba

LESOTHO's ailing economy received a major boost with the announcement of a R60 million investment in the manufacturing sector

This will lead to the opening of three new factories which will provide employment for more than 1 350 people

The announcement of the cash injection coincided with the celebration of the Lesotho National Development Corporation's 30th anniversary in Thetsane near Maseru on Monday

The investment was made by Lekim Textiles (Lesotho) a Singaporean-based group comprising various companies operating in Singapore, South Africa Malaysia, China and most recently, Lesotho

The company will employ 800 workers in its first factory, which will produce T-shirts for the United States market

Lekim Textiles is expected to open another plant later this year which will employ another 200 workers

Another factory opened was a Taiwanese-owned plant United Clothing and J&S Fashions, which is valued at R21 million

The plant will manufacture T-shirts, trousers and skirts for export It had a worker complement of 310 and has since increased it to 560

United Clothing will be expanding its operations into another plant in November The company which manufactures jeans shorts and shirts will expand its workforce by another 400 to 2 200

These factories were officially opened by Lesotho prime minister Ntsu Mokhehle

Sowetan 7/8/97. (167)

Lesotho economy poised for boost

By Shadrack Mashalaba

LESOTHO's economy stands poised for a major boost by the multi-billion rands of foreign exchange with it will gain from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP)

The first phase of the project, which is a binational scheme between South Africa and Lesotho, is about to be completed. It is expected to be opened late this year

The project includes the Katse Dam and is being financed by the World Bank and German-based financing R1,2 billion

The second phase, according to project chief executive Makase Marumo, is valued at R6 billion

An interesting aspect of the projects is that hundreds of jobs have been created for Basotho and South Africans

Investment

The treaty to construct the LHWP was signed in 1986 and will have four phases which will also include the construction of four dams

The binational initiative will divert water from Lesotho's rivers to South Africa's growing industrial heartland of Gauteng and also generate hydro power for Lesotho

Marumo said the project offers physical and social investment

Gauteng is scheduled to receive its first "white gold" (water) from the Katse Dam late this year

By 1998, the nearby Muela hydro-electricity plant will make Lesotho independent of South Africa for its energy needs.

The plant will later be capable of generating electricity for export to other Southern African Development Community countries

"The project will boost our balance of payments In addition, our infrastructure that has been created through the initiative will also have a multiple effect to tourism," he said.

Further infrastructure is planned in the scenic country to include roads linking the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape

While some of the to LHWP, there has also been impressive growth in the manufacturing sector

Total exports grew from R145 million in 1988 to R580 million in the 1995-96 financial year

This was driven by the growth in the manufacturing industry The country's exports include textiles, shoes, shirts and its export destinations include the United States, Europe and countries of the Southern African Customs Union which include South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland

Authorities in the Mountain Kingdom are breathing a sigh of relief with the completion of the first phase of the project.

The project was not without its problems, according to Marumo These included hurdles such as the delay caused by the geological problems in the Maluti Tunnel and the labour strife which led to deaths

Another problem faced in the initial stages was lack of proper consultation with communities before the start of the project leading to critics charging that there was no feasibility study conducted

Tendering for the project

Discussions, according to Marumo, are currently under way for phase two

"We will be opening tendering for the project which is expected to resume next year

Fifteen percent of the water will be sold to South Africa annually

"The treaty will expire in 2044 and will earn Lesotho R200 million a year in royalties

"We have created a special fund that will manage the royalties our target will be on poverty alleviation measures

The project tilts the balance of dependence in Lesotho's favour Through the project, a number of benefits have also accrued to Lesotho such as roads and improved telecommunications

Marumo said they had also allocated a budget to cover people's losses once the second phase begins





Vaal Dam in spate roaring its defiance in the face of looming drought

LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER PROJECT

FM 8/8/97 (167)

SA's saviour from the ravages of El Nino

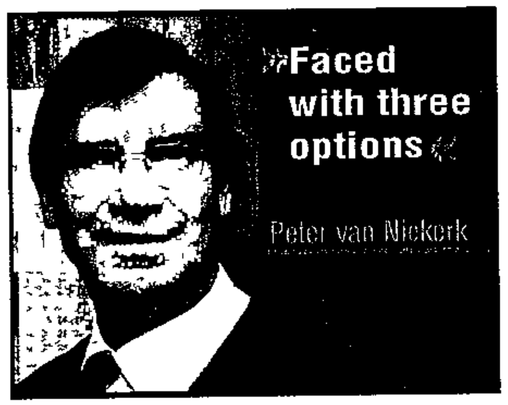
Weather child's temper tamed by leading edge technology

As dire warnings of the dreaded El Nino hit the media headlines, what may well prove to be SA's answer to the infamous weather pattern is beginning to take shape

Work on the complex system of tunnels, weirs and dams that is the multibillion Lesotho Highlands Water Project is gathering momentum with the latest undertaking of the scheme being the R4,5bn Phase 1(b)

This will include the 950m m³ Mohale Dam and a 30 km transfer tunnel Department of Water Affairs manager, international projects, Willie Croucamp says after access roads (R250m) are completed by the end of the year, the R100m advanced infrastructure will be built at Mohale (see map) This should be completed by March next year

"Tenders for the dam, tunnel and diversion weir have already been advertised and we expect to take a decision early in 1998 Water should begin to flow into the Vaal system by 2003," says Croucamp



Faced with three options

Peter van Niekerk

Other project teams are already looking at completing feasibility studies for the next series of dams and waterworks that will need to be completed by 2006-2008 depending on consumption projections and the possible effects of El Nino and other climatic uncertainties

Water Affairs managing engineer (planning) Peter van Niekerk is faced with three choices "We can go for the second phase of Highlands, we can build the new Boskop Dam upstream from the Gariep Dam in the Orange River, or we can go to the Tugela River, where two major dams could be built in the Bushman's River near Weenen and in the Tugela near Colenso, KwaZulu-Natal

But, he says, Lesotho lies closer to the Vaal and offers cleaner but costlier water Boskop could provide "free" water but would involve a series of tunnels, weirs and pumping systems to get the water to the Vaal, while the Tugela scheme would use existing pumping capacities into the Sterkfontein Dam

Tugela water project feasibility study head Bob Pullen says 'this second phase of utilising Tugela water for the Vaal system would take total potential utilisation to about 1 016m m³/year out of the Tugela, which has an average river mouth runoff of about 3 865m m³/year"

El Nino is a vast accumulation of exceptionally warm water in the Pacific off the coast of Peru and is predicted to set off droughts and "above normal temperatures" across southern Africa in the summer ahead US weather sources say this year's El Nino could be even worse than that experienced in the summer of 1982-1983 That drought cost an estimated R5bn across southern Africa

Based on SA's past record of seasonal and regional droughts, a 'big one" could well stretch over two to three years However, with dam levels at present capacities, Highlands should kick in well before there is any danger of water shortage Previous droughts also hit economic prospects, with a poor agricultural season often depressing national growth prospects

SA Agricultural Union chief economist Koos du Toit says "The 1995 drought reduced gross farming output by about 26% and slashed about 1% off GDP for the year, while the good 1996 rains increased gross farm earnings by about 30% and added an estimated 1,6% directly and indirectly to the GDP'

But, while farmers are braced for severe dry conditions which will hit hard on summer rainfall crops like maize, cotton, sunflower and sorghum, "excellent" underground moisture reserves derived from recent rainy summers should still boost early crops

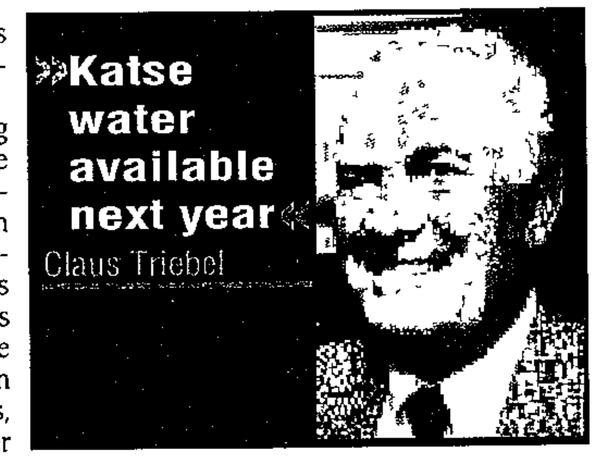
However, irrigation farmers and the urban economy have never been better prepared

Irrigation farmers producing tobacco, citrus, wheat, cotton and vegetables should not fear drought for at least the next two years And commerce, industry, mining and ordinary households are even better off

Rand Water GM, community support services, Archer Davis says "We have enough water stored in the Vaal system to take us through five years of drought"

Water Affairs deputy director-general Claus Triebel, says the state of the nation's dams "has never been so good" Most major dams in the Vaal system are still overflowing, while the 2 617m m³ storage capacity Sterkfontein Dam, which receives water from the upper Tugela through the Drakensberg Pump Storage Scheme, is 74% full And Lesotho's new 1 900m m³ capacity Katse Dam (part of the Highlands project) is already 80% full

"Katse water will be available from January next year, once we have tested the transfer tunnel," Triebel says But consumers will also have to start paying off the estimated R10bn costs (including finance charges) for Phase 1(a) of the Highlands Project (Katse Dam and transfer tunnels), while the R4,5bn Phase 1(b) costs should also start filtering through to end-consumers' accounts from 2000 onwards



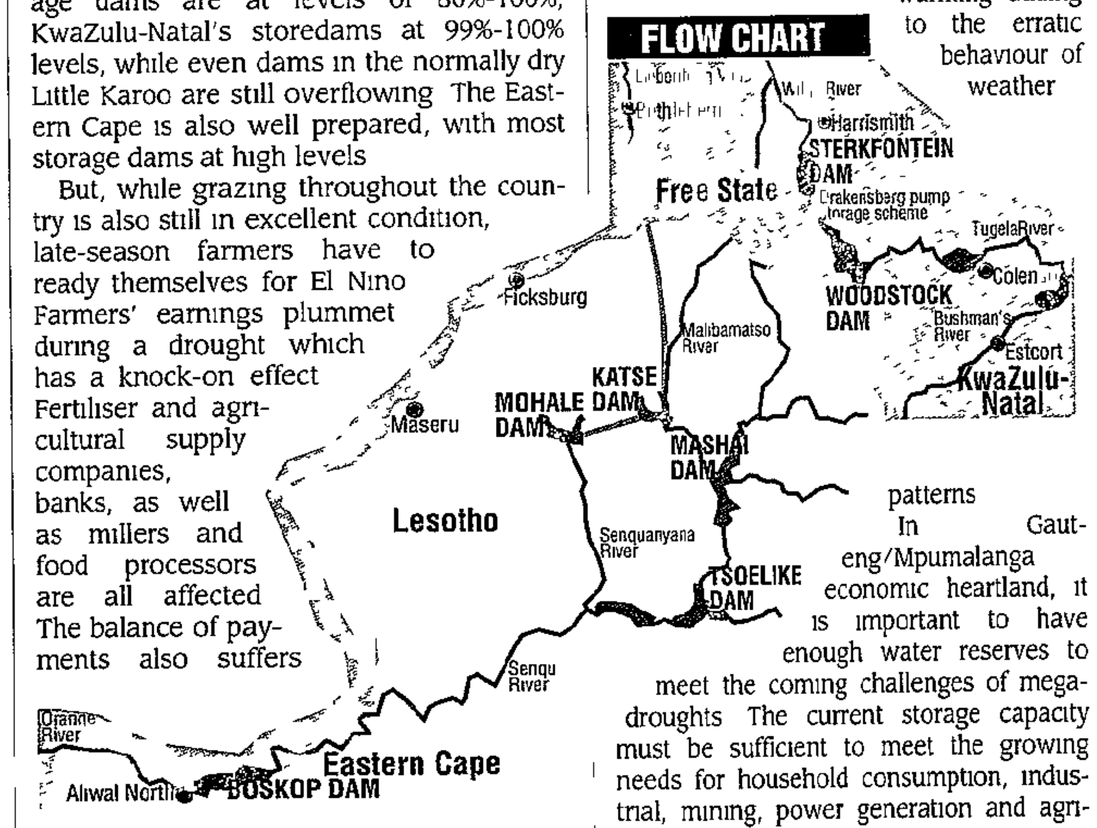
Katse water available next year

Claus Triebel

Ironically, rising water prices are also having a beneficial effect on consumption patterns Consumers are tightening belts to stop wastage and save costs In fact, says Davis, "average water consumption in Rand Water's jurisdiction area has shown minimal growth between the 1983 drought and 1996 — and we only forecast 2,5% annual growth in the foreseeable future" Households consume about two-thirds of Rand Water's total sales, with mines, commerce and industry taking up the balance

The same good news applies to the rest of the country, with major irrigation dams brimful or overflowing Western Cape storage dams are at levels of 80%-100%, KwaZulu-Natal's storedams at 99%-100% levels, while even dams in the normally dry Little Karoo are still overflowing The Eastern Cape is also well prepared, with most storage dams at high levels

But, while grazing throughout the country is also still in excellent condition, late-season farmers have to ready themselves for El Nino Farmers' earnings plummet during a drought which has a knock-on effect Fertiliser and agricultural supply companies, banks, as well as millers and food processors are all affected The balance of payments also suffers from reduced export revenues, while increased imports add to the Reserve Bank's woes Some milling companies have already started signing forward contracts for maize, based on expectations of severely reduced crops in the 1997-1998 season



Long-term forecaster at the Weather Bureau in Pretoria Ben Kgakatsi says "While October rainfall might be above normal, El Nino will start influencing our weather patterns from about November and this should continue till next April, with the worst effects being felt between December and March"

Maize and other summer crop farmers have already been cautioned to reduce plantings and fertiliser purchases, as a severe drought could slash up to 75% off projected crop returns But, says Du Toit, if Mpumalanga crop farmers start planting early this summer, they could partly miss the effects of the drought

With dams brimful and overflowing, do we have anything to worry about? Yes, because water conservation, consumption and demand is as dynamic as the economy and could become just as unpredictable This is more so should the future bring worse El Ninos, with the impact of global warming adding to the erratic behaviour of weather patterns

In Gauteng/Mpumalanga economic heartland, it is important to have enough water reserves to meet the coming challenges of megadroughts The current storage capacity must be sufficient to meet the growing needs for household consumption, industrial, mining, power generation and agriculture into the next century

At full capacity, Vaal Dam holds 2 600m m³ of water (but loses huge volumes to evaporation), the deeper Sterkfontein dam also about 2 600m m³, while Katse will also contribute about 1 900m m³

But Water Affairs — which continues to explore all viable options for water schemes — says this is not enough "We must not only provide for normal growth, but also for emergency supplies," says Triebel

Arnold van Huyssteen

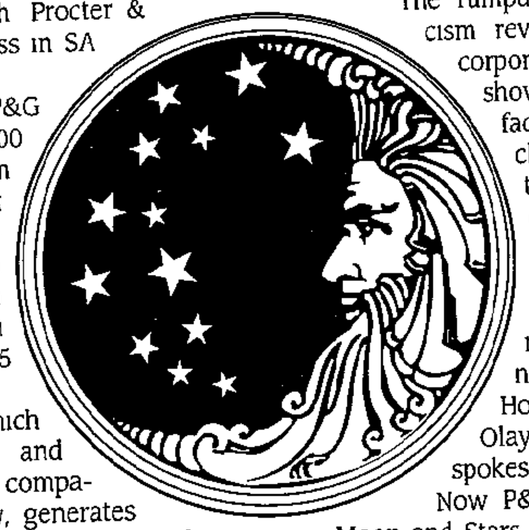
PROCTER & GAMBLE/AMWAY CORP

US retail giants prepare to lock horns in SA

All hell about to be let loose as warring multinationals square off for local market share

SA business circles are about to witness a titanic clash between US corporate retail giants Procter & Gamble and Amway Corp

Already deadly rivals in the global market place both companies will have a presence in SA once Amway opens an office in Cape Town later this month Procter & Gamble set up business in SA three years ago



New York listed P&G markets more than 300 brands to about 5bn consumers in about 140 countries Unlisted Amway, with headquarters in Michigan, has 2,5m distributors in 75 countries

Direct selling, which includes single-level and multilevel marketing companies such as Amway, generates sales of close to US$20bn a year in the US and about $75bn globally

Amway's total sales in the last fiscal year were $6,8bn while P&G's in its latest financial year were $35,3bn Amway's sales, though, have more than doubled since 1991 while P&G's have grown — admittedly from a higher base — by just under a third in those six years

In addition, direct sellers, particularly Amway, are booming in South Korea and Japan With sales of $2bn in Japan and more than $1bn in the rest of Asia Pacific, Amway is not far off P&G's sales of $3,8bn for this region

That helps to explain the competitive friction between the traditional retail and direct selling industries and the fight between two of their respective leading lights

This struggle is already taking place to a degree in SA, where direct sales are estimated at 5% of total annual retail sales of R126,8bn Amway's presence will sharpen the tussle for the consumer

In the US, the two corporations are locked in courtroom combat over the satanic issue of Old Nick, alias the devil

For 16 years P&G has endured implausible claims that the corporation is linked to satanism Last year a Geneva-based public relations manager flew to SA on a trouble-shooting mission after 'well-meaning but uninformed Christians" fanned the rumours in SA's Bible belt

The rumpus that refuses exorcism revolves around P&G's corporate logo, which shows a moon-shaped face and 13 stars It was claimed that the sign of the devil — 666 — could be discerned in the curls of the face's beard

"One lady phoned me and said 'I've finally found the Ram's Horns on your Oil of Olay'," says a P&G SA spokesman

Now P&G has "redefined" its Moon and Stars logo, reversing the offending beard curls But because of the black rumours the new logo has been shelved in favour of a plain but infinitely safer blue-hued P&G

Two weeks ago Ohio-based P&G filed a lawsuit in Houston, Texas, against Amway and some of its distributors, alleging that Amway was seeking to associate them with Satan — and accusing them of being an illegal pyramid scheme

The case accompanies a still active case in Utah over similar claims by P&G In filings in the Houston action P&G claims "Amway's purpose is to divert consumers from the retail market place, creating a captive audience which buys Amway products at the exclusion of all others in the false hopes that doing so will lead to riches"

From Ohio, a P&G spokesman says the Texas law suit is its seventh against Amway distributors over the Satan issue and the second against the Amway Corp itself

Amway has repeatedly denied spreading the rumour that P&G's more than a century-old Moon and Stars' trademark is a satanic symbol It says it has also never suggested that P&G is a pyramid scheme

"Amway considers P&G's lawsuits to be a predatory attempt to stifle a growing competitor,' it counters "No distributor is barred from using competitive products or even barred from selling competitive products Unfortunately, P&G seems to have the mistaken notion that it is the only company that can sell consumer products"

Amway itself opposes pyramids, and has been cleared of those claims by Federal Trade Commission authorities, but a number of its independent distributors have been accused since the Eighties of operating pyramid-like schemes These distributors profit from the selling of so-called motivational materials to distributors they recruit and sponsor

Amway has sought to discourage these practices since they first appeared, and provides money-back guarantees on start-up kits, products, and motivational and training materials to protect the consumer even after the sale

Prospective SA distributors need to be exceptionally wary of "training" materials offered outside of official Amway packs Consumers though can look forward to a possible intensity in the competition between traditional and direct retailers which hopefully leads to better products at better prices

Sean Feely and Jack Lundin

FOREIGN BANKS

SA beckons Baroda

India's second biggest bank, the Bank of Baroda, is the latest foreign institution to open its doors in SA

Baroda chairman and MD Shri K Kannan says the initial emphasis of the Durban-based operation will be on corporate and wholesale banking, in order to build on its R50m asset base

But given the institution's record in India, where it pioneered rural community banking, this could be a feature of the services offered in the longer term, particularly as this is perceived to be an under-serviced area in SA

Baroda's turnover was US$10bn at March 1997 It has 2 400 branches throughout India and a further 38 around the world

Kannan says the bank has received Reserve Bank authorisation and will open later this month Deloitte & Touche are its SA consultants **Herb Payne**

JOE THLOLOE
THE BODY POLITIC

Tokyo sweats for a quiet exit



Gauteng premier Mosima Gabriel Sexwale — Tokyo — is hoping that at the close of day on August 17, he will have achieved his first goal as he tries to extricate himself from his job as smoothly as possible Acutely aware that a messy succession could damage the ANC come the national elections in 1999, he is working hard for a seamless transition as he gets out of the leadership of the province and of the ANC in Gauteng

Tokyo has already urged the two people vying for his position — his deputy in the provincial party, Mathole Motshekga, and health MEC Amos Masondo — to talk to each other Keen to soothe taut nerves, he has told them they are both good candidates — that's why the ANC in Gauteng and its allies, the SA Communist Party, the Congress of SA Trade Unions and the SA National Civic Organisation, nominated them

Now they need to agree on who will get out of the race and who will stand up at the ANC's Provincial General Council on August 17 and nominate the other for the position of premier of Gauteng

As I said, this has to go smoothly Last Saturday, the ANC's provincial executive met but could not resolve the issue Sexwale will have to If it goes to a vote at the Provincial General Council, in my view, Masondo would win Despite being very different from Sexwale — he is quiet and unassuming — Masondo has enough support among key ANC allies

Still, harmony is vital Tokyo says ever since he took over as chairman of the ANC's provincial executive in 1991 and as premier of Gauteng in 1994, both executives have reached their decisions by consensus

"The only time we had to vote was in the provincial executive when the National Party was still in the Government of National Unity," he says "I've even forgotten what the issue was In the end, the NP abstained"

He describes what happened after he decided he was getting out of politics "I had to talk to President Nelson Mandela and to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki

"I told them I did not want to run for the 1999 election I told them I had to leave in time to allow the new person to lead the election campaign in the province I got their blessing and we agreed I would step down in January

"I then had to talk to the provincial Cabinet as well as to the ANC's provincial executive"

He denies suggestions from some quarters that democracy within the ANC is being trampled upon "The Provincial General Council, which is the highest organ in the ANC between conferences, decided on a way of searching for my successor that would be least disruptive to the organisation

"The various regional officials in the council and in the search committee represent the branches They have canvassed them already We also had to consult our allies"

Tokyo says the rough part was when he had to explain his departure to the Provincial General Council It illustrates the scale of the divide ANC leaders cross when they move from politics to business

A young man seemed to speak for irritated delegates when he asked "What will Comrade Tokyo's class bias be when he joins big business?"

These are ghosts from his past tugging at him "I reminded the young comrade that the late Albert Luthuli, who led the ANC in the Fifties, was a member of the Sugar Growers' Association, that Deputy President Mbeki's wife, Zanele, runs a bank that benefits rural women and that Engels was from a family of industrialists and yet had a clear bias towards the workers"

In the end, they agreed to let him go but he was charged by the meeting with writing the first draft of a strategy to guide the ANC into the world of business and capital Who should be deployed into that territory? What is their brief? What are their responsibilities to their constituency when they find themselves in the lap of personal wealth?

Strange brief I thought this had all been worked out when ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa left politics to go into business — into "the new arena of struggle" ■

KENYA

More headaches for Moi

FM 8/8/97

President's refusal to tackle graft topples financial dominoes

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi is caught between a rock and a hard place following the International Monetary Fund's cancellation of a US$205m loan package to the country because of government's failure to tackle corruption

Moi's discomfort is easy to understand, says Kenyan academic Rok Ajulu of Rhodes University if he cracks down on corruption to comply with IMF conditions for continued assistance, he will soon implicate senior figures in his ruling coalition, including vice-president George Saitoti and strongman Nicholas Biwott

If he does nothing, the local currency, which took a knock after the IMF pulled the plug on July 31, will continue to slide The Kenya Shilling stood at 57 to the US dollar before the protests of July 7, and dropped to 61 on August 4

Moi slammed the IMF's move as "purely political and lacking economic sense"

The fund had offered Kenya a $205m, three-year loan under its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility pending adequate action being taken against corruption

It was particularly angered by government's handling of the 1992 multimillion dollar Goldenberg International financial scandal But the final straw seems to have been government's refusal to reinstate a diligent Customs commissioner who was sacked for refusing to permit a fraudulent sugar consignment Those implicated in both scandals "are right inside Moi's coalition," says Ajulu

Finance Minister Musalia Mudavadi admitted days before the July 31 deadline, and after government had drafted an anticorruption Bill meant to satisfy IMF concerns, that "losing the money would be a big blow to our economic programme and could affect growth" The opposition was sceptical of the antigraft Bill

A day after the IMF acted, a number of foreign investors, who account for between 40% and 50% of bourse business, bailed out of the Nairobi Stock Exchange One trader was quoted as saying "Now that we've lost the IMF package, many foreign investors are suspending their orders or making cancellations If foreigners start selling, that could crush the market" **Amarnath Singh**

Lesotho in bid to attract more foreign companies

(167) BD 11/8/97

Patrick Wadula

LESOTHO National Development Corporation is inviting foreign companies to take advantage of its investment incentives.

Corporation CE Sophia Mohapi said the attraction of foreign investors to Lesotho was initially based on the country's offer of competitive and productive labour and its access to world markets

Lesotho offered a free market economic system which lead to development and growth

Mohapi said Lesotho had preferential access to world markets such as the European Union, North America and the Southern African Development Community, a corporate tax rate of 15% and free repatriation of profits

She said preferential loans and loan guarantees for capital equipment and a comprehensive finance facility to support exporters with working capital on concessionary terms were available

"There are serviced industrial sites at competitive rentals and a productive labour force "

Lesotho's gross domestic product lifted to 14% in the past financial year from 9% in 1995

The manufacturing, construction and agricultural sectors contributed to growth

Mohapi said growth in the manufacturing sector had risen due to the development of exports, which grew to more than R800m from R145m in 1988

Last year manufactured goods (predominantly clothing and footwear) made up more than 77% of Lesotho's export value

Foreign investors continued to respond to the country's investment overtures, Mohapi said Last year there were 21 projects in the pipeline with an estimated investment of R57m

The projects had an employment potential of 6 500 jobs

Mohapi said the clothing and footwear sectors were likely to continue as the main investment attraction in Lesotho

There was also potential in other labour-intensive sectors such as electronic, pharmaceutical and electrical goods

Mohapi said the corporation would diversify into industrial projects which provided strategic services

A priority was to supply maximum technology transfer to Lesotho's young population, she said

'INTERNET JOBS AT STAKE'

Telkom in row over R300m online profits

(167) CT 14/8/97

INTERNET SERVICE providers, who have provided access to the Internet since 1993, are angry that Telkom is trying to ban their booming businesses. **ELISSA GOOTMAN** reports.

DAVID has met Goliath on the Internet, as private Internet service providers (isps) are embroiled in a battle with telecommunications parastatal Telkom

If Telkom wins, it could spell the end of South Africa's R300-million Internet service provision (isp) industry — which includes 72 companies, telecommunications networks valued at R50m, and more than 2 000 of the country's top-notch computer experts

Under the current system, those who want Internet access "subscribe" to an isp In exchange for a monthly fee of about R100, isps allow subscribers access to their established networks — made up of telephone lines purchased from Telkom — and "manage the traffic" on these networks

Telkom now hopes to control the lines and manage the traffic on them (and reap the attached profits) itself, claiming that this is part of its mandate under the Telecommunications Act of 1996

Soon, the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra) will decide whether Telkom's five-year monopoly on telecommunications, as designated in the act, should extend to the Internet

Representatives of the Internet Service Providers' Association (Ispa), an organisation formed in response to the conflict with Telkom, are outraged at the possibility that their flourishing industry may now be declared illegal

Ispa co-chair Mr Mark Todes said "They (Telkom) supply us with our lines, and we pay them good money For them now to say that what we're doing is illegal, is preposterous We have set up our own networks using Telkom's lines, and now Telkom wants us to dismantle that," said Todes

Mr Philip Esselaar, former Ispa co-chairman, said "The first commercialised isp started in 1993 For four years Telkom did nothing about it They let us invest, they let us enter into long-term contracts, they let us start businesses We're now saying it's too late (for Telkom to claim an Internet monopoly) — you should have said so earlier if you had a problem with this "

Ispa maintains that loss of this industry will mean a significant loss to South Africa

"The (Internet service provision) industry has been a wonderful source of employment for some of the top engineers in the country," said Todes

"I believe if their ability to operate in this industry is canned, South Africa will lose them "

Telkom officials have been tight-lipped when it comes to justifying their request for monopoly rights

Until it makes a final decision, Satra has said that Telkom must not claim exclusivity in any form Telkom officials say this interim ruling forbids them from explaining the substance of their claims

Earlier this year, Mrs Pinky Moholi, Telkom's group executive for regulatory affairs, said a monopoly would enable Telkom to bring the Internet to "the masses"

Telkom announced last week that it would not sell international bandwidth (line capacity) to isps — a move which the isps claim will impede the performance of the Internet



GLOOMY FACES: Three employees of Ursus Telecom Corporation (from left) Peter Whittard, Ronald Martin and Amanda Vlotman, who will lose their jobs at the end of the month when a ruling by the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra) banning all call-back companies in the country comes into operation *PICTURE: ALAN TAYLOR*

No solution in Lesotho row

(167)

MASERU — An indefinite nationwide go-slow protest by workers of the Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation (LTC) entered its third day yesterday, with no solution in sight.

The protest was launched on Monday to compel the LTC's board to improve management and grant a 60% salary increase.

A workers' committee spokesman said the protest action would continue until the board met worker representatives to discuss grievances

The workers' dissatisfaction over salaries, management restructuring and management audits, and their concern about the operations of SA cellular telephone company Vodacom, which operates in a joint venture with the Lesotho corporation, has been simmering since last year — Sapa

BD 14/8/97

Two-year deal signed in coal sector

BD 28/8/97

Reneé Grawitzky

A LANDMARK two-year wage deal covering 70 000 coal workers, providing for increases of up to 23% and a minimum wage of R1 000 by next year, was signed by the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) yesterday

According to the agreement, all chamber member coal mines will pay a minimum wage of R900 this year and are expected to move up to a R1 000 minimum next year

The chamber committed itself to a social plan to cushion the effect of retrenchments and agreed to move towards providing equitable health care for mine workers.

The deal is the first in the chamber's history in which a separate coal wage deal has been agreed

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said that for obvious reasons, the parties had to consider separate gold and coal negotiations.

Anglo American coal representative Alan Martin, on behalf of the chamber, said mining industry bargaining structures would have to be reconsidered.

It is understood that discussions have started on the formation of a bargaining council. Further talks will be held once the wage agreement has been implemented

Increases for workers on gold mines have yet to be implemented Their deal links wages to productivity, and increases will be implemented only once parties at mine level have agreed on ways to raise productivity

The coal agreement will see workers not on the minimum wage level receive increases ranging between 7,5% and 9,75%. During the second year covered by the deal, the majority of workers will receive increases of 8%-9%

However, workers at Ingwe will receive increases equal to the average inflation rate for the 12-month period ending May 1998.

The agreement, in line with the motor industry's three-year wage deal, says that if inflation falls below 6% or rises above 13% for the year to April 1998, any party may cancel the agreement or reopen negotiations.

Motlanthe said all mines bar Alpha Anthracite and Gold Fields would be unable to pay a minimum of R1 000 for surface workers this year; all except Gold Fields were paying a R1 000 minimum to underground workers

A social plan would be implemented on collieries after discussion at mine level of services workers needed. These could include retraining retrenched workers, skills assessment and certification of prior learning, and financial and other counselling. The services would be funded by employers, with government playing a role as well

The agreement also stipulates provisions to regulate job losses at mines by ensuring timeous information disclosure, fair termination procedures, planning taking into account matters relevant to job losses, and proper prior notice to ensure compliance with these provisions.

While each mining house has committed itself to discussing regulating health care in the industry, the agreement says health care for dependents, especially in rural areas, requires further discussion.

Callback services granted temporary reprieve by Satra

(167)

Robyn Chalmers

BD 28/8/97

THE SA Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra) has granted local callback operators a temporary reprieve from its order to shut up shop by September 1.

In a letter to the SA Callback Association and 10 callback operators, Satra's attorneys said the authority would not initiate criminal prosecutions pending a ruling on a hearing in the Johannesburg High Court today in a case brought by the operators.

"(Satra) has never intended, nor does it intend, to impose any penalties on anyone contravening the provisions without there being a conviction following criminal proceedings," said the letter However, this should not be understood to mean that if the court found callback operations unlawful, the operators would not be exposed to prosecution, it said.

Satra could not be reached for comment last night.

SA Callback Association chairman Gianfranco Cicogna said he believed the attorney's letter indicated September 1 was no longer a deadline for closing down callback operations

"The matter will now be determined by an impartial high court judge rather than the regulator, which had apparently determined the matter without recourse to the views of interested parties," he said

"The industry now has clarity with regard to Satra's limited powers ... in general Interested parties will have the opportunity to be heard on this matter," he said

When announcing that callback operations were banned earlier this month, Satra chairman Nape Maepa said in terms of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Telkom was the only organisation licensed to provide international telecommunications services in SA on an exclusive basis

Callback operators offer international rates which are up to 30% cheaper than Telkom's.

Many government organisations and business users said they were using callback services.

JOBS *If it delivers, the project will create employment and promise a greener future*

Lesotho launches tree-planting programme for youth

ET(BR)3/9/97 (167)

TSEBO MATS'ASA

Maseru — A tree planting programme here not only promises a greener future for the capital city of the Mountain Kingdom but ensures jobs for the youth

The few poplar trees which grace the roadside of the main north road in Maseru are reminiscent of tree planting programmes of the early 1970s

Most of the trees died, and this prompted the National Environment Secretariat (NES) not only to replace them but to ensure their protection and proper growth NES's tree planting programme is run by the department of National Environmental Youth Corps (NEYC)

The NEYC hopes to curb unemployment among young people while at the same time encouraging conservation The targeted age group ranges from 15 to 25 years

The youth work in groups of 25 a ward in about seven wards in each of Lesotho's 10 districts Titus Lesofe, the technical adviser of the project, said since the beginning of the project 18 months ago, 400 trees have been planted every month The trees are planted along gullies as part of a land reclamation process

Lesofe said young people worked under the supervision of a civil engineer who provided training on gully rehabilitation, while in some wards they worked with agricultural extension officers

Although each youth receives R200 a month, a group of youngsters interviewed showed dedication and said they would continue with the scheme even if NEYC stopped giving them the allowance

"This is to our benefit. Our country is becoming full of gullies If we cannot come to its rescue where are we going to farm or build houses?" said one of the planters in the Berea district.

However, some observers argue it is too early to determine the youths' commitment to the project. "Once NEYC stops paying them they will no longer maintain the trees and they will not continue filling in gullies," said Chief Bernard Masopha, who lives in one of the wards where the project is going on

> ***Paying people to develop their own areas remains a controversial issue in Lesotho***

Masopha's argument is based on past experiences The Lesotho Woodlot Project (LWP) is an example The LWP was funded by South Africa, Overseas Development Assistance and the World Food Programme It provided "pseudo-employment" in which rural people were given food as payment When the project was terminated in 1987 LWP property was taken over by the forestry division of the ministry of agriculture and care of the trees deteriorated

Paying people for developing their own areas is a controversial issue in Lesotho Some argue the main cause for failure of many projects is when donors leave them in the hands of indigenous people

Lesofe counters that NEYC projects are business-oriented and controlled directly by concerned communities, which he believes will keep them viable Tree planting can boost the economy, he says At present, most wood products are imported from South Africa

Tree planting as a leading conservation activity in Lesotho was first practised in the late 1930s People were found to lack commitment to protect and ensure proper growth of trees because they felt they had been planted for chiefs

When the colonial government realised communal woodlots were problematic, it encouraged families to plant their own trees However, many chiefs, as the custodians of the land and all natural resources, insisted on communal woodlots

The government tried to improve the situation in the 1970s by allocating land for tree planting To ensure that individuals benefited, the government issued proof of ownership of the land and the trees planted on it Nevertheless this step had not in practice really changed the people's attitude — Independent Foreign Service/AIA

AFRICA

Political tension could hurt Lesotho's economy

(167) BD 11/9/97

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

POLITICAL tensions in Lesotho, which culminated recently in opposition MPs and journalists being barred from parliament, are creating an unstable climate which could damage Lesotho's struggling economy.

Political commentators say they are concerned about the air of crisis that has pervaded the kingdom since Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle decided three months ago to leave the ruling Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) He took 40 MPs with him, leaving 23 MPs with the BCP.

Mokhehle's move on June 9 to transfer powers of the ruling party to his new party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, followed a BCP congress where Mokhehle was voted out as party leader

Since then mass demonstrations have been organised by the BCP and other organisations which argue that Mokhehle's move was unconstitutional because he stripped the ruling party of its powers before an election had been held Mokhehle, in turn, argues that his move was legal because he has the support of the majority of MPs

The situation took a turn for the worse in August when the parliamentary speaker, John Kolane, announced that three BCP MPs — including BCP chairman Ntsukunyane Mphanya, had been suspended from parliament. They were suspended after telling the speaker he had no business to declare the BCP the official opposition when the party had won the previous elections.

A few days later the speaker announced that the media and members of the public could no longer attend parliamentary debates, and the police were ordered to escort them out

The ban has not yet been lifted, even though journalists petitioned the speaker saying the order violated constitutional guarantees on freedom of expression

In early September the speaker asked the police to eject the remaining BCP MPs from parliament after they refused to follow parliamentary procedures as an expression of defiance at his declaration that the BCP had become the opposition party

A leading business consultant and former secretary-general of the Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thabang Mokatse, echoed the views of many other businessmen when he said the protracted political impasse would damage Lesotho's chances of recovery after implementing economic reforms

Mokatse said that if the present crisis continued, the economy would deteriorate to the pount that Lesotho would not be able to service her foreign debt, and unemployment would rocket

The decision to bar BCP MPs from parliament has generated widespread anger, prompting the Senate, which is pro-BCP, and BCP MPs to write to King Letsie, asking him to intervene in upholding the constitution

Meanwhile, the ban on journalists means that the Hansard office provides the only record of parliamentary deliberations, although journalists have to wait 24 hours for Hansard transcripts However, photocopiers are broken, leaving the nation in the dark about the issues under discussion

According to BCP leader Molapo Qhobela, the BCP MPs' defiance of parliamentary procedures was also triggered by the speaker's refusal to address 15 points of order tabled before him by the BCP three months ago

The BCP has been supported in opposing Mokhehle's moves by the Senate, the chiefs, the organised youth and women's organisations as well as the church They have all taken part in marches on the royal palace to petition the king to dissolve Mokhehle's government

Since then the king has appointed members of the electoral commission who were sworn in last week

Lesotho mill to be privatised

(167)

JOE MOLEFI

CT (BR) 17/9/97

Maseru — Two companies had made bids for a stake in the privatisation of the state-owned Lesotho Flour Mills, Mothusi Mashologu, the director of Lesotho's Privatisation Unit, said on Monday.

They are Seaboard, the US company, and Lesotho Milling

Mashologu said this marked an important stage in the search for a strategic partner to take up equity and management in the milling corporation, which has a workforce of 480 and includes a flour mill, an animal feed plant and a sugar-packing facility. It also owns a railway siding

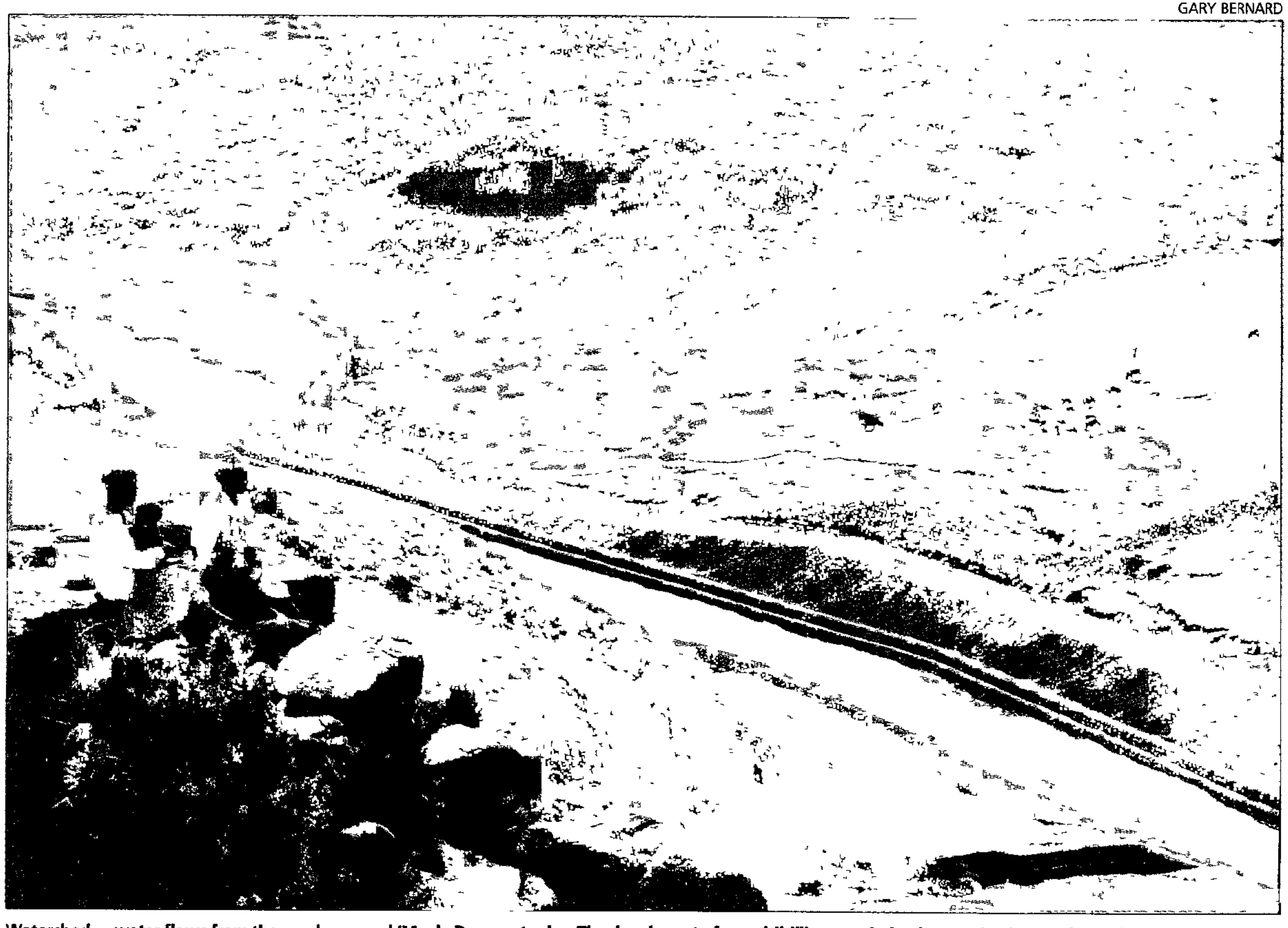
The two bids would now be studied by a five-person evaluation team, and the successful bidder would be announced on September 22, Mashologu said

The successful bidder will hold an as-yet unspecified portion of the milling company Another portion will be held by the Lesotho government for later sale to Basotho investors.

Abut 30 state-owned enterprises are earmarked for privatisation in Lesotho

So far only one successful bidder has been announced — the South African charter airline Rose Air, which won the bidding for Lesotho Airways — Independent Foreign Service

GARY BERNARD



Watershed ... water flows from the newly opened 'Muela Dam yesterday. The dam is part of a multibillion-rand plan by South Africa and Lesotho to pump water to Gauteng and enable Lesotho to generate its own electricity.

Joy greets opening of Lesotho dam

(167) Star 25/9/97

BY FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA

Gauteng residents could soon start drawing from an alternative source of water after the 'Muela dam in the Lesotho Highlands gushed its first litres to the South African province yesterday.

Thousands of villagers declared the day an unofficial holiday to quench their thirst and witness the plan to see Lesotho dampen its dependence on South Africa for its energy needs.

The release of the water marked the completion of the first phase of the Lesotho Highlands water project – a R19-billion joint South Africa-Lesotho venture to build two dams in Lesotho that would supply South African households and industries and generate electricity for the mountain kingdom over 30 years.

Villagers in their Sunday best and children in school uniform stood for hours on the hilltops of the Maluti mountains, waiting for the dam's sluices to be opened to the hydro-electric plant. Jubilation flowed in the village when the gates opened.

It was not clear how much more Gauteng residents would have to pay for their water because Rand Water in May increased tariffs to pay for the Lesotho project.

New voice threatens Telkom

ST(BD)30/9/97(167)

SHERILEE BRIDGE

Johannesburg — Internet telephony could squeeze up to $2 billion a year in revenue out of international telecommunications service providers and cost Telkom up to $46 million a year by 2000, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), said yesterday

It is estimated that Telkom, South Africa's state controlled telecommunications utility, would lose about $1,4 million of its $322 million international revenue to the Internet this year

Telkom refused to comment on the effects Internet telephony would have on its business

Telkom has not cited the threat of Internet Protocol (IP) telephony as the reason it asked the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra) to rule on IP control

Telkom has argued that the exclusive privilege granted it in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 should be extended to allow it to monopolise the provision of "basic Internet services"

Telkom said that would allow it greater scope to roll out Internet access to rural communities and the public

Satra's Advisory Committee on Internet Protocol held its first formal meeting last week when members deliberated the question of Internet access Satra is expected to announce its ruling on October 14

The ITU said it expected the overall proportion of international traffic diverted from the public network to the Internet to grow from 0,6 percent this year to 6,38 percent in 2001

The rise in Internet telephony, e-mail and Internet fax are expected to take a large bite out of the core business earnings of 16 of the world's major telecommunications companies, which together account for more than a quarter of the world's international call traffic

The ITU said Internet service providers and progressive telecommunications companies which provided their own Internet services had embraced the technology More conservative telephone companies and their regulators, however, have doubled efforts to stop IP telephony

Internet telephony is expected to have the greatest impact in developing countries with poor-quality and expensive international telephone services

The use of the Internet for international telephony will soar in the next few years, said ITU

This year, the 16 telecommunications companies expected to be most affected by IP telephony stand to lose $20 million to Internet telephony and $132 million to Internet e-mail services

Coronation expected to draw thousands

BD 30/10/97 (312) (167)

MASERU — The national stadium in Lesotho's capital of Maseru will be thronged by 40 000 Basotho people and a host of African "VVIPs", as well as ordinary VIPs and special guests when the 34-year-old Letsie is crowned king of the Basotho nation tomorrow

The list of those invited is impressive — presidents Nelson Mandela of SA, Ketumile Masire of Botswana, Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, Joachim Chissano of Mozambique and Sam Nujoma of Namibia are to attend

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe is sending is Vice-President SV Muzenda

Bakili Muluzi of Malawi will send his minister of state and Angola's Eduardo dos Santos his national assembly president, Robert de Almeida

Britain's Prince Charles will be representing Queen Elizabeth

The occasion has presented organisers with a huge protocol headache, because the invitations include African ex-leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, John Tembo of Malawi and Terror Lekota, former Free State premier

A solution seemed to have been to create a category of very, very important persons (VVIPs) for those in government and very important persons (VIPs) for those who were and no longer are

Letsie succeeds his father, King Moshoeshoe, who died in a motor car accident in January last year

He inherits an institution watered down from that of an executive monarch with extensive powers to what is today largely a symbolic role.

The independence constitution of 1966 gave King Moshoeshoe power to dissolve parliament or fire a prime minister The 1992-93 constitution removed this power

Clashes with politicians had twice forced Letsie's father into exile — to Holland in 1970 when he opposed late prime minister Leabua Jonathan's usurpation of power, and to Britain in 1990.

Then, military ruler Maj-Gen Justin Lekhanya stripped Moshoeshoe of power for refusing to sign the order expelling the king's two cousins, colonels Thabe Letsie and Sekhobe Letsie from Lesotho's ruling military command

Military government

Moshoeshoe's eldest son, crown prince David Mohato Seeiso, was then installed by the military government as King Letsie while his father remained in exile Tomorrow's coronation sees his induction as the Basotho nation's official head of state

Although heavily stripped of power, Letsie has already clashed with the government — firing the Basotuland Congress Party administration in 1994 and replacing it with his caretaker one

But the general feeling is that the quiet-spoken king, who obtained an MA in agriculture economics in Britain, acted to save his father from going through an embarrassing investigation

Last year, after his father died, it took Letsie a long time to assume the throne, raising concerns among the Basotho people that he was simply not interested

It was perhaps Letsie's nightmare year as unfolding events called for intervention he was unable to perform

First it was a national police strike in February which culminated in the military forcing them to return to work

The police strike leaders, 2nd Lt Phakiso Modise — who is regarded as a personal friend of the king — and Sgt Thabang Makateng sought refuge in the palace before fleeing to SA, angering the Lesotho government.

Then, last June, Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle broke ranks with his Basotuland Congress party and formed the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, vesting the administration of government in it

The main parties, the Basotholand National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party staged demonstrations urging the king to sack Mokhehle, dissolve parliament and call elections Letsie kept silent

Whether he can — or wants to — keep silent after tomorrow's ceremony remains to be seen The government, say insiders, may face a $2m bill for the coronation, a budget "afterthought" not included in state spending estimates —Sapa-DPA

Lesotho crowns new king

ARG 31/10/97 (167)

Maseru – Lesotho King Letsie III was crowned with a headband and feather and robed in wild animal skins today in a colourful ceremony attended by dignitaries including President Mandela and Britain's Prince Charles

King Letsie, who gave oath last year after the death of his father and predecessor, King Moshoeshoe II, was crowned by his uncle, a traditional Basutho chief, on a podium before about 15 000 people at Setsoto Stadium

Several senior ministers of the Lesotho Council of Churches then laid hands on the king and offered prayers for long life and prosperity

Thousands of blanket-clad Lesotho citizens had gathered in the capital for the coronation of the 34-year-old King Letsie, who has ruled this tiny southern African state once before He briefly claimed the kingship in the early '90s following a coup in which his father was exiled, but stepped down in favour of the elder royal.

Lesotho has been fraught by on-again off-again political instability for several decades Its government, which is almost entirely dependent on its sole neighbour for economic income, is led by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, who has promised elections for next year

The premier fought off a power bid by members of his own Basutholand Congress Party (BCP) earlier this year, and formed a breakaway movement which has since held on to the reigns of government – Sapa-AFP

Crown but no power for Lesotho's young monarch

Star 30/10/97
(167)

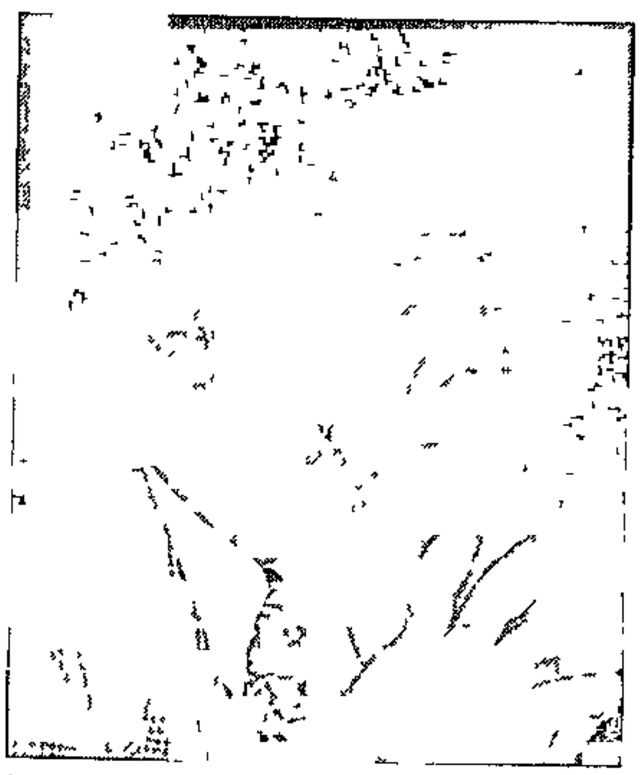
By Khitsiso Sekoati
Star Foreign Service

Maseru – The coronation of King Letsie III tomorrow is the major topic all over Lesotho.

Roads leading to the stadium in the capital have been repaired to allow smooth driving, but the 34-year-old monarch has walked a rough road since taking over the kingdom

He is being crowned at a time when the country's political future is under scrutiny since the newly founded Lesotho Congress for Democracy of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle grabbed power from the Basutoland Congress Party, itself founded by Mokhehle.

Senators opposed to Mokhehle's defection from the Basutoland Congress Party, which had overwhelmingly emerged victorious in the 1993



Letsie III ... an expensive monument

polls, have sent out a petition demanding that he dissolve parliament He has yet to react

The magnificent occasion in the life of the bachelor king is a unifying factor among the population of 2 million But it also highlights his plight as a figurehead with no administrative powers Only the king's right-hand man, the frail Mokhehle, can run the whole show

In fact, this powerless monarch will be presented to the nation by Mokhehle

Letsie was sworn in as king by the military rulers who sent his father, the late King Moshoeshoe II, into exile in England

The king learnt a lesson from the Lesotho army – toppling the government, which he did when he dissolved the parliament of the Basutoland Congress Party administration and suspended some parts of the national constitution to coerce the ailing prime minister to bow to domestic demands for good governance.

For Justice and Law Minister Sephiri Motanyane, the occasion means little more than a presentation of the king to the nation and the acknowledgement of Letsie's status as monarch

However, for opposition senator Vincent Malebo, campaigning for the dissolution of parliament, his Marematlou Freedom Party regards the occasion as the "culmination of a wish of the people to have the monarchy and the country to continue in its constitutional form as a kingdom"

With this event, Letsie is reassured that the country will remain a kingdom for many years. But it remains fascinating that he is being crowned by an unelected ruler who slipped in to rule in a June declaration by Mokhehle that he had formed a new party which effectively took power

Referring to the usurping of power, Malebo said: "The coronation has nothing to do with the foolishness of the prime minister It (the occasion) must come when it should We may not like it at the moment, but it must take place because it's the nation doing it."

He denies allegations that the opposition's plea to the monarch to dissolve parliament is designed to pull him into politics, saying: "He's our king He must take pressure from us We can't go to Mandela, Masire or Mugabe"

However, the constitution has stripped the king of power, so he can't do anything without the advice of the premier

The scrapped 1966 constitution empowered a king to act with his own judgment in performing functions relating to, among others, dissolution of parliament and appointment and removal of the prime minister

His inability to exercise any powers independently has turned him into an expensive monument, and the Basutoland Congress Party has long tried to expose him as such

'Phone price hike hits the poor'

Unions, business slam Telkom's policy on local calls

ARG 6/11/97 (167)

LLEWELLYN JONES
BUSINESS REPORTER

The hike in Telkom's local call rates announced this week is likely to impact hardest on poorer communities, according to trade union groupings, greatly increase the cost of doing business, according to business groupings – and will certainly not be the last big hike in call charges, according to Telkom.

The 25 % price increase for local telephone calls effective from January 1 comes on the back of a 28,8% increase last year

From January local calls for three minutes during standard time will increase by 7,7c to 38,6, business and residential installations will rise by R28,38 to R192,38, and business rental will jump by R8,38 to R64,24 a line Residential rental will increase by R5,95 to R55,54

National calls will, however, drop to R3,55 from R4,09 for three minutes International tariffs are being negotiated, but the trend is downward

Announcing the price increase for local calls, Telkom chief operating officer Mac Geschwind warned there was likely to be another hefty price increase in 1999 as the price of local calls was still not covering the cost to Telkom

Victor Moche, Telkom's public relations group executive, said this was part of a three-year rebalancing programme to end the cross-subsidisation of local telephone calls by national and international telephone calls

"We have to bring rates in line with costs – local rates will continue to rise until they cover costs, and national and international calls will continue to decline," Mr Moche said

He was unable to give a ballpark figure for the expected price hike in 1999

"That depends on Telkom's performance and what still needs to be done in terms of the five-year monopoly agreement"

But if Telkom tacks on similar increases next year, consumers could easily be paying as much as 50c for a three-minute call by the year 2000

Western Cape secretary general of Cosatu, Tony Ehrenreich, deplored the hike in the price of local calls

"The poorer sections of our communities will have to bear the brunt of the increase," Mr Ehrenreich said

'Telephone rates should be structured differently to take this into account"

But Alan Lighton, an executive director of the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry, believed business would be hardest hit

"To add to the cost of doing business will undermine the competitive position of South African companies in the global market," Mr Lighton said

"We are concerned that Telkom is taking advantage of its monopoly position and state protection in order to finance the extension of telephone services to disadvantaged communities in far flung parts of the country

"The net effect of the rate hike for local calls is yet another tax to be borne by business

"If the state wants to extend services to rural communities, it should do this out of ordinary tax collections," he said



MANDLA MNYAKAMA

Useless: township residents who already have to contend with vandalised telephones like this one, a common sight in Cape Town's townships, now face huge increases in phone call charges too

King's balancing act

Sowetan 25/11/97 (167)

Lesotho's King Letsie III has a tough assignment as he tries to keep the monarchy relevant and out of politics. **Ben Molapo** explains why this task is so daunting...

THERE is no doubt that the monarchy in Lesotho is an institution which has, and continues to be, at the centre of political controversy

The Marematlo Freedom Party uses it as a constituency-splitting wedge The National Independence Party is forever agonising about it while both the Basotho National Party (BNP) and Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) have been at odds with it at various times

What gets lost in the whole political furore is that King Letsie III is meant to continue the legacy of the nation s founder, Moshoeshoe I

It is an attempt, however politically ill-conceived and alienated from its constituency, meant to preserve the history of the Basotho as a nation

Basotho in and outside Lesotho's current borders have to apply their minds to issues of the monarchy to determine their destiny

The converse is that the newly crowned king will, like his father, continue to be scorned as multipartyism deepens its roots

Once dethroned, Letsie III s father was scorned and this cannot be morally and politically viable

Lesotho's constitutional monarchy is based on the British constitutional model and has brought disrespect to the legacy of the founder Many Basotho of Letsie III's generation tend to doubt the monarchy's significance

The institution needs be put under the microscope to examine and redefine its role in Lesotho Perhaps a referendum on the institution should have been considered before this month's coronation ceremony

In the light of history, it is necessary to ask whether Lesotho still needs a king and how best the Basotho can preserve their historical heritage without compromising the significance of the country's royal institution

True son of the soil

There is no doubt that among Basotho and throughout Southern Africa the name Moshoeshoe I will, for generations, not only be in bold letters in history books, but be remembered as a true son of the soil who fought tirelessly against Anglo-Boer expansionist and colonial movements

His diplomacy and militant and skilful leadership saved his people from the fate of his contemporaries in the region

Moshoeshoe's words are timeless and form part of common proverbs quoted by Basotho His sayings like *"U ka nketsang ha e hahe motse"* (fighting never built anything) describe the style of his leadership, which was in contrast to that of his contemporary, Shaka Zulu

Though proverbs like this continue to be commonly used, the reality of Lesotho political



Letsie III was crowned king of the Basotho nation earlier this month.

history reflects quite the opposite The country's political landscape has, and continues to be, marked by intolerance and ideological bankruptcy among politicians

As a result, the monarchy several times burnt its fingers by intervening in political squabbles since independence in 1966

The former king was exiled to the Netherlands in 1970 and England in 1990

And Lesotho's oldest political party, the BCP, led by Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, spent most of its post-independence period in exile, not actively involved in local politics for years

As a result, the two key stakeholders in Lesotho politics the BNP and BCP, have developed a deep-seated hatred for each other They have developed almost unbridgeable chasms between their thinking

They have never been able to see eye to eye on any issue of national interest In fact, party interests seem to be driving their political agenda rather than national interests

It is against this background that Letsie III inherited the throne

For him it will be a bumpy ride In fact, the 34-year-old king has already been politically at odds with the BCP – in 1994 he dismissed Mokhehle's government and replaced it with a caretaker one

The issue at stake was the reinstatement of his father whom the military government had deposed in 1990

Living in the legacy of a leader of Moshoeshoe's calibre is understandably difficult The constitution adopted at independence stripped the king of executive powers

Unlike Moshoeshoe I, who directed the political course of the country, the king under the present constitution cannot do the same But the public cannot make a distinction between these phases of Lesotho royal history

The monarchy has been dragged into political squabbles by politicians and others who seek the king's intervention

The escape of police strike leaders to South Africa after seeking asylum at the palace in February is a case in point The government was reportedly angered by the role played by the palace in the episode

In another incident, the BNP, BCP, MFP and other groups brought the king into the centre of political controversy by urging him to intervene after Mokhehle formed a new party to usurp power The king remained silent

Lesotho's post-independence history, if not that of the whole of Africa, remains a painful reminder of how much historical treasure has been lost by religiously adopting Western multiparty democracy

Feudalistic state

The system has not only failed to take the interests of common people aboard, but alienated Africans from social and political institutions that form the basis of Africa's existence

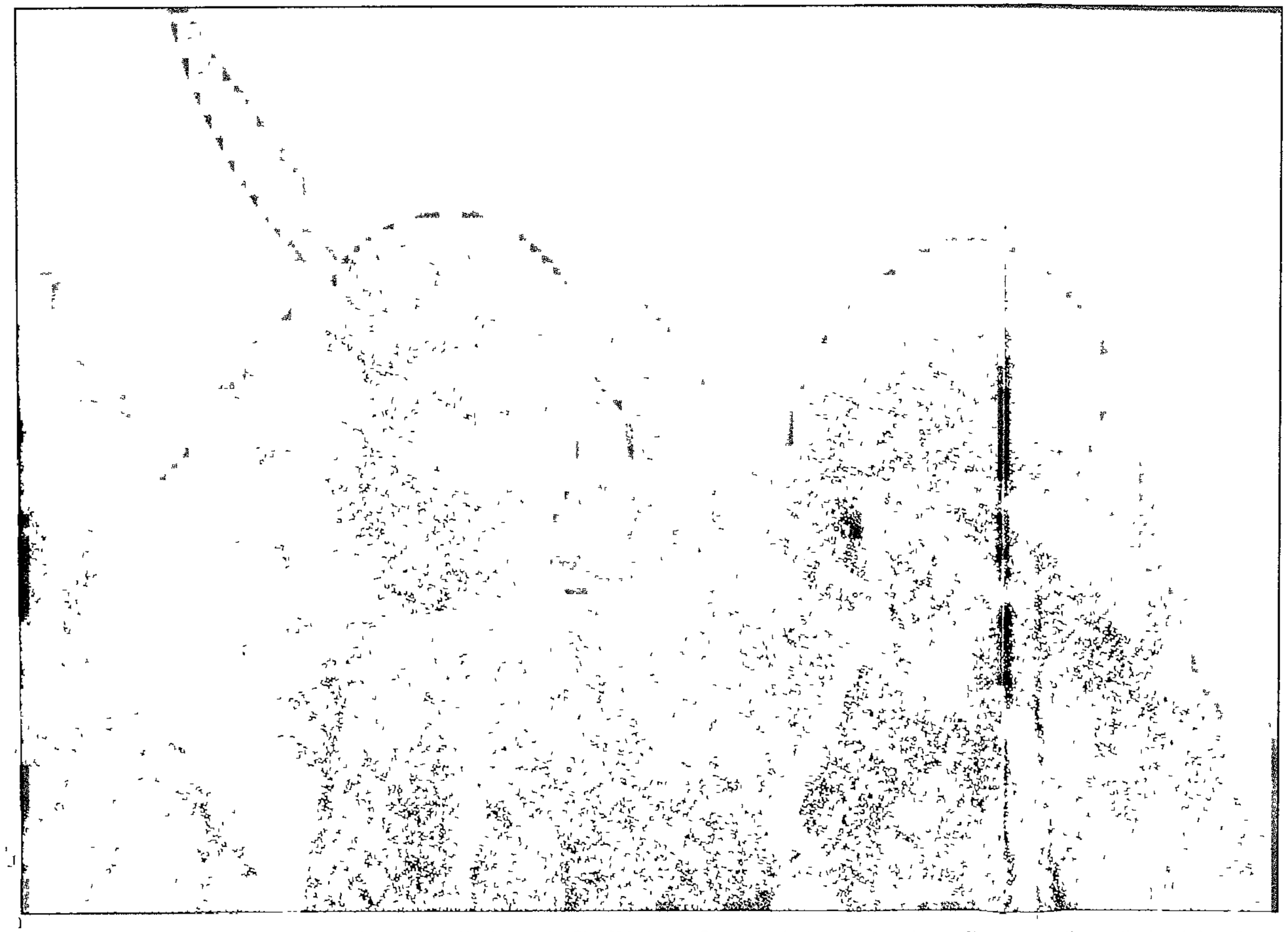
This, however, does not suggest that Lesotho should move back to a medieval feudalistic state or an absolute monarchy Any attempt to do so would fail

What is needed is to re-examine the role played by the traditional system of governance and integrating that into a modern form

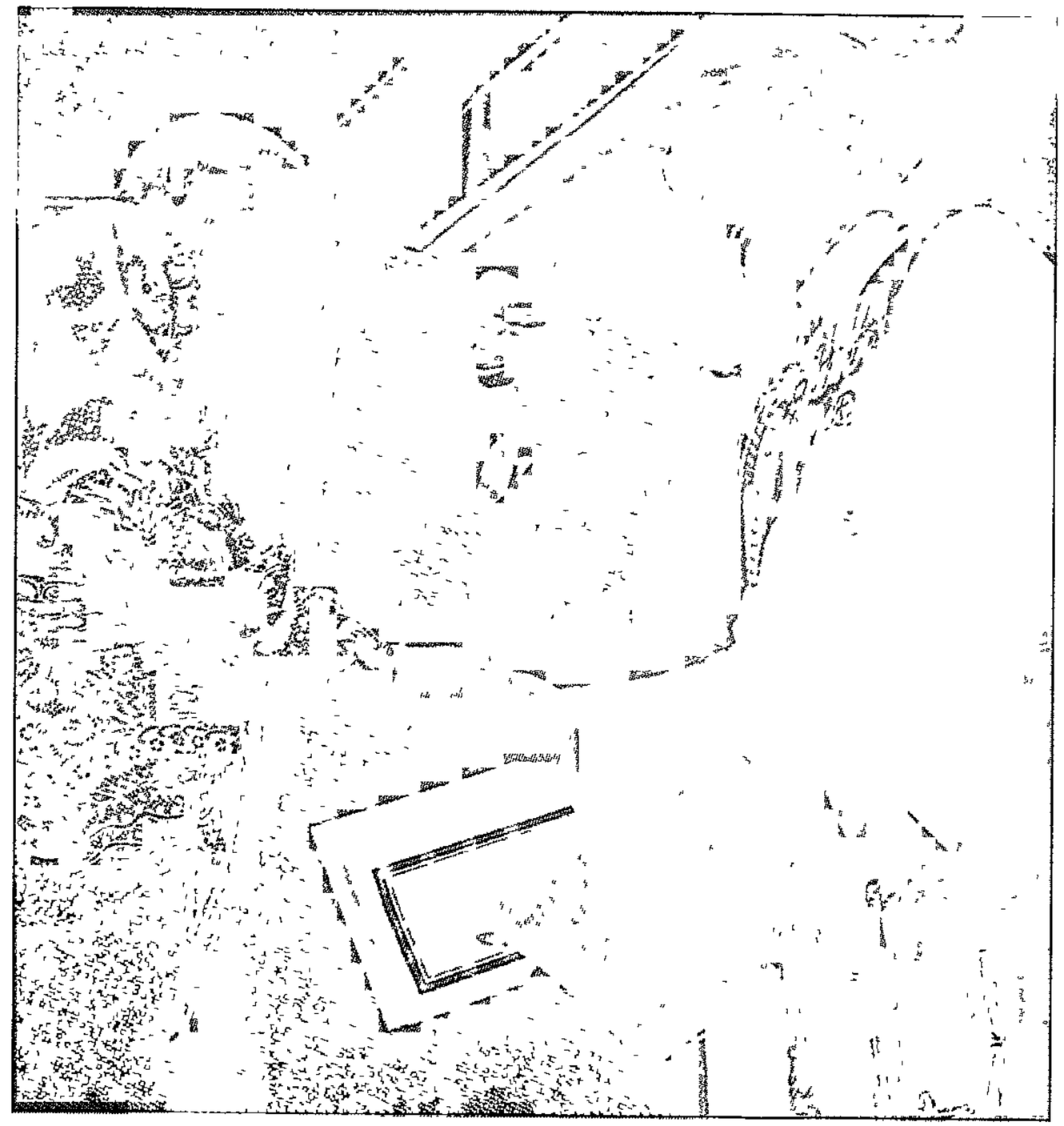
It is therefore necessary for Basotho to ask themselves whether they have adopted an appropriate vehicle – a constitutional monarchy – to carry forth the legacy of Southern Africa's legend, Moshoeshoe I

(The writer currently works for the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa as media officer. He writes in his personal capacity)

Mocheso, pula, mabele, Letsie III



ROYAL HONOURS . . . *Lesotho King Letsie III is crowned by his uncle, Chief Mathealia Seeiso, in the Lesotho kingdom on Friday. The feather on the king's headband is from the nearly-extinct Lesotho bird Mohololi, which resembles a stork or a crane, and the skins are leopard and bushbuck skins*



ROYAL GUESTS . . . *The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, and King Mswati of Swaziland share a joke with President Nelson Mandela during the coronation ceremony*

■ **Pics: TLADI KHUELE**

Right Royal gathering honours the new King

LESOTHO King Letsie III was crowned with a headband and feather and robed in wild animal skins on Friday in a colourful, symbolic ceremony attended by Britain's Prince Charles and other dignitaries

Letsie, who gave oath last year after the death of his father and predecessor, Moshoeshoe II, was bestowed the royal honours by his uncle, a traditional Basotho chief, on a podium before about 15 000 people at the Setsoto Stadium.

The symbolic traditional garb – first worn by Lesotho's founding king, Moshoeshoe I, seven generations ago – was carefully placed over Letsie's deep blue military suit as the crowd ululated and whistled at their leader

Senior ministers of the Lesotho Council of Churches then laid hands on the king of this tiny, politically divided southern African state, and offered prayers for his long life and prosperity

Afterwards, bare-breasted girls wearing ochre-coloured body paint performed traditional dances, and several large choirs sang tributes to the monarch as smoke-trailing helicopters whirled overhead

Lesotho, a tiny mountainous state completely surrounded by South Africa, is one of the poorest yet most spectacularly scenic countries in the world

The country has been fraught by on-again off-again political instability for several decades, but appears united around its 34-year-old king, who is unmarried and reportedly searching for a wife

The Prince of Wales, on the second leg of a three-country African tour, offered Letsie congratulations on behalf of Queen Elizabeth, who visited Lesotho as a young princess exactly fifty years ago with her father, King George

"I retain happy memories of my short stay I know a great deal has changed in the intervening period and the pace of change continues to increase," Charles said, reading his mother's statement.

She added wishes for "Khotso, pula, nala (peace, long reign and prosperity)" to the new monarch on behalf of the Commonwealth, to which Lesotho belongs

Thousands of blanket-clad Lesotho citizens had gathered in the capital for the coronation of the 34-year-old Letsie, who has ruled this country once before.

(167) CP 2/11/97



WHAT A JOKE . . . *Northern Province Premier Ngoako Ramatlhodi (left) seems to be sharing a joke with royalty – King Mswati of Swaziland and King Letsie III of Lesotho – at the coronation*

Lesotho's government, which is almost entirely dependent on its sole neighbour for economic income, is led by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, who has promised elections for next year

Mokhehle, who is in his seventies and has been ill for some time, spoke in a halting, coughing voice and called for peace and reconciliation between his politically divided people.

The premier fought off a power bid by members of his own Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) earlier this year, and formed a breakaway movement which has since held onto the reins of government.

Letsie was briefly king in the early 1990s, when his father was exiled by a coup

The younger royal was never crowned, however, and he later stepped down in favour of his father – saying he was warming the seat for him

Political observers have speculated the latest coronation could help settle political troubles

The Prince of Wales, who arrived on Thursday on the second leg of his regional tour, was joined by state leaders like South Africa's President Nelson Mandela and Swazilands King Mswati II

Other dignitaries at Friday's ceremony were Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano, the Zulu king of South Africa, King Goodwill Zwelithini, and South Africa's Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Mandela praised the Lesotho monarchy for fighting for "freedom in southern Africa" but said the new monarchy, like neighbouring states, faced new challenges of poverty – Sapa-AFP



KING MEETS KING . . . *The Zulu monarch, King Goodwill Zwelithini, meets King Letsie III of Lesotho after his coronation ceremony in Lesotho on Friday*

Lesotho takes action to prevent doomsday forecasts

Star 1/12/97 (167)

By Joe Molefi
Star Foreign Service

Maseru – Lesotho commemorates World Aids Day today against the background of a spiralling HIV/Aids pandemic and estimates that, if present trends continue, more than 40 000 people in the country will have full-blown Aids in four years' time

This alarming prediction is contained in an Aids update by Lesotho's National Aids Prevention and Control Programme (NAPCP) published in Maseru last week

Sex industry, migration blamed for rising toll

The report warns that "the HIV/Aids pandemic in Lesotho poses a grave threat to the people of Lesotho, with the potential for devastating consequences to the social and economic development of the country"

The government intends to adopt a multisectoral approach to combat Aids It aims to involve government ministries; quasi-governmental organisations, the private sector; institutions of higher learning; non-government organisations such as the Red Cross, Care and the Christian Health Association of Lesotho; and members of the donor community.

The NAPCP will act as the secretariat to the national response and play the leading role in areas of advocacy, mobilisation of partners, policy formulation, strategic planning, co-ordination and monitoring, and evaluation

The key objectives are to prevent sexual transmission of HIV infection, to ensure HIV-free blood transfusion, to reduce the risk of prenatal transmission, to effectively manage conventional sexually transmitted diseases, and to reduce the personal and social impact of HIV infection and Aids

According to the NAPCP, the number of reported Aids cases rose to 2 400 by the middle of this year. The number of new cases reported at hospitals in the country continued to increase at an alarming rate, until it reached the highest annual figure of 936 last year.

The latest available data indicates that the capital Maseru has the highest prevalence rate About 43% of women who are HIV positive are found in Maseru.

Most Aids cases are young people between 19 and 39 years and children under 5. The number of children orphaned by Aids is also on the increase.

The 20-39 age group constitutes 65% of the reported cases, in which there are more females than males In the 40-59 age group, however, male cases are dominant

Prevention drive even before onset of sexual activity

The report adds that the high rate of HIV infection in young women and men under 20 calls for strong prevention programmes for teenagers – before, and not only after, the onset of sexual activity.

The movement of men from Lesotho to South Africa in search of employment has been associated with the high risk of HIV infection among the migrants, as well as their spouses or regular sexual partners upon their return home.

Migration within Lesotho from rural to urban areas has led to high concentrations of predominantly male communities and increased participation in commercial sex in the urban areas of Maseru, Leribe and at the Katse Dam in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project area.

World Aids Day commemoration programmes will include:

- The education of villagers through songs
- The distribution of teaching and information programmes on sexually transmitted diseases, as well as HIV/Aids, by members of the Lesotho Defence Force in the Leribe district
- Church services, by member churches of the Christian Council of Lesotho, to pray for people living with HIV/Aids and their families.
- A raffle by Berea Hospital to initiate a fund for children orphaned as a result of Aids. The funds will be used to provide food and clothing and school fees for some of these children
- A presentation by pre-school children who will stage a play and present songs on the plight of children affected by HIV and Aids, organised by Leribe Hospital.

Real power is economic

R305-m loan deal for water scheme

Sowetan 2/12/97 (167)

Loan agreement will finance the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

By Shadrack Mashalaba

TRANS-CALEDON Tunnel Authority and the Development Bank of Southern Africa signed a R305 million loan agreement to finance the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The 20-year loan will be used to finance the construction and upgrading of the Ash River and Liebensberg-Vlei rivers which will carry water to the Vaal Dam Once completed, the project's Phase 1A will have cost R3,9 billion

The loan will be subject to a floating interest rate linked to the bankers' acceptance rate with the option of a fixed interest rate

DBSA's chief executive Dr Ian Goldin said "The bank supports the Lesotho Highlands Water Project as a catalyst for an integrated southern African economic development

"It fosters the principle of economic co-operation across national boundaries through the allocation and efficient utilisation of water resources

"This includes appropriate commitments from the governments involved with long-term sustainable support to the affected communities and the environment"

> **"Project will have a wider effect on electricity supply"**

Phase 1A of the project will be completed in January and will be officially opened towards the end of the same month by President Nelson Mandela and Lesotho's King Letsie III

Historic moment

Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) chief executive Stuart Downie said "This is a historic moment for authority since it is the first time that we have signed a loan directly with DBSA and also without the security of a government guarantee

"All other loans granted to the project by the DBSA were signed directly with the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority"

TCTA was formed in 1986 before the start of the LHWP It is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the project on behalf of South Africa

Downie said his organisation had in the past relied on funds from both foreign and local capital and money markets

Phase 1A of the project comprised the 185 metre high Katse Dam, a 48km transfer tunnel a 16km delivery tunnel south of the Muela reservoir and another 22km delivery tunnel from the border to South Africa

"Not only does the project offer the most economically viable option to provide additional water supply to South Africa's industrial heartland – Gauteng – but its development support function will have a wider effect on electricity supply, tourism and job opportunities," said Goldin

DBSA gives R305m loan to Lesotho water project

(167) BD 2/12/97

Robyn Chalmers

THE Development Bank of SA and the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority signed a R305m loan agreement yesterday to help finance Phase 1A of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The 20-year loan would go towards the total R3,9bn cost of Phase 1A, which was due for completion early next year The loan was subject to a floating interest rate linked to bankers' acceptance with the option to fix the interest rate

Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority CE Stuart Downie said it was the first time the authority had signed a loan directly with the development bank, without the security of a government guarantee He said all other loans granted to the project by the bank had been signed directly with the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

Bank CE Ian Goldin said the bank supported the water project as a catalyst for integrated regional development in southern Africa

"It fosters the principle of economic co-operation across national boundaries via, inter alia, the effective allocation and efficient use of water resources (The project) includes appropriate commitments from government involved with long-term sustainable support to the affected communities and environment," he said

Phase 1A of the project consists of a 185m-high concrete arch for the Katse Dam, a 48km transfer tunnel, two delivery tunnels, upgrading the water-works along the Ash and Liebenbergsvlei rivers, and repairing any resulting environmental damage

The Katse Dam and the tunnel system will transfer about 17m³ a second of water from the Lesotho Highlands to the Vaal Dam system

Goldin said the project offered the most economically viable option to provide additional water supply to Gauteng It would also enable other development initiatives in Lesotho, such as electricity supply

Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority secures R305m loan

DBSA puts faith in Lesotho water plan

CT(BR) 2/12/97 ~~183~~ (167)

RICHARD STOVIN-BRADFORD
BANKING EDITOR

Johannesburg — The Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, which is responsible for the South African side of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) yesterday signed their first loan agreement, worth R305 million over 20 years, the company said.

The loan, which established a number of precedents for both borrower and lender, would be used to finance just under 8 percent of the estimated R3,9 billion total cost of Phase 1A of the project, which was expected to be ready for water delivery in January Phase 1A comprises the Katse Dam and tunnel system which will transfer water from Lesotho to the Vaal Dam

DBSA's loan is the first it has made at a floating-rate, with the interest margin linked to the Safex BA rate

Flexibility was built into the facility as Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority had the option to switch to fixed-rate funding during the life of the loan, said Stuart Downie, Trans-Caledon's chief executive

The pricing was below that of alternative funding sources available to Trans-Caledon, according to Ian Goldin, the chief executive of DBSA

"It is significant that all the funding came from the private sector," said Downie

The lack of guarantee marked another first for Trans-Caledon and reflected DBSA's recognition that the project was self-sustaining financially DBSA had been a supporter of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority since inception, said Goldin

The project not only offered the most economically-viable option to provide additional water supply to Gauteng, but also provided development support to Lesotho in electricity supply, jobs, tourism and entrepreneurial development, said Goldin

The bi-national co-operation would soon lead to the completion of Phase 1A "with Lesotho's surplus water being gushed to our arid South African ground", concluded Downie

SA NEWS DIGEST

BANKING

Standard completes listing of Sugar Corporation in Malawi

Standard Corporate and Merchant Bank, which has affiliates in 15 sub-Saharan African countries, recently completed the listing of the Sugar Corporation of Malawi (Sucoma) on that country's stock exchange, the bank said yesterday Sucoma had a market capitalisation of about R1 billion on listing, making it the largest listing in the region outside South Africa It was only the third company to be listed on the Malawian stock exchange

Before the listing Standard Corporate and Merchant Bank spent three months restructuring Malawi's two state-owned sugar companies under the Sucoma umbrella, leaving Illovo Sugar — through Lonrho Sugar Corporation — with control of 56,1 percent of Sucoma, and the Malawian government with about 35 percent The public offer, of 5,9 percent of the equity, was three times subscribed The share price had risen 27 percent to 2,85 kwacha (86c) from the November listing price of 2,25 kwacha, said Joubert van Wyk of the bank's Corporate Finance Africa division "More shares in Sucoma changed hands on the first day of trade than for the year as a whole," said Van Wyk — *Richard Stovin-Bradford, Johannesburg*

(170) CT(BR) 4/2/97

Waterless Malawians lash out (170) at board

Star 8/12/97

Blantyre – The Blantyre Water Board is being accused of failing to supply safe and clean water to residents in Blantyre, Malawi's commercial centre.

The board has been bombarded by complaints from irate residents

Abudu Soko, a resident of Ndirande – the largest township in the city with a population of 200 000 people – complained of having had no water for a week

He said when the water was reconnected it was muddy and not fit to drink

The board, however, maintains that it is doing its best

A spokesman from the water board said that a

Muddy and impossible to drink

drought four years ago had been the cause of the problems, with inflow having been drastically reduced from the main source, the Shire River

Due to frequent water shortages in the city many residents are reported to have resorted to using untreated water from nearby streams and rivers.

Health officials say this has resulted in the prevalence of waterborne diseases

The Minister of Water Development, Edward Bwanali, said recently that the board should improve its efficiency first before asking the government to intervene – Star Foreign Service-AIA



Soweto children beat the recent heat with the help of a hose. Picture TREVOR SAMSON

Mine fails to gain access to papers

(167) BD 15/12/97

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — Swissbourgh Diamond Mines has failed to gain access to government documents required for a R1bn damages claim relating to the loss of mining rights in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project area.

High Court judge Meyer Joffe dismissed with costs two applications by Swissbourgh for access to documentation relating to the agreement between SA and Lesotho for the establishment of the water project.

The company announced at the weekend it would appeal against the judgment. The company and its SA shareholders would also launch a separate application in the Constitutional Court for access to all documents in possession of and/or under the control of the SA government, the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority, the Lesotho government, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, the Joint Permanent Technical Commission and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and its financiers.

The company, which claimed it obtained mining rights in the Katse Dam area in 1988 — two years after SA and Lesotho signed the treaty — alleges a conspiracy between the two governments to deprive Swissbourgh of its diamond-mining rights. To prove its case for R945m damages for loss of income after its mining rights were invalidated, Swissbourgh stated it required access to government documentation relating to the water project.

Joffe upheld an argument by government lawyers that the documents were protected by legal, state and international privilege and that Swissbourgh therefore had no right to them.

At the same time, the Lesotho chief justice on Friday also dismissed a similar application launched by Swissbourgh in Maseru against the Lesotho government

Joffe also ruled subpoenas issued by Swissbourgh for Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal and three of his officials to testify in Maseru were not enforceable. The Maseru case involves the validity of five diamond mining leases granted by the Lesotho military council near the water project

The claims for damages are expected to be before court next year.

LESOTHO - GENERAL

1998

JAN - SEP



SA's President Nelson Mandela, right, chats to Lesotho's King Letsie III on the banks of the Muela Dam yesterday at the official launch of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

Picture TREVOR SAMSON

SA and Lesotho hail end of water project's first phase

(167)

Josey Ballenger BD 28/1/98

'MUELA — Southern African authorities and crowds of supporters yesterday celebrated the completion of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project's R7,5bn first phase, hailing it as a world-class socioeconomic and engineering achievement.

The celebration formally marked the start of the transfer of water through a complex web of dams and underground tunnels from Lesotho to drought-prone Gauteng

The first phase of the project included the construction of the 185m-high Katse Dam; the 45km transfer tunnel to 'Muela dam, the 35km delivery tunnel to the Ash River, which forms part of the Vaal catchment in SA, and a 274kw hydroelectric power station to supply Lesotho.

The celebration included Olympic-style torch bearers and parachutists who landed with "international missives" of peace. President Nelson Mandela and Lesotho's King Letsie III set individual white pigeons free before an entire flock was released Screens highlighted the project's progress since 1986, and fireworks over the 'Muele Dam formed the finale.

Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal dubbed the project a "part of the renewal of our region and a renaissance and rebuilding of Africa"

Mandela said the "resounding success" of the project "testifies to the powerful spirit of co-operation as Africa lifts itself through its own efforts, with the support of the international community"

King Letsie III said the collective mood among politicians had been "guarded" at earlier project landmarks "as though we could not freely enjoy celebrating an incomplete project Today, however, our freedom of enjoyment is evident"

Lesotho's Natural Resources Minister Skakhane Mokhehle noted the project was one of the largest construction feats in the world, and the largest in southern Africa. The project had come in "largely on time and within budget".

The governments praised the socioeconomic benefits of the project, including the creation of 7 000 jobs at its peak for Basothos, a R350m development fund to Lesotho's benefit, and a surge in Lesotho's gross domestic product (GDP) growth to 14%. In 1994, the peak construction year, project expenditure accounted for more than 25% of Lesotho's GDP

Water, sanitation, electricity and communications services were provided to rural areas in Lesotho Skills training, clinics and schools in directly affected areas had also improved the quality of life.

Authorities emphasised that the original project treaty had been modified to take social and environmental issues into consideration. Phase 1B, whose construction is due to start soon, would take the "lessons learned" during the first phase to heart

Mandela said the project, which had been initiated by the apartheid and military regimes, had been "transformed into a fine instrument of development and progress for all".

However, Reuter reports international and SA environmental groups and a Lesotho-based church group said the project had damaged the environment and "adversely affected a great number of people"

SA radio said Asmal admitted project authorities were slow in dealing with the impact on the villagers.

King Letsie melts as water flows

ART 23/11/98 (167)



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Big moment: King Letsie III and President Mandela push the button to start the flow

Muela, Lesotho – King Letsie III, his eye caught by many beautiful young girls at the opening of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, announced he might have found his future queen.

King Letsie, 35, said he had admired the girls invited to entertain guests at the ceremony yesterday, and told President Mandela that his long search for the future queen of Lesotho might have ended A young maiden at the ceremony had caught his eye

Mr Mandela, who helped King Letsie launch the water project, said the Lesotho Highlands scheme was proof of the powerful spirit of co-operation growing in Africa

Water from the R10-billion project travels through 35km of channels from the Katse Dam in the Lesotho Highlands to Muela Dam From Muela the water is channelled 30km to the Ash River, which crosses the South African border and eventually links with the Vaal River

"The resounding success of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project testifies to the powerful spirit of co-operation that is growing as Africa lifts itself through its own efforts, with the strong support of the international community," Mr Mandela said – Sapa

NGOs call on SA, Lesotho to halt development of water project

Josey Ballenger

ENVIRONMENTAL and civic organisations have called on the SA and Lesotho governments to halt further development of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project until "serious outstanding social, environmental and economic concerns" are resolved

The R10bn first phase of the project is to be officially opened today.

The nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) said about 2 000 people displaced by the construction of the Katse Dam during the project's phase 1A had not yet been compensated. They also complained that the Lesotho and SA governments had failed to address ecological issues and that water conservation efforts would be severely hampered by increases in water supply costs

The organisations opposing the project include the Johannesburg-based Group for Environmental Monitoring, Alexandra Civic Organisation, the Soweto branch of the SA National Civics Organisation, Earthlife Africa, Environmental Justice Networking Forum, Lesotho's Highlands Church Action Group and the California-based International Rivers Network

In a joint release, they said the governments — whose former regimes had signed the project treaty in 1986 — had not completed an environmental impact assessment before the project had been designed and construction on phase 1A had started This was "contrary to international law and professional standards"

The NGOs said the governments had not investigated how the reduction and regulation of the flow of the Orange and Senqu rivers would affect the local ecology, the effects of the collapse or manipulation of the natural flow canals, and the project's effect on downstream user Namibia.

The group objected to phase 1B — the estimated R7m construction of Mohale Dam, due to start this year — on the grounds it would "seriously undermine" the water affairs and forestry department and Rand Water's recent "creative" management efforts to increase equity and efficiency in Gauteng and southern Africa

These efforts included education; introducing water-saving products such as dual-flush systems; tariff reform; and fixing leaks and plumbing systems

The NGO coalition claimed that phase 1B would increase water supply costs by at least 40%, which would be passed on to the consumer. "If phase 1B proceeds, paying off the excessive costs of the project will make Rand Water and water affairs' efficiency and equity efforts a lower priority and encourage greater use of high-cost water to increase revenues. (They) will have less incentive to limit consumer demand"

The coalition said phase 1B could be delayed by up to 20 years if existing supplies were used more efficiently.

Rand Water and water affairs officials, who were on their way to Lesotho, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Regarding the 300 Lesotho households that had been displaced by the Katse Dam's construction, the Highlands Church Action Group reported that of 93 households surveyed late last year, 40%, or 38 homes, had not had grievances addressed "in any way whatsoever" The grievances had been lodged three years ago

The grievances of 51 homes — or 55% — had been partially addressed and only 5%, or four households, had had their complaints fully addressed

The complaints related to the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority's compensation programme The programme included annual delivery of foodstuffs to make up for loss of arable land, single cash payments for gardens, baled fodder for lost range land, seedlings for trees and replacement of damaged property.

Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal said he had directed on taking office that "SA should go further than its treaty obligations, thus ensuring, not only that no one would be worse off after the project, but that all affected people would be better off".

He said the treaty and its implementation had been "carefully revised and monitored so as to fit in with the new demands and norms of democracy and respect for communities and the environment".

Plans to pipe Lesotho water

ET (BE) 12/1/98 (167)

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL

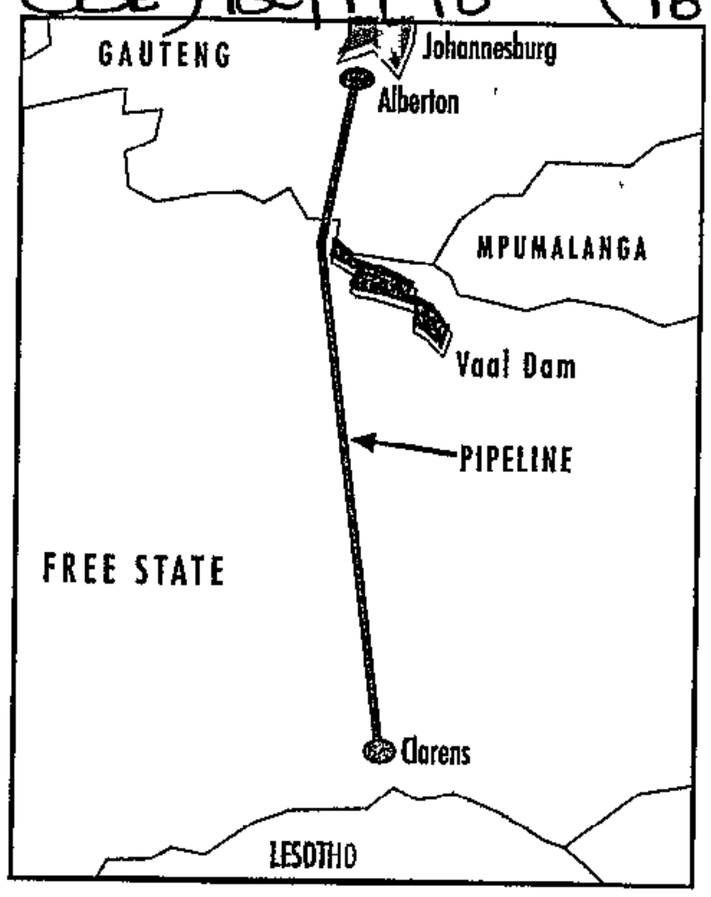
Johannesburg — Rand Water is investigating the viability of a R2,5 billion water pipe to carry water directly from the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme to a water purification plant just south of Johannesburg, the water utility said last week

The R10 billion Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme, which started its first water delivery last week, transfers water from the Lesotho Highlands into the Vaal river for use in the thirsty industrial regions of Gauteng

Walter Coxon, Rand Water's chief development engineer, said if water was piped directly from the highlands, it would flow downhill virtually all the way to Johannesburg and would not have to be pumped back uphill from the Vaal dam as is presently the case.

Pumping and capital costs are two of Rand Water's largest expenses

A pre-feasibility study had indicated that the utility could make a considerable energy saving if it eliminated the cost of having to pump water up to Johannesburg. A detailed feasibility study was under way to investigate whether the saving would outweigh the capital cost of building a pipe, Coxon said.



Although unconfirmed by the utility, it is believed that the total saving could be in the order of R100 million over the life of the project

The pipe would also offer marginal cost savings in purifying the Lesotho water before it was mixed with water in the Vaal system

He said the studies were focused on a 255km-long 4m-diameter pipe which would cost about R2,5 billion. This would be the largest pipe of its pressure rating in the world The utility was also investigating the viability of a 3m pipe which would cost about R1,75 billion

The feasibility study, which has been under way for a year, was expected to report its findings within a month This would allow the utility to make a decision on whether to proceed in the second half of this year

DAMS *Deliveries start but Vaal dam is full*

Lesotho water flows in, but now we don't need it

CT (BHBR) 8/1/98 (167)

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

Johannesburg — Today's first deliveries of water to South Africa from the controversial R10 billion Lesotho Highlands Water Project will ironically flow back into the Orange river system because unexpectedly good rains have been filling the Vaal dam beyond its normal capacity, the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) said yesterday.

The project, which was built to divert water from the Lesotho Highlands to the water-scarce Gauteng industrial region through the Vaal river, was started in 1986 to meet an expected water shortage in the Vaal system, a shortage which would have been exacerbated by the El Niño weather system which was widely expected to produce unseasonal droughts over much of South Africa this summer

Water will instead flow to the Gariep dam in the Free State along the Orange river, the river system into which water would have normally flowed without the water project, but South Africa will still pay royalties to Lesotho of about R6,5 million a month for the water transfers

In its latest annual report the TCTA, which is responsible for funding the project, said the estimated cost of the first phase was R9,8 billion, made up of R5,8 billion in construction costs, escalation of R153 million, royalties of R252 million and finance costs of R3,5 billion.

The projected debt of the project at March 31 is estimated to be R7,9 billion, to be paid over 20 years through a water levy of 35c a cubic metre, imposed by the water affairs department on water users in the Vaal river supply area.

Although no decisions have yet been taken by the department on whether further phases of the project will be undertaken, the TCTA said yesterday that revenue requirements through the levy would stabilise in real terms over the next year or two. As the TCTA reduced its total debt on the project, it would be possible to begin funding further phases of the project without imposing further increases in the water levy, the TCTA said.

Funding requirements were expected to remain at about R2 billion a year for the next five years

The first phase of the project will ultimately supply about 18m^3 of water a second to Gauteng and royalty payments will boost Lesotho's gross national product by 4 percent to 5 percent.

Further phases of the project still hang in the balance amid rising environmental and political concerns over the effects of drawing additional water from the Orange river system

Deficit of R436m blights Lesotho's budget

CT(BR) 31/7/98 (767)

FROM SAPA

Maseru — Lesotho's budget for the 1998-99 financial year provides for revenues and grants totalling R2,372 billion and total expenditures of R2,808 billion, representing a deficit of R436 million

These figures were announced by Leketekete Ketso, the minister of finance and development planning, in his budget speech in the national assembly yesterday

The bulk of the country's revenue continues to come from Lesotho's share of the receipts from the Southern African Customs Union with South Africa and neighbouring countries

The customs revenue of R1,033 billion represents 46 percent of the country's total revenue.

Ketso said there had been a decline in customs revenue from last year's collection of R11,72 million

The drop was attributable mainly to the winding down of the Lesotho Highlands Project and the subsequent decrease in customs-related receipts, he said

Ketso said salaries for civil servants constituted the single biggest recurring expense, at 44 percent of the budget

"This is unacceptably high by international standards," he said

The government has awarded a 10 percent inflation adjustment to civil servants A new pay and grading system has also been implemented

Ketso said the government would have to introduce measures to limit the growth of the civil service "without sacrificing the quality of public services"

Among the major sources of revenue presented by the minister were royalties from South Africa, estimated at R140 million, for the sale of water from the Lesotho Highlands Project

Court orders poll documents opened

MASERU — Two months after the conclusion of the Lesotho general elections on May 23, the Lesotho High Court yesterday ordered the independent electoral commission to allow three main opposition parties to inspect election documents.

The Basotholand Congress Party, the Basotho National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party have alleged serious irregularities in the outcome of the elections, which they claim the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy rigged

The parties reached a deed of settlement that was made an order of court by high court judges yesterday.

The order directed the chairman of the commission, Sekara Mafisa, and the director of elections to make relevant documents available to an individual upon the completion of inspection forms.

It was agreed that an individual who requested inspection of election documents would be responsible for their safe return.

The number of people inspecting election documents at any one time must be limited to six — Sapa

MAIL & GUARDIAN
July 31 to August 6 1998

Lesotho crisis deepens

MHG 31/7-6/8/98 (167)

The continuing battle over alleged electoral fraud could plunge the region into turmoil, writes **William Boot**



Royal row Rumours are circulating that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy wants to depose King Letsie III, shown here with Prince Charles. PHOTO: PICTURENET.CO.ZA

Opposition parties in Lesotho this week expressed "great shock" at a "serious rumour alleging a possible resolution by some people in high places or quarters to banish from Lesotho His Majesty the King and declare a state of emergency"

A statement they issued warned "those who might be approaching a state of mental derangement that they are already committing treason" and that the nation would "resist them with vigour and resolve"

Treason? Banishment? His Majesty the King? Like so much about Lesotho, the statement has a curiously medieval flavour about it But the events and intrigues that lie behind it appear to be contemporary enough in their cynicism, and could plunge the territory into turmoil lasting well into the 21st century

The resolution that the three major opposition parties — the Basotho National Party, the Basotholand Congress Party and the Maramatlou Freedom Party — were referring to was reportedly taken at a secret bosberaad last weekend at the Katse Dam

Attended by members of the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy, the Cabinet and top securocrats, the bosberaad was nothing if not a crisis meeting The very survival of the government was at stake after a high court ruling handed down in Maseru last Thursday

Lesotho Minister of Foreign Affairs Tom Thabane confirmed that the bosberaad had taken place but denied drastic decisions had been taken

This is the worst lie that anyone could have published There is no way the government could have taken such a decision We have run the country for the past five years and the king has never been a political problem There is no way this party can banish the king, ' Thabane said

"It is the previous rulers who have the history of banishing the king twice These are people who failed to get to power through elections, and now they want to do it through extraordinary means "

The high court ruling followed a case brought by Lesotho's opposition parties They alleged they had unconstitutionally been denied access to voters' rolls and other relevant documentation on the May 23 elections — and that there had been widespread and systematic electoral fraud

They produced comprehensive forensic audits of six constituencies to make their point. Compiled by South African forensic auditors OF&A, the analyses suggested the presence of significant numbers of 'ghosts on the voters rolls — sufficient numbers to ensure the resounding victory registered by the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, which won all but one of the 79 seats.

'It is the previous rulers who have the history of banishing the king twice. These people failed to get to power through elections, and now they want to do it through extraordinary means'

The high court judge said the six constituencies analysed were not sufficient to prove systematic fraud But he left the question open, ordering that the records of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) be made available for scrutiny

To turn up the temperature even higher, there is another case before the courts This is the appeal of an earlier application to have the elections postponed in the light of alleged constitutional irregularities

The applicants claim the IEC failed to meet constitutional requirements to give opposition parties access to provisional voters rolls before the May elections

While the judgement has yet to be delivered, it is believed the Appeal Court will decide whether the whole can of worms should be sent to the country's constitutional monarch, King Letsie III

In terms of the Constitution, the king has the power to annul elections and dissolve Parliament if electoral fraud can be proved.

It was against this backdrop, and in a climate of growing resistance, that Prime Minister Pakaditha Mosisili, the Cabinet and a select group of security officials went into their secret weekend conference

Sources close to the process told the *Mail & Guardian* some startling decisions were taken in protracted meetings and at a braai for which Lesotho Defence Force chief Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng apparently donated three sheep

The idea was mooted of declaring a state of emergency, with the effect of suspending the rule of law

The emergency could be declared for two reasons. First, there was the threat (many believe it is a real threat) of a military coup in the ranks of the Basotho National Party-supporting defence force

Second, there was a threat of civil unrest arising out of an opposition march planned for August 4 to protest perceived irregularities in the elections

At the same time, the bosberaad reportedly considered banishing the newly crowned King Letsie This would prevent the monarch from performing any constitutional functions in Lesotho, and also keep him out of any potential political alliances with the opposition

There was a precedent for this Letsie's earlier hands-on involvement in politics led to his exile in the early part of this decade It was only after he accepted a circumscribed role as constitutional monarch that he was finally crowned last year

It is possible that by publicising the rumoured plot to unseat the king, opposition parties may have pre empted the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy's reported plans

The stakes could be high With Lesotho dependent on South Africa for more than two-thirds of its economy, significant pressure could be brought to bear if the government goes ahead with the reported plans

There is also a threat posed by an emerging labour movement in Lesotho, closely affiliated with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), whose unstated agenda is nothing less than incorporation into South Africa Constitutional uncertainty in Lesotho could well result in escalating labour unrest, and play into Cosatu's hands

A crisis could, however, still be averted. This week Lesotho's opposition parties briefed a troika of Southern African Development Community leaders — President Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe and Botswana's Festus Mogae — on the situation Behind the-scenes negotiations could restore enough calm for the elections issue to be resolved once and for all.

Few observers, though, are betting they will



Krisjan Lemmer

Dracula cred

South African clerics at the Lambeth conference were reported to be among leaders of the stampede to place orders for an essential piece of ecclesiastical equipment on offer at the gathering a sterling-silver crucifix which doubles as a security alarm.

Priced at R2 000, the fashionable accessory was designed as a rape alarm for the growing body of female vicars But it seem they proved unexpectedly popular among male clerics nervous of things which go bump in the churchyard at night.

"One in five clergy families have been attacked," said Michael McCarthy, the silversmith flogging the crucifixes. "Society is degenerating "

Star Wars

Fear and trembling among our craven press lords at rumours circulating in the watering holes of hackery that the Black Baron himself, Rupert Murdoch, is gearing up for a long awaited strike at the South African newspaper industry

Reported boasts by the Independent Group s outgoing Gauteng MD, Deon du Plessis, that he has R56-million at his disposal to launch a genuine tabloid has raised suspicions that he may be Rupert s man

Bongo-Bongo teams up with the Dirty Digger! Help! Where s Luke Skywalker?!

Hope springs ...

An opponent of euthanasia writing on the subject in *The Scotsman* recounts how a friend of his had been in a so-called "persistent vegetative state" for eight months, unable to so much as move a eyelash Doctors were urging his wife to withdraw life-support when on impulse she asked him whether he had seen the Wales-South Africa game that day on TV He nodded Had he enjoyed it? He shook his head indignantly no, Wales had lost, 96-13 And he was back again

Believe it or not

Some interesting facts and figures about former baked bean magnate Tony O'Reilly's international press empire, Independent Newspapers, based in Ireland Recent press reports in the United Kingdom disclose that its operations in South Africa and New Zealand account for 57% of its turnover and 59% of operating profits Which, considering the collapse of the rand and the plight of the New Zealand economy, raises obvious problems for O Reilly

Add to that the criticism back home of his near monopoly where the newspaper industry is concerned — which seems to rule out any chance of breaking into the money pot that is television — and life looks a struggle for the golden boy

Then there is the controversy over Independent s payments to the Fianne Fail party and but that is a subject which is well covered by the Independent Group newspapers out here, so Lemmer will not subject readers to the repetition.

Believe it or not (2)

The SABC has a fully staffed, in house public relations outfit, but despite this also pays R27 000 a month to a top-flight international public relations company, Gillian Gamsey, solely to popularise the persona of the corporation's CEO Considering the performance of the SABC in recent months, Lemmer would recommend that this expenditure be increased immediately

Lesotho focuses on public participation in privatisation

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

MASERU — The Lesotho finance ministry's privatisation unit is concentrating on facilitating public participation in the privatisation of government-owned companies this year, its spokesman says

Nthabiseng Motjolopane says emphasis is being placed on reforming and privatising the state banking sector and the three companies which supply water, telecommunications and electricity

However, regulations for establishing the capital markets, which were supposed to be promulgated under the Central Bank Act before the end of the first half of this year, are at the draft stage, pending the stabilisation of the banking sector

An Irish consultancy, International Development Ireland, was awarded a management contract to reorganise the country's largest bank, Lesotho Bank, and the Agricultural Development Bank, which were allegedly in the red due to poor management

This was to be followed by hiring a banking adviser to help government pull out of the two national banks and clear the way for privatisation

The expert, who should have started work last month, is still being selected

Telecommunications company LTC, the Water and Sewerage Authority, and the Lesotho Electricity Corporation are the other parastatals earmarked for eventual privatisation.

The opposition Basotho National Party opposes privatisation of the two banks, and even the engagement of International Development Ireland to manage the banks, arguing that the problem is not with the Basotho managers, but with the politicisation of these institutions

Both banks were established in the 1970s during the rule of the Basotho National Party, whose government was toppled by the army in 1986

The Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry has written to Finance Minister Leketekete Ketso asking him to suspend the privatisation process for at least three months.

Chamber president Makalo Khiba says "We are not opposed to the concept of privatisation

"All we want is for Basotho people to be given first preference"

Khiba says it is wrong for government to transfer the national assets to foreign investors

"The Basotho should be given an opportunity to own a majority share in any of the enterprises that are being privatised."

With R500m in assets, Lesotho Bank is the largest of the three commercial banks in the country

The bank's competitors are Nedbank and Standard Bank of SA

A New Zealand consultancy, John Crook, has been recruited to look into the financial state of LTC with a view to turning around its poor performance and preparing it for privatisation

Last Thursday, the Lesotho appeal court heard an application from 314 former LTC workers, mostly technicians and engineers, who were dismissed from work in August last year after the talks on working conditions broke down Judgment is due today

The LTC, which was established in 1978, is the only telecommunications corporation that provides fixed-line telephones in Lesotho. However, there is a joint venture between the LTC and Vodacom SA to provide mobile phones



Porters watch over stacked sacks of maize donated by the United Nations World Food Programme at Ajiep, in famine-torn Bahr el Ghazal province, southern Sudan Relief food is pouring into southern Sudan in multimillion-dollar drops in the largest international relief operation to date, but starving Sudanese, in conditions so desperate that mothers stare at their skeletal children in horrified disbelief, are still dying by the thousand. Picture AP

AFRICA

Bid to delay Lesotho elections

BD 19/5/98 (167)

MASERU — Three of the main opposition parties contesting this week's election in Lesotho launched a court action yesterday to delay the vote

Court documents submitted by the three parties cited irregularities in the registration of voters

About 860 000 people are eligible to vote for 12 parties and 30 independent candidates on Saturday, although special voting will start today

The documents showed there were 6 000 voters in the small southern constituency of Mohale's Hoek registered with birth dates falling over a four-month period in 1980 According to the documents, four batches of 1 500 people were born on the same day each month The total number of voters in the Mohale's Hoek constituency is only about 10 000

The three parties argued that the apparent registration of fake voters in the tiny town was highly irregular and posed a serious threat to free and fair elections

The three parties, the Basotho National Party (BNP), the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) and the Marematlou Freedom Party, are competing to wrest control from the recently formed ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party

The LCD was formed when ailing Prime Minister Ntsu Mokehle broke away from the then-ruling BCP, which was split by factions, and took almost all his ministers with him to form the new party (164)

Mokehle, 78, said he would not stand as leader of the LCD nor for a government position However, he had been campaigning for his party

At well-attended rallies in Maseru over the weekend, leaders of the opposition parties said they were sure the court would rule in their favour

Opinion polls carried out in the capital of Maseru showed that the BNP was a favourite ahead of the ruling LCD

The BNP ruled Lesotho since independence from Britain in 1965 to 1985 when it was overthrown by a military coup The military government ruled until 1993, when the BCP came to power — Reuter.

Lesotho polls win OK as ruling party sweeps home

(167)

Maseru – The Southern African Development Community observer team has declared Lesotho's election free and fair in the face of opposition protests.

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) swept to victory

The Independent Electoral Commission said by last night the LCD had won all 52 constituencies that had been declared for the 80-seat parliament.

But supporters of the three main opposition parties staged a protest in the streets of Maseru claiming the election had been "rotten and rigged".

The Basotho National Party (BNP) and the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) said they were not satisfied with the result.

An offical from the BCP said the two main opposition parties would explore an alliance against the LCD.

Judge Bobby Bwalya of the SADC observer team said last night: "We want to emphasise that this election was free, fair and transparent." He said the team would issue a detailed statement today.

The preliminary SADC statement declared the election acceptable according to international standards, in spite of minor logistical problems, which were addressed by Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission.

Rafael Pinter, observing the election for the UN Development Programme, said the election was internationally acceptable.

The official result is expected on June 1 and the government will be sworn in soon after. – Sapa and Reuters

ARG 26/5/98



Opposition protests mount over Lesotho election results

BD 25/5/98 (167)

MASERU — Supporters of the three main opposition parties in Lesotho gathered at the residence of Basutho National Party member Evurastus Sekhonyane yesterday afternoon in protest at Saturday's elections result

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy party won more than 50 of the 80 seats in the country's national assembly but the results have been rejected by the Basutoland Congress Party, the Basotho National Party and MaremaTlo Freedom Party, who claim they were rigged

However, the Southern African Development Community election observer team last night declared the election free and fair Judge Bobby Bwalya said "We want to emphasise that this election was free, fair and transparent" He said the team would issue a detailed statement today

One angry supporter said the opposition parties could not accept that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy had won the elections with a majority because the party did not have the support it was reported to have

Other supporters claimed to have found full unattended ballot boxes from the Moting Poso constituency and they also claimed to have recovered unsigned cards for voters

Earlier police dispersed a crowd of Basutoland Congress Party supporters in Maseru central about to be ferried by minibus towards the Basotho National Party leader's residence

"The Basutoland Congress Party and I believe the Basotho National Party and MaremaTlo Freedom Party do not accept the results of the rotten and rigged Lesotho general election," party leader Molapo Qhobela said

Qhobela said an urgent application by the three opposition parties in the country's high court proved the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) should have complied with the electoral law, which stated all parties had to be supplied with first voters' lists which they were not Nominations for candidates took place on April 20 on the basis of the lists

Following the absence of the lists, the opposition parties lodged an urgent application in the high court asking it to postpone the election

Last Wednesday, Chief Justice Joseph Kheola found the IEC wrong for not giving parties the lists

Lesotho Congress for Democracy secretary-general Shakhane Mokhehle said the opposition comments were "sour grapes by those who are losing an election that was conducted in a free, fair and peaceful atmosphere" He said it was surprising that the three parties which had been involved in the electoral process since the start of the election campaign could now claim the process was flawed

"We must, however, accept that things were not running smoothly, such as the late start at certain polling stations and shortage of ballot boxes at others, but these problems are not so serious to warrant people to make a mountain out of them"

IEC chairman Sekara Mafisa maintained that the election was free and fair —Sapa

Picture: Page 10

Star 25/5/98

Opposition parties protest at Lesotho ruling party's landslide

(167)

Maseru – Thousands of angry people took to the streets of Lesotho's capital Maseru yesterday to protest against the sweeping electoral win of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), accusing it of rigging the vote

By evening, calm had returned to the city However police were braced for further disruptions today

The protests came as international and local election observers declared the vote to be "acceptable according to international standards" Observers from the 14-member Southern African Development Community went a step further and said the poll had been "free and fair".

Army vehicles appeared on the streets of the capital late yesterday afternoon, leading to fears of imminent trouble

But police commissioner Major-General Bolutu Makoaba said no incidents of violence were reported

Election officials earlier announced that the LCD – Lesotho's ruling party since last June – had taken every one of the 52 constituencies where counting was complete. The party looked set for a clean sweep as results drifted in from rural areas, where LCD president-for-life Ntsu Mokhehle holds sway

The LCD may nominate the prime minister in the 80-seat National Assembly – likely to be Deputy Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, who is de facto leader of the LCD

In a statement, the opposition Basotho National Party (BNP) stressed "the impossibility of any party in Lesotho winning all parliamentary seats".

The BNP, together with one-time arch-rivals the Basutoland Congress Party and the royalist Marematlou Freedom Party, jointly declared the polling to have been rigged

The parties last week lost a court bid to postpone the poll over claims of irregularities in the voters' roll. The Independent Electoral Commission rejected their allegations last week.

IEC chairman Sekara Mafisa said yesterday the parties should file an election petition with the court if they insisted on crying foul.

Addressing about 1 000 Basotho outside BNP leader Evaristus Sekhonyane's house in Maseru yesterday, the parties disclosed they were involved in "intimate negotiations", leading to speculation of a merger to challenge the LCD

They were to make an announcement today on what action they intended to take.

Due to Lesotho's "first past the post" electoral system, the party with the most votes in each constituency wins, regardless of the opposition's showing

This means that in a Maseru ward – where the LCD won the constituency with 3 742 votes against the BNP's 3 136 – no provision will be made for BNP representation

The LCD was formed last June when Mokhehle led a walkout from the BCP in the face of a leadership threat, taking a majority of parliamentarians with him – AFP

▶ Picture



ANGRY OPPOSITION: Members of the Basotho National Party (BNP) march through the streets of Maseru on Sunday in protest against the results of the general elections on Saturday, won by the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party *PICTURE. AP*

(167)

Landslide victory for ruling party

CT 26/5/98

MASERU: The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) has won all 52 seats declared by yesterday in the 80-seat parliament. Final results should be out by June 1 and the new government sworn in shortly afterwards.

Lesotho's opposition parties have accused the ruling party of using fraud to achieve its landslide election victory and said it would petition the Independent Electoral Commission to order fresh polls.

"The elections were fraudulent and the results are crooked. We don't accept the outcome of the elections," Basotho National Party (BNP) secretary-general Lekhooana Jonathan said.

However, International and local observers said Saturday's elections were internationally acceptable with no reports of fraud or intimidation.

The Lesotho Congress for Democracy was formed last June when then-prime minister Ntsu Mokehle split from the governing Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) and took nearly all of the parliamentarians with him to form a new government.

The BNP and BCP said they would hold a peaceful protest march through the capital today to hand a petition to the election commission urging it to declare the election void and hold fresh polls.

"We will contest the result," Jonathan said. "If the (electoral commission) won't do this then we will go to the high court to fight them there."

BCP leader Molapo Qhobela told hundreds of supporters of the two opposition parties on Sunday that the former rivals would work closely to contest the results.

The Southern African Development Community said yesterday that the elections were free and fair. Political parties were present at the polling stations and had raised no objections when the votes were counted, it said.

Lesotho has a history of political turmoil since gaining independence from Britain in 1966. It was a one-party state until a military coup in 1986 and became a democracy in 1993. Since the 1993 vote, the nation has had several revolts by the armed forces and a royal coup in 1993 by constitutional monarch Letsie III, which was reversed after intervention by South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. — Reuter

Lesotho poll found to be free and fair

BD 26/5/98

MASERU — The Lesotho general election at the weekend was free and fair, the Southern African Development Community observers' mission said yesterday.

It said the election was "peaceful, accessible, participatory by role players, transparent and (was) conducted efficiently without fear or favour" The teams witnessed the process from the opening of the polling stations to the end, it said

In all polling stations there were representatives of political parties and the electoral process functioned well.

The mission was chaired by Judge BM Bwalya, the chairman of the Zambian electoral commission. Other members included judges from Malawi and Tanzania, as well as representatives from SA, Mozambique and Namibia. — Sapa

(167)

Demonstrators storm Lesotho's election office

(167) BD 27/5/98

MASERU — A large group of angry demonstrators stormed the offices of Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission in Maseru yesterday.

The group, who were protesting against the outcome of the general election held at the weekend, demanded that commission chairman Sekara Mafisa leave the building to receive a memorandum

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy won the election overwhelmingly.

The demonstrators vowed not to disperse until Mafisa availed himself to a large crowd of mainly Basutoland Congress Party and Basotho National Party supporters. "We want Mafisa here, and we want him now," they shouted

The demonstrators accused the commission of being biased and of rigging the country's third democratic election

Earlier yesterday the Basutoland Congress Party leadership called on Lesotho security forces to act with restraint when dealing with people who were disappointed about the election results

"People are angry They have been provoked by the outcome of the election and they don't accept them," party leader Molapo Qhobela told reporters.

"And we are saying if for any reason there is a threat to our internal stability and peace, they (security forces) should understand the feelings of the people and should be able to handle them well." — Sapa.

Lesotho on edge as poll is disputed

(167) M+G 29/5/98-4/6/98





Make your mark: International observers commended Lesotho's parties and voters for their political maturity.
PHOTO: LORI WASELCHUK/AP

Lesotho's elections have been declared fair, but a host of inconsistencies points towards vote rigging, writes **William Boot** *in Maseru*

The day before Lesotho's general elections last Saturday, Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) leader Pakaditha Mosisili stuck his neck out to predict: "We will win by a landslide."

He said this at a time when analysts, journalists and observers alike were saying the polls would be closely contested. The best guess around was that the LCD would indeed garner the highest number of votes. But it was doubtful they would gain an absolute majority.

This opened up the intriguing possibility of a coalition between the other two major parties, the Basotho National Party (BNP) and the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) — sworn enemies in the past — to cobble together a government for the next five years.

In the event, Mosisili was more than vindicated. His ruling LCD fell only one seat short of a complete electoral whitewash: it won in 78 of the 79 constituencies, nearly all of them with margins of thousands.

There were some obvious reasons why the LCD could have outperformed initial expectations: the granting just before elections of a 10% pay rise to civil servants, the appearance on election day of supervising policemen in brand new uniforms, most notably the promise of R650-million (from a gross national product barely five times that) to Lesotho's farmers if the LCD was returned to power — the usual rabbits that governing parties tend to pull out of the hat around election time.

But there could be more to it than that. In the bitter aftermath of the elections, opposition parties have banded together to call for the annulment of the election results and to accuse the LCD of massive electoral fraud.

And in Lesotho itself, the mood is ugly, with opposition party leaders barely able to restrain their supporters from resorting to violence. Evidence is emerging to suggest the opposition could have a case.

Even prior to the elections, BNP leader Evaristus (ER) Sekhonyana took the precaution of employing a team of South African forensic consultants, from the firm OF&A in Durban, to scrutinise the provisional voters' roll.

Though initially Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) appeared reluctant to allow opposition parties sight of the lists — though electoral law specifies that such scrutiny must be allowed — eventually the BNP was allowed to buy the relevant diskettes.

What the consultants found, by sampling six of the constituencies, was that Lesotho's voter population is — apparently implausibly — unique in its composition.

For instance, the voters' roll suggests that eight times as many people are born on the first of January in Lesotho than on other days of the year. Similar anomalies were uncovered in connection with certain other dates, among them the second of the second month, the third of the third month, and so on.

What precisely the significance is of such anomalies remains unclear, but for the consultants they sounded alarm bells. "It is unnatural for these births to be concentrated in such a way; it falls totally outside the normal distribution... we are 95% sure that the births on these days are not statistically reliable."

The oddities uncovered do not end here. The consultants also noted that fully 10% of the voter population was duly accredited by IEC officials without providing any date of birth whatever.

In some cases a voter registered without a date of birth was grouped together with another voter (sometimes more than one) bearing exactly (or almost exactly) the same name — but this time with the date of birth specified.

Given the fact that Lesotho does not issue identity books and that the elections relied entirely on the good offices of the IEC in registering voters, such peculiarities could point to double, triple and even quadruple registration of individual voters.

Many of the missing dates of birth are of apparently relatively young voters born in the 1970s, when Lesotho already had a reliable registry of births and deaths.

Some of this information was made available to the IEC on May 16, before the elections were held, and formed the basis of a supreme court application seeking to have the elections postponed.

The court, however, found that while there were indeed irregularities, they did not appear to be sufficiently widespread to seriously influence the result — and that the elections should go ahead as scheduled.

In deciding this the court flew in the face of no fewer than three sworn expert testimonies, without evidence being led to rebut them.

The BNP supported the findings of the OF&A consultancy, with corroborating opinion by professors from the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of South Africa.

It also appeared that control over voter registration papers was less than watertight. After the voter registration period had expired a load of blank registration forms was discovered abandoned in the Leribe district — who put them there and why still remains unclear.

Some opinion has it that the forms were planted by opposition parties to support their case for the postponement of the elections, though other analysts think the abandoned forms represent the thin edge of a huge wedge of electoral fraud.

But if there was election rigging, it was certainly not uncovered by groups of international observers from both the Commonwealth and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Both groups certified the election process as having gone off without major problems, and though the Commonwealth observers were somewhat guarded in their wording, the SADC emphatically declared the elections free and fair, and commended the people and political parties of Lesotho for their political maturity.

This was despite the fact that, as the observers freely admitted, their observations had been confined to voting and counting, and no study had been made of possible irregularities in the registration process.

Indeed, the SADC group's official representative happily confirmed that he had not even consulted the records of the postponement case brought before the supreme court only weeks earlier.

But even within their perceived brief the observers could not be everywhere at every given time, and they seemed to gloss over some apparently serious potentials for voting irregularities.

For instance, there have been numerous reports that, at least in some constituencies, the ink used to mark the fingers of members of the electorate who had already voted was far from indelible.

In Leribe, for example, ordinary stamp-pad ink was used to dip the forefinger. In other instances voters were apparently able to remove the stain with nothing more hi tech than saliva.

Moreover, in at least one constituency ballot boxes were opened before being returned to the IEC for certification. The incident has apparently led to the calling of a by-election in the district in question.

Opposition parties are looking for a lot more though than just by-elections. They want a total annulment of the election results, and both the BCP and the BNP have announced they will be looking to the courts for satisfaction.

How such court action will play out remains unclear. Meanwhile, a perhaps more immediate threat to Lesotho's governing LCD could be coming from across the border.

It's an increasingly open secret that the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) has lost patience with successively corrupt governments in Lesotho and has its own plans for the tiny monarchy. In 1996, Cosatu took a secret decision to work towards the unification of both Lesotho and Swaziland with South Africa by extra-parliamentary means.

Representing as it does the nearly 100 000 Basotho mineworkers still employed on South Africa's mines (who still account for the lion's share of the total economy) and the more than 50 000 already retrenched in recent years, Cosatu may well be in a position to call the shots, not only through satellite unions inside Lesotho, but also by flexing its not inconsiderable muscle inside South Africa.

Some analysts are even predicting that the apparent rigging of the Lesotho poll could be the last straw that breaks the pony's back, and brings tiny Lesotho into South Africa as its 10th province — hardly the outcome that the LCD poll strategists had in mind.

Social, environmental impact of second phase of highlands project questioned

Before construction resumes on the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, the authorities have one last chance to address the concerns of environmental and civic groups which have so far been swept under the carpet, writes Josey Ballenger BD 19/3/98 (167)

CALLS for a delay in implementing the second phase of the multibillion-rand Lesotho Highlands Water Project may be justified in order to allow SA to clean up its own backyard concerning water wastage and to allow project authorities time to address problems associated with another round of construction

Celebrations in January of the first transfer of water from Lesotho to Gauteng concealed lingering unease about the project's social, environmental and economic costs Environmental groups objected to the expense and impact of the project since the binational treaty was signed 11 years ago But on the eve of dignitary-studded events to celebrate the completion of the initial R9,8bn phase — called 1A — earlier this year environmental and civic groups, became more vociferous in questioning the governments' resolve to press ahead with future phases

The politicians and officials at the celebrations went to great pains to acknowledge the "outstanding" issues, but failed to provide detailed rebuttals in most cases

Among the issues was compensation and resettlement for about 2 000 people displaced by the Katse and Muela dams' construction, environmental prospects for the project's next R6,7bn stage (1B) and, perhaps the subject least addressed by authorities, water conservation.

Before authorities go ahead with 1B's construction, a coalition of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) from SA, Lesotho and further afield have questioned its very need Coalition members claim the project does not meet the World Bank's dam standards The bank's decision on whether to lend 5% of 1B's cost is expected on April 30

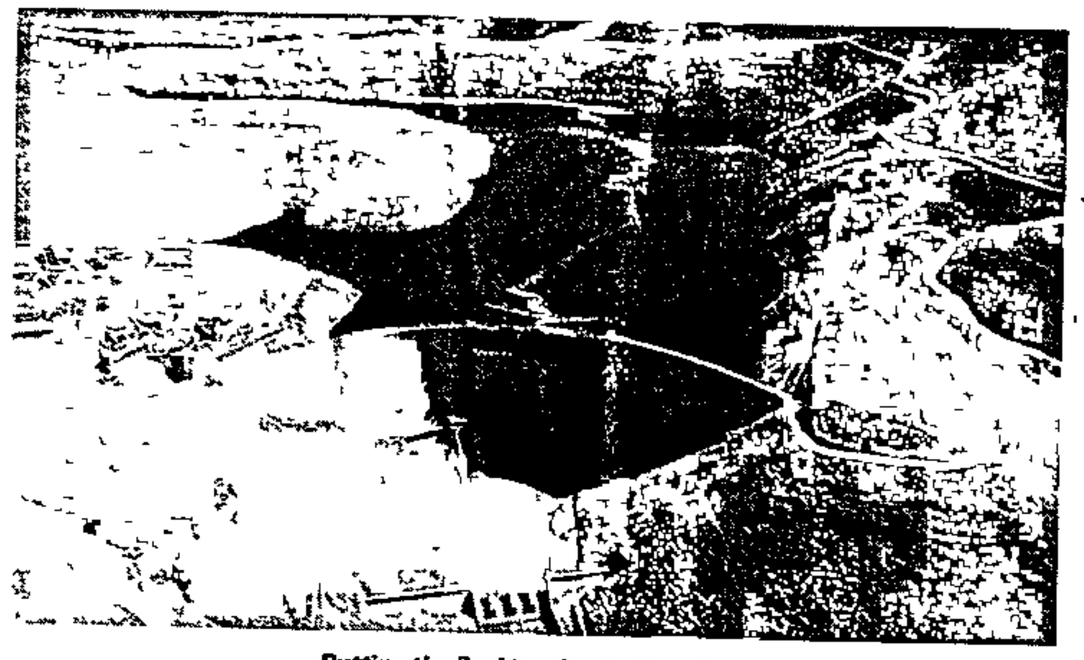
The coalition is concerned about a study showing only two of 93 sampled households were "completely satisfied" with their dislocation compensation By Lesotho Highlands Development Authority's own account, all but 14 of 679 complaints lodged in areas spanning 1A and preliminary work in 1B have been settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

The coalition is also calling for an "independent" review of 1B's environmental impact assessment. In light of Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal's statement that he "welcomed" and "valued" NGOs' contributions, he could pacify the NGOs by granting their request.

Perhaps the most unresolved issue, however, is that of conservation efforts among Vaal River users — the very people in SA who will benefit from the project's provision of water, and who are also paying for it through higher water levies (which will jump another 10% to 15% from April)

While market forces will probably discourage consumption by larger industrial and agricultural users, and even the average household, the NGOs are concerned that water affairs will be slack in providing education on the merits of conserving in its haste to recover funding for the project.

Water affairs has promised to implement a tariff structure that would punish larger users with incrementally higher levies, but some water utility sources are concerned these plans will not come to fruition due to "vagueness" in the tabled National Water Bill



Putting the final touches to Katze Dam

In addition, critics are concerned that local authorities will continue to lack the financial means and the incentive to fix revenue-draining leaking pipes and inefficient appliances, which are a serious problem in certain areas Soweto, for example, loses an estimated 125 megalitres a day — the equivalent of 2 500 residential swimming pools, and 50% of potential revenue

Rand Water, the utility that serves most of Gauteng and the bordering provinces, estimates Johannesburg loses 15%, Sandton 12%, Roodepoort 10% and Randburg 6% Gauteng as a whole loses 15%, and at the same time, 18% of its low-income residents are not serviced with water

The opposition's bottom-line question is whether more dams will be justifiable if conservation, or "demand management", is rigorously implemented. Rand Water projections indicate 1B could be delayed by a few years with a 10% decrease in consumption, or up to 17 years with a 40% decrease

"Rand Water did query the assumptions upon which the projections for phase 1B were based. It was also our opinion that if we were to be successful with regard to water conservation programmes, by applying methods found to be successful overseas, this dam might well be delayed," Rand Water CE Vincent Bath said.

While water affairs director-general Mike Muller acknowledges there are fairly severe water losses in some areas, he says some of the water unaccounted for is not actually wasted but is unregistered or simply not paid for

It is local authorities' responsibility to fix pipes, install meters and improve payment collections, Muller said. The Water Services Act promulgated in December allows central government to help local authorities to plan and manage their services, but he predicts it will take five years before councils are "fully effective"

Muller believes at least some local authorities are unable or reluctant to improve demand management because the cost of fixing pipes may be greater than the lost revenue

On the other hand, it is water affairs' responsibility to "assure bulk supply," and Muller says it cannot ignore the projected need for more water while waiting for demand management to improve While the department cannot quantify supply projections, Muller says there was no surplus water capacity when 1A was finished, therefore it was "the right decision"

Water affairs' platform, after all, is one of resource security "No minister would ever take the risk" of a water shortage, Asmal said before the launch. But Patrick Bond a senior lecturer in economic policy at Wits University, says that drawing water from Lesotho during a drought would "keep expensive Gauteng agriculture going" at the expense of the Free State and Northern Cape's Orange River users "That means merely moving the problem around."

Authorities and the World Bank also argue that delaying 1B, even by a few years would make it more costly down the line because of sunken fixed costs and loss of human resource capacity At least part of the pre-construction and infrastructure investment would be lost, and civil engineering bids for 1B contracts came in R600m below estimates

Meanwhile, Bond argues that if real interest rates continue to decline, government could save as much as R600m per year by postponing the project. Rand Water demand manager George Constantinides put that figure at R800m

If the authorities want to convince, or at least appease, the critics that they have foreseen and addressed all "outstanding" issues, a good first step would be for water affairs and local authorities to step up and publicise their conservation efforts The onus is on project authorities to engage in public debate, or else concerns about the project will remain

SA advised to proceed with Lesotho project

BD 25/3/98 (167)

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON — In estimates prepared for the World Bank's board, bank staff have quantified increased costs SA could expect to incur from delays in construction of the second, R6,7bn phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which is due to go on stream in 2003

They conclude that only a very lengthy delay could theoretically save any money on the project, but that this would come at an unacceptable risk of economically crippling water shortages in Gauteng by the second decade of the next century.

They also contend that because of the costs of any delay of less than 10 years, it was unlikely that the water affairs department would reduce the price of bulk water should there be a postponement

Assuming a 5% real interest rate, a five-year delay would add R350m to the bill in current rands, a 10-year delay R270m and a 15-year delay R210m, according to the staff calculations.

If funds released by delay could generate an 8% return invested elsewhere, a five-year postponement would still add R160m to the project's cost However, if it was put off for 10 years, the project would cost the same as it would now, while a 15-year delay could generate theoretical savings of R100m

However, John Roome, the World Bank's team leader for the project, stressed that these theoretical savings would likely be more than offset by the costs of the demand management activities that would be needed and "no organisation has been willing to publicly endorse (this scenario) as the correct planning method"

The longer the delay, said Roome, the higher the risk of drought and mandatory water restrictions

"First-tier" restrictions — requiring a 50% cut in irrigation, and 30% and 10% cuts in domestic and industrial consumption respectively — could cost the Gauteng economy between R1,5bn and R3,8bn, and up to R8bn in the event of even more severe "second-tier" rationing.

Completion of the Lesotho project's second or 1B phase would give Gauteng a 12 to 18-month buffer before having to apply restrictions in the event of drought, according to the World Bank's analysis.

Unofficial estimates are that a 10 to 15-year delay could increase the risk of restrictions by 10%-15% by the time construction started

The World Bank's board is to meet on April 31 to decide whether to proceed with a $50m loan for the project Additional low-interest funding from the European Investment Bank is contingent on the board's go-ahead

A decision could be put off if critics of the project request that an inspection panel be instituted to review it

Roome emphasised that the SA government and all other key players, including the National Water Conservation Campaign and Rand Water, had agreed that phase 1B should proceed as planned since the increased risks of water restrictions inherent in delays of 10 or more years "would not be acceptable to them" compared with whatever nominal savings might be achieved by waiting that long

'Tired' Mokhehle asks to step down

(167) Sowetan 2/2/98

Ailing PM requests conference to give party's reins to young leaders

MASERU – Ailing Lesotho prime minister Dr Ntsu Mokhehle on Saturday asked to be relieved of the leadership of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), because he was 'tired through illness and old age"

Although LCD spokesman Mr Monyane Moleleki told *Sapa* earlier that Mokhehle's request had been accepted by the party, a *Sapa* correspondent at the party's first annual general meeting reported late on Saturday that Mokhehle s request would be discussed during a closed session

It is the party s first general meeting since it was formed last year

Mokhehle said in a message read on his behalf by deputy prime minister Professor Pakalitha Mosisili that he had been instructed by his doctors to rest for a few days before resuming work He received treatment at a Bloemfontein hospital last week

He said his body 'cannot carry me anymore' It was time to give the party s reins to young leaders

Mokhehle said he had travelled a long way with his supporters and if his life was spared he would always be with them in pursuit of the struggle to achieve national welfare for the Basotho against hunger and poverty

"Even if I can continue working, the party should allocate me other duties, aware that my time to go has arrived"

Mokhehle had earlier announced that he did not intend contesting the premiership in the general election, scheduled for late April or early May

"Even if I can continue working with the LCD leadership, the party should allocate me any other duties aware that my time to go has arrived"

He asked the conference to look carefully among party members who had excelled at their work for new leadership to lead not only the ruling party but the Lesotho government, if the LCD won the elections

Moleleki told *Sapa* there was a proposal to make Mokhehle honourary president of the LCD

He said the resolutions committee was still busy preparing a motion in this regard to be presented to conference for adoption

Moleleki said the leadership fight in the party and for the premiership would now be between the current party deputy leader Mosisili and foreign minister Kelebone Maope

The conference is expected to elect a new national executive committee and candidates to represent the party in the coming elections – *Sapa*

Delaying water project 'would increase risk

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON — Delaying construction of the next phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project would be very costly and would increase the risk over time of crippling water shortages in Gauteng which could not be mitigated by demand management alone, John Roome, the World Bank's team leader for the project said.

Roome was responding to a campaign against the project, spearheaded by the Group for Environmental Monitoring, after the first $2,5bn phase, 1A, came on stream last month with the inauguration of the Katse Dam and began delivering water into the Vaal River system

The $1,5bn phase 1B, scheduled for completion by 2004, consists of the Mohale Dam on the Senqunyane River, a diversion weir on the Matsoku River and a tunnel to transfer the diverted water to the Katse Reservoir. It will add 12m³ of water a second to Gauteng on top the of the 18m³ a second flow generated by phase 1A

Contracts for construction of the tunnel and weir had been signed with a multinational consortium of Hochtief of Germany, Impregillo of Italy and Concor of SA, while bids for the dam were being evaluated, Roome said Other sources said the same group was likely to be chosen.

Almost all the financing was lined up, mostly on private-capital markets with government guarantees, with about two-thirds denominated in rand, Roome said

The World Bank planned to lend up to $50m on a nonconcessional basis, subject to approval by its board in April.

This would pay for environmental and engineering review panels, project supervision, design consultants and technical assistance to the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

"We don't make money on loans like this," Roome said "We see ourselves adding value to the original project by bringing international best practice to bear and providing a heavy supervisory presence on the social and economic side "

The Group for Environmental Monitoring coalition, which includes the Alexandra Civic Organisation and the Soweto branch of the SA National Civics Organisation, is urging delay both on environmental and social grounds, and because it contends the cost of the project will lead to the misallocation of resources. Water supply would be better served by conserving existing water supplies and improving access to them

The high costs of the project would give the water affairs department and Rand Water an incentive to sell as much "expensive" Lesotho water to wealthy customers as they could to meet debt and royalty obligations, and to stint on efforts, such as fixing leaky pipes, to ensure better use and more equitable distribution of cheaper, existing supplies, the coalition said.

Roome countered that Rand Water would have no incentive to maximise sales at the expense of conservation.

The department would buy the water from Lesotho and sell it to Rand Water and municipalities at a flat price per cubic metre The more water the latter bought to sell to their customers, the higher their costs. Their margins would not increase with volume However, the more water they let seep into the ground through broken pipes, the more money they would lose Roome admitted this did not remove the department's incentive to maximise sales to meet its project obligations, but he stressed that Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal was committed to demand management. If necessary, government could raise the price it charged.

"It is not a perfect situation," Roome said. However, he said it made more sense than delaying phase 1B of the project.

Gauteng needed more water and putting the project off would only increase costs and the risk of serious water shortages.

Bids on the three civil-work contracts had come in R600m below original engineering estimates, partly because of a downturn in the contracting industry but also because the necessary equipment and skills were in place as a result of the work on phase 1A. Those savings would be lost if the project had to mothballed and rebid in five years

Under the 1986 treaty establishing the project, SA had to pay royalties on phase 1A and 1B, whether or not it took delivery of the water, Roome said.

There would be penalties for reneging on signed contracts. SA would have to continue paying for the the authority's overheads, including compensation for those displaced by phase 1A The Lesotho economy, which was closely geared to the project, would "contract", leading to a serious souring of relations with SA

of severe shortages'

Pg 27 (1) 5/2/98

State will save R500m on Lesotho water plan

(167) (2) (122)

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

(BD)BT 25/2/98

Johannesburg — The government has claimed it will save R500 million through its decision to proceed immediately with the next phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water project

This is despite claims from some quarters that additional water from the project will not be needed for up to 17 years

The R10 billion first phase of the project carries water from Lesotho into the Vaal river system to feed populous Gauteng cities

Phase 1b of the project entails the construction of a second dam and additional tunnels to increase the water supply from 18 cubic metres a second to 30 cubic metres a second at a projected cost of roughly $1,5 billion.

But at a conference late last year officials at Rand Water, the water utility serving Gauteng and bearing responsibility for much of the cost of the project, expressed reservations about the next phase

A Rand Water official allegedly referred to an unpublished study on demand management that indicated further phases of the project could be delayed for up to 17 years through conserving water in Gauteng

After the conference Rand Water backed down from its view Vincent Bath, its chief executive, said several scenarios were examined, and possible delays varied from seven to 13 years

Mike Muller, the director-general of the department of water affairs, said the decision to go ahead had been based on the cost savings that could be achieved through proceeding immediately, as well as a risk assessment of the potential costs to the economy of a water shortage in Gauteng

"It may well be that there could have been some delays, but there would have been immediate costs," he said

Delaying the dam would have meant rebuilding the road infrastructure, which is still able to support construction of the next phase A delay would also have to be offset against the discounts over estimated contract prices that were achieved because the winning contractors were already mobilised and on site

Concor, a construction company which has already won several contracts on the next phase, said it would achieve cost savings through reusing equipment used to build the first phase

Fort Hare to reopen after deal on fees

Jonathan Davis BD 27/2/98

FORT Hare University will reopen next Wednesday following an agreement between university management and the students' representative council. The agreement, brokered by SA Student's Congress (Sasco) leaders, was signed on Wednesday this week

Fort Hare had been closed and all students ordered to leave last week after rioting on campus Students protested against management's refusal to readmit students with fees outstanding.

According to the agreement, students with debts of not more than R4 500 would be readmitted provided they undertook to repay their debts over the course of the year.

"It is a big victory for us," said Sasco secretary general Tshilidzi Ratshitanga He said the university had backed down on its demand that students pay off their debts before readmission. He said most of the university's 6 000 students owed up to R4 500

The university had also demanded that students pay this year's 1998 tuition fees in advance, but agreed to change this to 50% of their first semester fee, or R2 500, in advance.

Under the agreement a special committee will consider cases individually of students unable to reduce their debts to R4 500 or less.

Ratshitanga said the agreement at Fort Hare provided Sasco with "a good tool or example" for settling fee disputes at other institutions.

Fort Hare vice-chancellor Mbulelo Mzamane said the agreement came very close to what the university had originally proposed He said the university was prepared to admit students with debts of up to R4 500 provided they set up debit orders which would wipe out their dept by November 30.

Mzimane warned that students who defaulted would not be allowed to continue studying

He denied that management had backed down and said that the university had always been prepared to consider "hardship cases" when representations were made to it

Highlands 'will ensure water for next century'

Deborah Fine BD 27/2/98 (167)

THE Lesotho Highlands Water Project was a costly but important undertaking to ensure that SA had sufficient access to scarce water supplies well into the next century, Rand Water GM Archer Davis said yesterday

Davis, who is the board's community support services GM, was speaking at a media briefing where the board announced a 9% increase in its tariff for water supplied to local authorities This comprised the board's regular annual price increase. The tariff would rise to 168,45c/kl from April 1 and municipalities were expected to pass some to consumers

Rand Water CE Vincent Bath said the board's increase reflected an 11% increase in the price at which the water affairs and forestry department sold raw water to the board, which in turn served as the bulk supplier to local authorities.

The department's water price would increase from 58c/kl to 95c/kl on March 1 About 75% of the increase would be used for the Lesotho Highlands Project.

Rand Water's tariff was made up of the 95c/kl charged by the department and an additional 73,45c/kl to cover the board's labour costs and the transporting, purifying, storing and pumping of water to local authorities.

Scarcity was an important factor governing its cost, Bath said. "Despite high rainfalls this summer, SA remains a water-scarce country with an average annual rainfall only about half of the world average."

5

Protesters block Lesotho parliament

(167)

CT 7/8/98

MASERU: Riot police confronted demonstrators barricading Lesotho's parliament yesterday in the second day of protest against the results of a May election in which the governing party won 79 of 80 assembly seats.

Police used tear gas, rubber bullets and batons on Wednesday to break up a demonstration by more than 1 000 Basotho men demanding to be addressed by King Letsie III.

Yesterday, after a night-long vigil outside the king's palace, a smaller group gathered at the gates of the single-storey sandstone parliament.

A session due to start at 10am was postponed to 2pm.

Police positioned a water cannon opposite the protesters in the dusty, windswept main street of Lesotho's tiny capital where the men and women gathered

The protesters said Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisile's Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) had stuffed the ballot boxes in the May 23 election to ensure that they won all but one of the parliamentary seats.

"People are very angry because they know there are figures that the prime minister cannot explain. It is clear that these figures were used to pad the LCD to victory," opposition Marematlou Freedom Party leader Vincent Malebo told Reuters

"These demonstrations are supposed to be for only one thing: The people want the king to speak to them. They want the king to issue a directive to resolve this issue"

Malebo added, however, that Letsie had no authority to intervene and would not be able to resolve the issue

President Nelson Mandela was trying to rally neighbouring heads of state to deal with developments in Lesotho, Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday — Reuter and Sapa

Lesotho's election farce

M+G 7/8/98

(167)

Tensions are running high in Lesotho as an ongoing vote recount reveals evidence of election fraud, writes
William Boot



Discontent: Protesters take to the streets in Maseru. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEAL ALLENTOFT

Long-simmering dissatisfaction over Lesotho's May 23 elections finally reached boiling point this week, and it is clear the political temperature is not going to come down until the issue is resolved

Supporters of opposition parties marched on the royal palace, they beat policemen with sticks, they held all night vigils to prod King Letsie III to action, and they held Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili hostage in Parliament for hours before police dispersed them with water cannons and rubber bullets

The evidence is all but irrefutable the May 23 elections *were* rigged Votes in nearly half the country's 80 constituencies were recounted this week It has been found that the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) won only 12 seats, less than a third of the total

The as yet unofficial recount stands in stark contrast with the May results counted under the auspices of Lesotho s Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) the official election result gave the LCD 68 of the 69 contested constituencies

The ongoing recount follows a ruling in the Lesotho High Court on July 22 which ordered that Lesotho's three main opposition parties — the Basotho National Party, the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) and the Maramatlou Freedom Party — be allowed access to previously suppressed IEC documentation Last weekend members of the Lesotho Mounted Police discovered a large amount of dumped electoral documents on the banks of the Caledon River

But even before the IEC documents were made available it was already clear something was amiss A forensic audit by South African consultants OF&A of the Lesotho voters' roll revealed some seemingly inexplicable demographic peculiarities

Notably there was a pattern of recorded birth dates which defied scientific explanation In every constituency, analysis of the roll revealed a vastly higher number of births (sometimes four or five times as many) on January 1 than on any other day in that month Even more puzzling, the same was true in the ascending sequence February 2, March 3, April 4

In at least two instances, the LCD candidate had already conceded defeat before the IEC announced him the winner

The audit also found that, recorded in the voters' roll, a larger number of people had birthdays in the first half of the month than in the second

This led the auditors to conclude "It is not possible at all that the above pattern could have occurred naturally It is our further submission that the above occurred as a result, and is an undeniable indication, of the fact that the voters' roll was manipulated "

Exactly how the voters' roll or voting at polling booths, monitored by not only the opposition parties themselves but also Commonwealth and South African Development Community observers, might have been manipulated remains unclear

However, stories are beginning to emerge which could suggest a less than independent electoral commission The *Mail & Guardian* knows of at least three instances where claims have been made that the initial count — conducted at the polling stations, in the presence of observers and members of all political parties — was at variance with the IEC's count. In at least two instances, the LCD candidate had already conceded defeat to his BCP opponent before the IEC announced him as the winner

But the LCD furiously denies any electoral fraud took place As the ruling party, it shows no signs of wanting to stand down A top-level bosberaad on July 24 and 25 considered a series of drastic measures, including banishing Letsie and declaring a national state of emergency, to maintain control of the territory

Although these plans were apparently abandoned after opposition parties issued a press release in protest, there are other potential threats to the constitutional order

On July 24, while the Cabinet and senior security force officials were locked in the bosberaad, the opposition axis sent a letter to Mosisili asking for an opportunity to address chiefs of the security forces It is understood they wanted to attempt to forestall conflict between the armed forces and the increasingly angry populace, and partly to prevent a widely rumoured pending military coup

Mosisili described the request as "presumptuous" and "a distinct attempt to politicise the security forces, to sow dissension among its members and create insecurity and instability in the country" He rejected it outright

Sources in Lesotho say a potentially devastating conflict, with factions taking arms on behalf of political parties, remains a real possibility It is also worth recording that, in advance of this week's march on the royal palace, Lesotho's police commissioner gave orders that roadblocks be set up on routes into Maseru

Orders were that, while ordinary traffic be allowed through, protesters in buses should be turned back The fact that his orders were not carried out says much about where the hearts of many security forces members lie Buses were cursorily stopped, but then allowed through

Meanwhile the opposition is calling on Letsie to exercise his constitutional right to intervene and forestall a crisis This week they handed over a memorandum presenting the evidence of electoral fraud, and "imploring" the king to "intervene with the aim of pronouncing Your Majesty's findings on the authenticity of the 1998 general elections"

Letsie has been reluctant to do this Earlier involvements in the politics of the day led to his banishment and the withholding of his crown, and as yet no official agency of state has formally asked him to exercise his constitutional right to annul the elections

With the king's hands still tied, the best hope of a resolution lies in Harare this weekend, where President Nelson Mandela is meeting Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe on issues of regional security

Both leaders have been appraised of the situation, and requests have been forwarded from various parties that the Southern African Development Communities guarantee not only stability in a potentially explosive time, but also the fairness of the re-elections for which the Basotho are agitating

Lesotho's election farce

M+G 7/8/98

(167)

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SA called to mediate in Lesotho poll crisis

(167)

By THABO MATLAMELLE
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Star 8/8/98

Maseru – Charges that the ruling Lesotho Congress of Democracy party rigged the May 23 legislative elections, at first dismissed by international election monitors, are now firming up

Several hundred opposition supporters camped outside the palace of King Letsie III on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights, demanding that the monarch annul the elections and call new ones.

There was rioting in the city centre and clashes with the police on Thursday

Letsie, apparently undecided about his powers to annul an election result, has called on President Mandela, as chairperson of the Southern African Development Community, and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe to mediate. Mandela was to send an envoy to Lesotho this weekend, according to reports.

South Africa has twice since 1994 intervened to help settle disputes in Lesotho.

Opposition parties have drawn up a long list of alleged election irregularities, including accusations that the voter registration list was packed with "ghost" voters.

The firmest evidence of vote-rigging emerged this week when opposition parties gained access to the list of voters used by election officials on voting day in 31 of the 80 constituencies

According to reliable sources, the new count discovered substantially fewer people had voted than was shown in the totals announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) In one constituency there were 4 950 more votes than shown on the list.

The IEC at first refused to give the opposition parties access to documents and ballot boxes, and did so only when ordered to do so by the Lesotho High Court

The auditors appointed by the opposition parties began counting the votes cast according to the voter registration list, but were again blocked by the IEC after they had completed an inspection in 31 constituencies.

At that point the opposition parties organised a petition demanding the annulment of the elections The petition was handed over to a palace official this week by a large group of supporters who then camped outside the palace.

Opposition parties have accused Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili of inciting supporters to violence by calling on them to "defend" their electoral victory.

Mbeki steps in to help end Lesotho election row

Report on 'rigging' claim due in two weeks

ARG 11/8/98 (167)

Maseru – Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has tried for six hours to broker an end to a worsening dispute over May's election results in Lesotho.

The negotiations took place yesterday as one man was beaten to death and 15 were injured in clashes between government supporters and rivals, said an AFP correspondent here

Mr Mbeki said after the talks that South Africa had been given "the responsibility to constitute a team of experts that will work with the IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) on the complaints" surrounding the May 23 election

"In this task, South Africa will work in consultation with Botswana and Zimbabwe as the guarantors of Lesotho's democracy," said Mr Mbeki.

He was speaking after briefing King Letsie III on joint negotiations with government and opposition figures in an effort to resolve the dispute

Mr Mbeki, who was accompanied by a high-level South African delegation, including Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo and Defence Minister Joe Modise, said the team would report on its findings in two weeks

"The team's report will be circulated to the Organisation of African Unity, the Commonwealth and the United Nations," said Mr Mbeki

"The prime minister of Lesotho and concerned parties have agreed to abide by the outcome of the investigation, and the opposition alliance has agreed to address its followers on that matter," he added

Thousands of demonstrators have gathered daily for the past week outside the royal palace in an effort to persuade the king to exercise his constitutional powers to overturn the result of the May 23 poll, which they claim was rigged

The leaders of the opposition alliance addressed about 1 000 supporters outside the palace after the meeting, but demonstrators rejected South Africa's involvement, reported an AFP correspondent – Sapa-AFP

SA to audit Lesotho election documents in bid to resolve impasse

(167) BD 11/8/98

MASERU — The SA government is expected to arrange the auditing of documents related to Lesotho's May general election, in a bid to resolve an impasse that has triggered violent protests and the death of one person in Lesotho's capital, Maseru

Sapa reports that the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy and the three main opposition parties agreed last night that SA should ask experienced judges and a forensic expert to audit all papers relating to the election results The opposition parties allege the outcome was rigged by the ruling party, which secured 79 out of the 80 parliamentary seats.

A source, who was speaking after talks between Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Lesotho government officials and opposition party leaders in Maseru, said: "The parties have agreed that SA should audit these papers and SA has agreed to pay for this process, with results published within 14 days."

Defence Minister Joe Modise and Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo were part of the SA delegation sent to Lesotho for talks, which took place amid clashes between supporters of the ruling party and the opposition Basotho National, Basutoland Congress and MaremaTlou Freedom parties

A spokesman for Mbeki said yesterday the situation in the kingdom was "of concern to the region and SA" However, neither the SA nor the Lesotho delegations have commented publicly on the outcome of the talks

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane reports that thousands of citizens have been demonstrating in front of the royal palace since last Tuesday, urging King Letsie to declare the elections null and void

A national stayaway called for yesterday was successful in Maseru, where government offices and businesses stayed closed.

Thousands filled the streets to ensure the call was respected, and those who defied it had their vehicles taken away from them. Tyres were burned in the streets and roadblocks were manned for most of the day. Reuter reports one person died and at least 15 were wounded in the clashes

An attempt by the crowds to take over Radio Lesotho to proclaim the fall of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili's government was foiled by soldiers manning the station's gates

The government has appealed to the crowds to restore peace to the streets, but opposition spokesmen say they do not recognise Mosisili's government. They are demanding his resignation and want the king to establish an interim order that will lead the country to a free and fair election

Lesotho boils over

By Thabo Motlamele

AT LEAST one person was reported dead and two others were shot and wounded in the Lesotho capital of Maseru yesterday as the political impasse over the outcome of the May elections turned violent.

Fifteen other people were reported injured and admitted to Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Maseru and in tents put up by the Red Cross

South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki arrived in Maseru yesterday morning accompanied by Foreign Minister Mr Alfred Nzo and Defence Minister Mr Joe Modise to mediate in the dispute that has seen about 6 000 opposition protesters camped outside the gates of the royal palace for a week

Mbeki's mission seemed to run into immediate problems as spokeswoman for the opposition parties Ms Monica Mopedi revealed that Mr Moletsane Monyake, who was to present statistics to Mbeki and Lesotho prime minister Mr Pakalitha Mosisili proving that last May's elections were rigged in favour of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), was put under house arrest 30 minutes before the meeting was scheduled to start

"His house is surrounded by police and the army They even refused his lawyer access to him We are going to take this up with Mbeki and Mosisili. There is no way we can continue negotiating when one member of our team is under house arrest," Mopedi said.

Late yesterday evening Mbeki was still locked in meetings with Mosisili, some Cabinet members, and leaders of the opposition parties, the Basotho National Party, the Basotholand Congress Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party.

The meeting was the first time that the warring parties had sat down to discuss the crisis

Yesterday morning about 1 000 LCD supporters engaged the protesters in a number of skirmishes that resulted in the death of one person and injuries to others

The fracas started when workers were on their way to work despite a call for a stayaway by the opposition parties

Government supporters moved in to dissuade the protesters from stopping workers from going to work They were met by opposition supporters with guns, wielding sticks and throwing stones

One man, who was part of the government supporters' group, was beaten to death by the angry mob of opposition supporters

Lesotho police commissioner Bolutu Makoaba could not confirm the death but said two people had been shot and wounded earlier in the day during a clash.

"There has been some shooting. It seems the boys were trying to stop someone coming to town. His car's windscreen was broken. He reacted by taking out his gun and firing at the crowd, injuring two people," Makoaba said from Maseru.

The government supporters are camped at Motimposo and Lekhaloaneng – both within walking distance of the royal palace

There is a heavy police and army presence in the streets of Maseru but they do not appear to be trying to intervene between the factions

Mbeki's arrival yesterday followed King Letsie III's appeal that the two sides should meet to resolve their differences peacefully

The trouble started when opposition parties claimed that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had rigged the elections in favour of the ruling party

They conducted an audit, with the assistance of IEC staff, of the lists used at 31 polling stations against the results announced by the IEC and concluded that there must have been thousands of ghost voters

In the other constituencies, similar irregularities were reported When the parties tried to continue with their investigation, the IEC refused them access to election material, despite a court order allowing it

Army surrounds palace to quell Lesotho protest

(167) ARG 12/8/98

Maseru – The Lesotho army today surrounded King Letsie's Royal Palace in Maseru in a bid to disperse protesters who have been outside the palace since last Tuesday.

Basotho National Party leader Evaristus Sekhonyana said that the country's army chief, Lieutenant-Colonel Makhula Motakeng, had instructed the protesters to disperse in a radio broadcast last night

"Early today the army began surrounding the Royal Palace Another tank, inside the palace, is facing towards the gate in the direction of the crowd," said Mr Sekhonyana

He said opposition parties — who were protesting against May's election, which they claim was rigged in favour of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy — had asked South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, during his recent visit to Lesotho, to give the assurance that the army would not be introduced into the dispute

"Mr Mbeki told us that he hoped the army would not be used. We are exerting political pressure on a political issue and I do not understand why the army is being used," said Mr Sekhonyana

He said he expected protesters would be forced to disperse "if it came to a push" – Sapa

Lesotho crisis deepens as deal is rejected

BD 12/8/98 (167)

John Dludlu and
Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

MASERU — The political crisis in Lesotho deepened yesterday when the opposition parties formally rejected an SA-brokered deal, raising the spectre of violence and instability

After a day of demonstrations punctuated by outbursts of violence, the eight opposition parties made renewed appeals to King Letsie III to intervene

For the first time the petition was endorsed by "principal chiefs", the traditional leaders closest to the monarch, a move that further isolates the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy

Essentially, the opposition parties want the ceremonial monarch to annul the May election — which they say was rigged — and a unity government formed to prepare for a fresh election

Lekhoona Jonathan, secretary-general of the Basotho National Party, one of the main opposition elements, said the opposition also wanted the constitution amended to allow the king to intervene in times of crisis

Crucially, the parties rejected multilateral interventions in the crisis, further unravelling Monday's SA-led understanding.

Although welcoming SA's gesture, the opposition alliance said the crisis was an entirely internal matter It was not necessary, at least yet, for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Organisation of African Unity to intervene.

On Monday, Foreign Minister Tom Thabane of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy party, which now appears to be the only party still upholding the

Continued on Page 2

Lesotho

BD 12/8/98 (169)

Continued from Page 1

SA-brokered deal, said Mbeki's mission was a continuation of the 1994 SADC mandate on Lesotho. In 1994, SADC chose SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe to intervene in another political crisis in Lesotho.

Mbeki had offered to assemble an expert panel, probably led by Constitutional Court president Arthur Chaskalson, to investigate complaints of corruption in the election.

"We found it unacceptable ... we don't think there is a government in Lesotho," said Jonathan, referring to the fact that legislators had not met for days due to the crisis

Moeketse Malebo, interim chairman of the opposition alliance, said Pretoria's intervention had helped only in getting people to talk.

The opposition parties still appear to have faith in the king despite the fact that he has still not intervened. "We are confident that there will be a response from the king . we have faith in him," said Molapo Qhobela, the leader of the Basutoland Congress Party.

Prospects of violence were raised yesterday when Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili appealed to protesting demonstrators to disperse. "Quite clearly he (Mosisili) is growing impatient ... he would like the people flushed out of the place," said Malebo.

Fears of military action to remove the demonstrators from the king's gate were heightened by the arrival of the military police at the palace last night.

Reuter reports that witnesses said a military jeep drove through the streets broadcasting a message saying: "We are telling everybody who likes their life to go home immediately."

About 200 protesters stormed the border post between Maseru and SA, but were turned back by police.

Although the crisis has been going on for nine days, it is the second day Maseru has been at a standstill with all businesses and government offices remaining closed. The effects of the impasse were felt when delegates to the African Investment Promotion Agency conference in Maseru were hurriedly transferred to Johannesburg.

PROTESTERS REFUSE TO GO HOME

Lesotho leader 'to step down if poll flawed'

CT 12/8/98

(167)

YOUTHS WHO BLOCKADED streets into Maseru and who camped outside the king's palace have refused to go home and await the result of a probe into the election.

LESOTHO'S new Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and his ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party has undertaken to step down should a South African-sponsored committee find that the May polls were seriously flawed, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday

Nzo said the committee would hopefully come out with its findings within two weeks

The opposition parties, who are contesting the validity of the May 23 polls, had also undertaken to respect the result of the committee's investigations, he said

Nzo on Monday accompanied Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Defence Minister Joe Modise to Maseru, to try and broker an end to the dispute which has seen government and opposition supporters pitted against each other

Mbeki said South Africa, along with Botswana and Zimbabwe, had been given "the responsibility to constitute a team of experts who will work with the IEC (independent electoral commission) to investigate opposition claims of massive election fraud"

Mosisili yesterday told thousands of protesters of his government's undertaking to step down if the investigation proved his party's May victory was flawed

"We are ready to accept the report's outcome, even though we are of the opinion that the elections were free and fair," Mosisili said

The demonstrators booed Mosisili's pledge to abide by the findings of the task team and ignored his calls to return home



MEDIATOR: Alfred Nzo

Despite South Africa's assertion that all parties had agreed to the probe, opposition leaders were meeting yesterday to draft an alternative solution to the crisis.

In Maseru youths supporting political parties alleging electoral fraud brought the capital to a standstill for a second day yesterday and rejected talks aimed at resolving the impasse

Streets into Maseru were blocked with large oil drums placed by youths who manned the barricades with sticks to intimidate workers into staying home

Shops and businesses in the capital have remained closed since Monday because buses and taxis have been prevented from entering the town, witnesses said

The city's streets were patrolled yesterday by armed soldiers threading their way through the debris of the previous day's conflict.

Burning tyres, large oil drums and overturned hawkers' stands blocked the streets on Monday One person was beaten to death and at least 15 others were treated in hospital for injuries

Opposition party leaders have called on their supporters to end the week-long action and go home

But the hundreds of protesters who are camped in front of King Letsie III's palace in Maseru were unwilling to leave.

"All we want to see is the government down and nothing else We will not accept anything from Mbeki or whosoever We know who is our true and rightful mediator — it's the king," said one protester

Leader of the opposition Marematlou Freedom Party, Vincent Malebo, said the meeting might have eased the minds of some people "but not the youth"

"Their anger is much too much They have been subjected to a lot of difficult conditions. It is very difficult for us to convince them that they should go home immediately," he said

Protesters have maintained a round-the-clock vigil at the palace since last Tuesday, demanding the king's intervention

The constitution rules out direct involvement in party politics by the king

Opposition parties have cried foul over the virtual clean sweep by the ruling LCD in the poll that was declared free and fair by international observers

The party won 79 out of 80 parliamentary seats, triggering allegations that ballot boxes were tampered with — Sapa-Reuter

AFRICA

Teargas fails to move protesters from palace after army's call to disperse is ignored

MASERU — Teargas released by the Lesotho army failed to disperse several hundred protesters gathered at King Letsie's royal palace in Maseru yesterday afternoon

A palace source said soldiers fired "one or two" teargas canisters in an attempt to disperse the protesters who have camped outside the palace since Tuesday last week

"The situation remains tense though People are still there in front of the gates, singing," the source said. The protest was legal

"There is no way that King Letsie can intervene in the electoral dispute because there are no provisions to do so in the constitution"

Troops took up position around the palace after protesters ignored an order to disperse from Lt-Col Makhula Motakeng, broadcast by a radio station on Tuesday evening.

The protesters are opposition party supporters who claim the results of the general election in May were rigged to return the Lesotho Congress for Democracy to power. The LCD took 79 of 80 seats in Lesotho's National Assembly

Earlier Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili appealed to LCD supporters to exercise restraint until the process agreed upon by the various parties was completed. He said it had come to his attention that LCD members had been incensed by the situation which faced the government they had elected

Basotho National Party official Bareng Sekhonyana said there were a number of issues that needed to be resolved "to our satisfaction" before the protesters could disperse

These included the participation of opposition parties in the independent electoral commission panel that is to recount the votes of the May general election (167)

"We want representatives in the commission because if they recount the votes alone, they would just confirm the (initial) results of the elections" The opposition also wanted protection for protesters against "LCD armed gangs".

Opposition parties' spokesman Monica Mopeli's claim that the soldiers fired stun grenades could not be verified — Sapa

BD 13/8/98

TROOPS USE STUN GRENADE, TEARGAS

Protesters stand firm as soldiers take action

(167) CT 13/8/98

MASERU: Lesotho's Prime Minister appealed for calm and for his supporters not to retaliate against protesters but to wait for a recount of the vote to confirm his party's victory.

SOLDIERS used a stun grenade and teargas against hundreds of anti-government protesters in Lesotho yesterday but failed to break up their demonstration, witnesses said

Around 500 protesters spent a ninth day camped in front of King Letsie III's palace in support of opposition claims that the May general election had been rigged

Two boys received slight burns when the soldiers launched their assault, which had the opposite effect of what they had intended, according to Monica Mopeli, spokesperson for three opposition parties

"The soldiers fired stun grenades and teargas into the crowd. People were running away, screaming. It was chaos It's a miracle that no one was seriously hurt," Mopeli said from the king's palace

She said guards had opened the palace gates to allow people to escape As a result the crowd had reformed inside the palace grounds and swelled to around 2 000

The protests were sparked by opposition claims that the general election was rigged by the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, which won 79 out of 80 seats

Mopeli said support for the protest continued to grow.

"We have heard that there are truckloads of people coming to join us from the mountains. The crowd was singing, chanting and dancing as they waited for the king to address their rejection of the results of the May vote Lesotho's constitution forbids the king to become involved in politics

A heavy military presence remained at the bottom of the road leading to the gates of the palace, one witness said

Shops and businesses remained closed in the city for the third day running after a general strike called by opposition parties on Monday to back their demands. They want the government to step down and King Letsie to address them.

South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki mediated between the protagonists on Monday in talks that resulted in an agreement for electoral specialists from Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa to probe the fraud allegations The South African cabinet said yesterday it was consulting Botswana and Zimbabwe about setting up the team.

Supporters of the Basotholand Congress Party, the Basotho National Party and the Maremattlou Freedom Party rejected the proposal and restated their demand for the king to address their concerns

Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili yesterday called on supporters of his ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party to remain calm and refrain from doing anything that could worsen the situation

As LCD leader, it had come to his attention that party members had been provoked and incensed by the situation which faced the government they had elected.

"I appeal to them to exercise restraint until the peaceful and legal process agreed by the political party leaders and the government is completed The truth shall prevail" — Sapa, Reuter

Lesotho PM agrees to poll fraud probe

(167) Star 12/8/98

Cape Town – Lesotho's prime minister and ruling party have pledged to step down if polls held in May are found to have been flawed, SA Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday

Thousands of protesters gathered outside the palace of Lesotho's King Letsie III for an eighth successive day yesterday, and opposition party supporters enforced a general strike for the second day, to demand that the election be annulled

Nzo accompanied Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Defence Minister Joe Modise to Maseru on Monday to try and bring to an end the dispute between the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and its political opponents.

Both sides agreed to allow South Africa to set up a committee, in co-operation with Botswana and Zimbabwe, to probe opposition claims of massive election fraud.

Nzo said yesterday that the committee hoped to complete its investigation within two weeks

"Both parties – the government and opposition parties – undertook to respect those investigations," Nzo said.

"The prime minister (Pakalitha Mosisili) was even saying, if the investigations show that indeed there were serious problems with the elections, they are prepared to step down," he said

Lesotho Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said "We made an undertaking that, if these allegations prove to be true, we would dissolve parliament and go for another election

"But, if proven false, then the opposition parties must accept we are here fairly"

Clashes on Monday saw one man beaten to death and 15 people injured.

The LCD took all but one of the 80 National Assembly seats in the elections. – AFP

Six people hurt after clashes in Maseru

BD 14/8/98 (167)

MASERU — At least six people were wounded when gunfire erupted between pro- and anti-government factions in the Lesotho capital Maseru yesterday.

The street clashes occurred when about 200 supporters of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy marched from the city's main street to confront opposition supporters camped outside the royal palace.

Hospital officials said at least six people were injured, with most having been shot in the legs, when shooting broke out between the rival factions

Hundreds of people were prevented from returning to work by antigoverment factions demanding that the king dissolve parliament As they streamed into town they were stopped by opposition supporters who insisted the stayaway was in effect despite announcements on state radio to the contrary.

Opposition parties, who claim the government was fraudulently elected in May, have held protests in Maseru for the past nine days, leading to clashes with government troops in which two people died. "We are scared," a public servant said "They will kill us," she said, gesturing to protesters blocking the roads and soldiers monitoring the situation

Food is running short in the town as shops have closed and supply trucks from neighbouring SA have stopped at the border

Opposition parties claim the May 23 vote was rigged and are demanding a fresh poll A team of experts from SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe is to probe allegations about the vote and release its findings within two weeks —Sapa-AFP.

The king and politics: Page 14

Several injured in Lesotho protest

(167) CT 14/8/98

MASERU: Several people were injured yesterday, including three who had gunshot wounds, as supporters of rival parties argued over the outcome of the election in Lesotho, witnesses said.

A strike, which enters its fifth day today, has brought Maseru to a standstill since Monday It is being enforced by youths manning street barricades

Food and fuel are running short in the capital, which could add to the tension

The leader of the opposition Basotho National Party, Evaristus Sekhonyana, said shots were exchanged when government supporters tried to take over his party's headquarters "In the process seven people were shot," he said

However, a reporter said he saw five people being taken to hospital, three with gunshot wounds and two with injuries from stones

Supporters of the government, which won all but one of the 80 parliamentary seats in the May election, have clashed with protesters who claim the vote was rigged. "The groups clashed in the centre of town (Maseru) and they began throwing stones at each other," the reporter said "Next thing shooting broke out."

The protesters have demanded that the constitutional monarch, King Letsie III, should dissolve parliament and annul the elections. The king is barred from direct involvement in politics — Sapa, Reuter

Lesotho troops retreat as more join protest over election

Maseru – Lesotho soldiers retreated late yesterday afternoon after earlier surrounding King Letsie III's palace in Maseru, where hundreds of opposition party members were protesting against the election results

"The soldiers have pulled back to a safe distance The crowds are gathering immensely," Basotho National Party president Evaristus Sekhonyana said

SA's Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday advised South Africans intending to travel to Lesotho to take precautions because of the unstable situation Travellers should take particular care when travelling to Maseru, the department said

Teargas and stun grenades were apparently fired outside the palace in an effort to disperse crowds yesterday Sekhonyana described the situation as "still a bit tense"

He said vigilante groups of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy were stoning taxis transporting opposition party members to the palace

Opposition party members have been protesting in front of the palace for more than a week against the May general election result, which they claim was rigged in favour of the LCD, winner of 79 of the 80 general assembly seats

In a radio broadcast on Tuesday night, army chief Lieutenant-Colonel Makhula Motakeng ordered the crowds to disperse They defied the order, and troops were sent in

Sekhonyana said he understood the king was extremely concerned about the situation

The king has so far refused to become involved, but on Saturday called on the government and opposition parties to talk

On Monday Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Defence Minister Joe Modise and Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo met Lesotho government and opposition leaders

It was decided that SA would work with Lesotho's electoral commission on the opposition's complaints – Sapa

(167) Star 13/8/98

Protesters bring Maseru to standstill

(167) Observer 14/8/98

HUNDREDS of people were prevented from working in the Lesotho capital yesterday by anti-government factions demanding that the king dissolve the country's parliament

As workers streamed into town, they were stopped by chanting opposition supporters, who insisted a stayaway was in effect despite announcements on state radio to the contrary

Opposition parties, who claim the government was elected fraudulently to parliament in May, have held protests in Maseru for the past nine days, leading to clashes with government troops in which two people have died

"We are scared," a civil servant told AFP "They will kill us," she said, gesturing to soldiers and protesters blocking the roads

People standing near her insisted that the protesters, mostly young men, carried weapons under their traditional Lesotho blankets

"We'll stay at home until further notice We are so scared and hungry," she added

Food is running short in Maseru as shops have closed and supply trucks from neighbouring South Africa have stopped at the border, unsure whether to enter the small mountain kingdom

Opposition parties claim the May 23 vote in which the Lesotho Congress for Democracy won 79 of the 80 seats in the National Assembly was rigged and are demanding a fresh poll

"That would not help," a worker told AFP "Everybody wants to be prime minister in Lesotho," she said

"Maybe the king should be the one to hold power"

On the other side of town about 300 opposition supporters lingered after having taken part in a ninth consecutive night vigil at King Letsie III's palace

Tri-nation team

The opposition will examine the names of a three-nation team from South Africa Botswana and Zimbabwe that was set up to probe allegations about the election, said Bereng Sekhonyana of the Basotho National Party

The team is expected to release their findings within the next two weeks

Meanwhile, opposition leaders insist that they and their supporters will stay outside the palace – where they have been camped since Tuesday last week – to await Letsie's reply to their demand that he dissolve the government

"He knows what to do, but he has to take time," one young opposition supporter said – *Sapa-AFP*

Meltdown in mountain kingdom

(167)

MG 14-20/8/98

William Boot

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki s intervention this week in Lesotho s election crisis may prove too little, too late to head off disaster in the beleaguered kingdom

Mbeki, Minister of Foreign Affairs Alfred Nzo and Minister of Defence Joe Modise secured agreement from both the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the country s major opposition parties to hand over their increasingly bitter election dispute to the adjudication of South Africa and its Southern African Development Community (SADC) allies

They will look into claims of election rigging by opposition parties as well as other matters relating to the electoral process

The country s three major opposition parties — the Basotho National Party, the Basotholand Congress Party and the Maramatlou Freedom Party — claim the general elections on May 23 were rigged in favour of the LCD which, in the official result, recorded victory in 79 of Lesotho s 80 voting districts

But the adjudication could be too late as Lesotho teeters ever closer to the brink of total disaster A resolute group of opposition protesters continues to swell outside the royal palace in Maseru, more than a week after they first marched there to demand that their monarch, King Letsie III, intervene to resolve the crisis

But Letsie s hands are tied by a Constitution and personal undertakings made before his coronation These preclude him from any involvement in the politics of the day, unless his authority is invoked under the Constitution

To date no such call has been made, though at the time of going to press Lesotho's council of senior traditional chiefs was reportedly meeting to pass a resolution calling for Letsie to use his constitutional authority to dissolve the government and take control of the country until new elections can be held

Each day the temperature rises. On more than one occasion soldiers have used water cannons and even stun grenades in an attempt to force the protesters to go home Earlier this week an unnamed government official was brutally killed after opening fire on a group of opposition supporters at the border with South Africa

Increasingly reports are filtering through of armed bands of government supporters, moving around the countryside intimidating opposition protesters with seeming impunity

On Wednesday a potentially catastrophic stand off developed when soldiers loyal to the government tried to enforce dispersal orders from Royal Lesotho Defence Force chief Lieutenant Colonel Makhula Mosakeng But a second contingent of soldiers aimed their weapons threateningly at their colleagues, who then backed off

The incident points to mounting tensions inside the security forces between factions loyal to the government and those on the side of the opposition — tensions that could spill over into outright conflict

One such observer was the king's brother, Prince Seeiso, who visited the army barracks in Maseru on behalf of the royal family Seeiso appealed for professional detachment on the part of the military and for the defence force brass to withdraw its troops from the palace He argued that instead of protecting the royal family, the presence of the military was inflaming a volatile situation

But whether the best interests of the tiny kingdom are being served is open to doubt About two weeks ago the LCD government used a special fund to buy a farm near Lady brand in the name of the defence force chief



A people divided: The Lesotho security forces' hold on order is tenuous as they are riven with internal tensions. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL ALLENTOFF

The money for the purchase was authorised from Lesotho's security fund by Prime Minister Phakalitha Mosisili and Foreign Minister Tom Thabane The deeds were signed by Mosakeng, who is now legal owner

The South African intervention could prove too little because the proposed SADC forensic audit of the elections will in terms of the agreement, be undertaken in conjunction with the country's Independent Electoral Commission

This, according to the opposition, is leaving the fox to look after the chickens its contention is that the IEC was part of the alleged rigging

And the evidence suggests it could have been A military intelligence official inside Lesotho has claimed high level orders were given three weeks ago for the systematic destruction of election documentation lodged supposedly under lock and key with the IEC Last week a substantial batch of voter papers was found dumped at a sewerage plant alongside the Caledon River

Election logistics, including the collection of ballot boxes, had been organised by the Tactical Intelligence Bureau on the orders of Mosakeng The bureau was paid by the military, and not seconded to the IEC

And a recount last week of voting in 32 constituencies revealed a pattern of inexplicable "ghost voting" in each of the constituencies, around 2 000 ballot papers lacked the authenticating mark of the voting officer at the polling booth

Such ballots should have been rejected out of hand, yet IEC officials had apparently systematically failed to pick up the inconsistency

Fair or fraudulent result? PAGE 28

RIAN HORN



Long vigil ... day 16 of the sit-in in front of the Lesotho king's palace, where most of the approximately 300 people have spent their time protesting, talking about the state of the land and singing during the day while sleeping at night. The rocks are for fighting the police.

Lesotho's government afraid that defence force is siding with opposition

(167) Star 2/18/98

By Simon Zwane

Maseru The commander of the Lesotho Defence Force yesterday moved to allay rumblings within the ranks of the army amid indications that the government was losing the support of the military.

Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakeng, who has been accused of involvement in corruption and the alleged rigging of the May 23 election, urged members of the army to be wary of reports which were aimed at "sowing confusion within the ranks of the army and creating distrust of the leadership".

This came after claims surfaced that senior government officials had bought a farm for Mosakeng at Ladybrand in the Free State. The farm was allegedly bought with funds from the army's secret security fund to which Mosakeng, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and Foreign Minister Tom Thabane are the only signatories

In a circular read verbatim on state-owned Radio Lesotho, Mosakeng admitted that the farm had been bought but said it was for the army's "breeding purposes"

Mosakeng's move came a day after signs that the army was beginning to sympathise with opposition parties which had staged a three week day-and-night vigil outside King Letsie's palace, demanding the dissolution of the government

Observers said Mosakeng, as head of military intelligence, had been compromised by claims that he was also involved in the electoral fraud The army's intelligence unit is said to have played a pivotal role in arranging logistics for the election

Aspects of these logistics, particularly the voters' roll, have been found to have been manipulated

A South African forensic company, OF&A, has said the voters' roll was "not a legit (sic) and accurate document and therefore would fail as a control measure for a free and fair democratic election"

The report found an exceptionally high number of people born on January 1 and on 0-01-1900 – Star Foreign Service

LESOTHO

CLUTCHING AT THE MOUNTAIN

Elite wants to hold on

The latest crisis in the tiny mountain Kingdom of Lesotho — visibly manifest by protest marches and running battles between protesters and soldiers in the streets of Maseru — underlines the fragility of its continued existence as a separate state

For the second time in four years, members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have had to intervene in a bid to resolve a political impasse in the minuscule country Outside intervention in any country, particularly by bigger neighbouring countries, always poses a potential threat to its national sovereignty Lesotho is not exempt from that danger

SA, which envelopes Lesotho geographically and which towers over it like a colossus, is once again playing a leading role in brokering a solution to Lesotho's recurring conflict

The present intervention by a three-member SADC team is a sequel to a similar intercession in 1994 by SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana after King Letsie III suspended the constitutionally elected government of Premier Ntsu Mokhehle and appointed a provisional government, pending the holding of new elections

But the agreement brokered by the SADC troika — which resulted in the restoration to power of Mokhehle's Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) — has merely proved to be an interlude before the present crisis, precipitated by vociferous dispute over the result of the May 23 general election

That poll saw the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), a party founded last year by the ageing Mokhehle as a riposte to challenges to his authority within the BCP, sweep to power, pulverising opposition parties to win all but one of the 80 seats to Lesotho's National Assembly

Initially grumbling at the election result by the three main opposition parties — the BCP, led by Molapo Qhobela, the Basotho National Party (BNP), led by Evaristus Sekhonyana, and the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) — has taken a more vigorous form in the past three weeks

Charges of electoral fraud have reverberated in Maseru's streets and outside Letsie's palace, where demonstrators are encamped to underline their demand for the king to declare the May election null and void and to order new elections

SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, responding to regional concern that the dispute could lead to conflict and add to instability in the subcontinent, has negotiated an agreement with the main parties

Under the accord an audit of the May 23 poll will be conducted by a three-nation team, headed by Pius Langa, deputy president of SA's Constitutional Court Its purpose will be to establish whether opposition allegations of massive fraud are justified

The ruling LCD led by Pakalitha Mosisili has committed itself to acceptance of the findings The opposition parties have been more cautious, reserving for themselves the right to assess the findings

These differing responses have led one well-placed diplomat to conclude that the opposition is less than confident in its oft repeated assertions that the poll was rigged to ensure victory for the LCD His conclusion is buttressed by declarations from UN and SADC election observer missions which pronounced the May 23 poll free and fair

An alternative interpretation is that the opposition parties are loathe to allow a team from outside Lesotho the final say, not because they do not believe their own propaganda but because they are jealous of Lesotho's independence A forensic audit commissioned by opposition parties supports their view that the voters' roll was manipulated — by the inclusion of "ghost voters" — to the advantage of the LCD

Opposition demonstrators in Maseru are manifestly deeply sceptical about making the SADC team the final arbiters on so critical an issue as the fairness of the election process Their view is reflected in the words of an irate protester "We will not accept anything from Mbeki or whosoever We know who is our true and right mediator It's our king"

Their sensitivity is understandable the forces propelling Lesotho towards closer union with SA are growing stronger as it struggles to find a permanent solution to the fractious disputes that have marred its history as a sovereign nation since it attained independence from Britain in 1966

Ironically, the birth of a nonracial SA has increased pressure for unification between the two countries Even a cursory knowledge of Lesotho's history shows that the threat of incorporation into apartheid SA was a potent argument for independence

It is not coincidental that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) urged Lesotho institutions to re-appraise the situation in 1992 when it was obvious that the long decades of apartheid were about to end The NUM is SA's biggest union and, as important, one whose membership has a substantial number of Lesotho nationals

The emergence of the new, nonracial SA has accelerated the process of political as well as economic integration between the two countries, with many Lesotho nationals voting in SA's 1994 watershed election and in the subsequent local government elections of 1995-1996

A survey conducted by the Helen Suzman Foundation shows that only Lesotho's better educated and higher income urban elite has a strong sense of separate nationhood The findings demonstrate their poorer, less educated brethren in the rural hinterland are much less attached to the notion of independence The result is a "crisis of confidence over national sovereignty" in that country **Patrick Laurence**

PLAGUED BY CONFLICT

Key dates in Lesotho's history

1965 — **First elections** (won by BNP)
1966 — **Independence**
1970 — Conflict following the **cancellation of elections** (BCP was leading)
1974 — **BCP's uprising** crushed by BNP gov
1986 — The military topples Leabua Jonathan's gov
1993 — **First democratic elections** in 23 years (BCP wins all the seats)
1994 — King Letsie III **suspends BCP's gov**, but later gives in following pressure from SA, Zimbabwe & Botswana
1997 — **Split in BCP and birth of LCD**
1998 — **Elections. LCD** wins 79 of 80 seats



Lesotho's rulers reject report

BD 27/8/98 (167)

MASERU — The Lesotho government rejected the contents yesterday of a preliminary report on alleged irregularities during the country's controversial general elections of May 23

The report, compiled by members of the Southern African Development Community-sponsored tri-nation commission of inquiry, was handed to King Letsie III by SA's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki

Lesotho's Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said the government did not accept the preliminary report He also denied any knowledge that the 10-man commission from SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe had confirmed 98% of the allegations about the election results, as claimed yesterday by opposition Basutoland Congress Party leader Molapo Qhobela.

The kingdom's three main opposition parties, the Basutoland Congress Party, the Basotho National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party, alleged that the elections had been manipulated in favour of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy

The parties staged several demonstrations which led to clashes between the security forces, opposition and government supporters over the past three weeks

During a meeting between Mbeki, the Lesotho government and opposition leaders on Tuesday night, the government argued that while it agreed that the elections should be declared null and void, the situation in the country should return to what is was before the elections, opposition sources said

However, the opposition insisted that the government be dissolved and powers be given to King Letsie to form a coalition government to prepare for fresh elections

Opposition sources said the government walked out of the meeting and also boycotted a meeting with Mbeki and the opposition later in the day

At a news conference Mbeki appealed to the Basotho nation to stay calm and not to listen to rumours about the contents of the preliminary report

He said parliament had changed the electoral legislation to allow the commission, chaired by Judge Pius Langa of SA, a recount of the votes on Saturday The commission's final report is expected to be released on Sunday — Sapa-DPA

CAPE TIMES
★ THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 1998

Lesotho poll 'mishandled' probe finds

MASERU: Deputy President Thabo Mbeki left Lesotho's capital yesterday after brokering an agreement between government and opposition leaders that there be a recount of votes cast in the May 23 general election.

The recount was set for the weekend, Mbeki told reporters.

On Tuesday and yesterday Mbeki and representatives of the presidents of Botswana and Zimbabwe met leaders of the three main opposition parties and the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD).

During these meetings Mbeki presented an interim report compiled by the Langa commission, which investigated opposition claims of election irregularities.

The report said there was evidence that Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission had mishandled the poll, which saw the LCD win 79 of the 80 seats in the National Assembly.

The parties agreed that the report be upgraded into a final document which would be tabled at the next meeting, scheduled for tomorrow.

The Lesotho government had asked asked Mbeki to convey to the opposition parties its preparedness for a recount.

A Lesotho government source said the ruling LCD was confident that a ballot recount would not change the status quo.

"We are so confident that we even went to Parliament to change our country's electoral laws to establish mechanisms for recounting. Our standpoint is very clear ... because we don't believe things will change," said the official, who asked that his name not be published.

He said the Lesotho government accepted there could have been irregularities in the May election

BNP leader Everestus Sekhonyane said the opposition leaders were happy with what had been achieved so far.

"We only wish the recounting could be speeded up. Although we acknowledge that the recounting process can take long ... we will be unhappy if it takes two months. We want it done within two or three days," he said. —Sapa

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year
IRE: AP

Lesotho's votes to be recounted

(167)

Sowetan 27/8/98

MASERU – South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said in Maseru yesterday that the Lesotho government had taken steps to change legislation to allow a recount of the votes cast in the country's controversial May 23 general election

Mbeki said the amended legislation would be given royal assent when King Letsie III signs the legislation to be formally gazetted. To recount would take place as early as over the coming weekend.

He had earlier met Lesotho opposition leaders to discuss a proposal by the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) that there be a recount of ballot papers

Mbeki appealed to the Basotho nation for calm in the crisis. The nation should "urgently, thoroughly and with impartiality" keep their calm and not get agitated.

The three main opposition parties – the Basotholand Congress Party, the Basotho National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party – have petitioned King Letsie III to dissolve the government and replace it with a form of proportional representative government to oversee the affairs of the country until new elections are held

A Lesotho government source said the LCD was confident that a ballot recount would not change the status quo

"We are so confident that we even went to parliament to change our country's electoral laws to establish mechanisms for recounting

"Our standpoint is very clear . because we don't believe things will change," said the official, who asked that he should not be named

He said the Lesotho government accepted there could have been irregularities in the May election, which saw the LCD win 79 of the 80 seats in the national assembly.

"The ball is now in the hands of Deputy President Mbeki and the opposition leaders We will wait for what the next step will be," said the official

An interim report by the Langa commission of inquiry into allegations of electoral fraud, released yesterday morning, said there was evidence that the Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission had mishandled the running of the polls.

Reacting to the interim findings, the leader of the Basotholand Congress Party, Mr Molapo Qobela, told a huge crowd gathered at the venue of the talks that the report was "encouraging".

Other opposition sources said the interim report indicated that 98 percent of the election results were irregular.

Lesotho Foreign Minister Pom Thabane said the fact that the commission had ruled that the IEC had mishandled the elections did not infer that there was fraud

Crowds of cheering people left the meeting venue early yesterday and went to the gates of the royal palace where they have been demonstrating for the past 22 days in support of opposition claims that the election results were not fair.

Split looms among farming groups

DD 3/9/98

Louise Cook

PRETORIA — Right-wing sentiment among factions of the Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) burst into open hostility yesterday when farmers from the North West accused the SA Agricultural Union (SAAU) of being "ANC orientated", unchristian and of selling out the TAU and its members.

Tensions between the SAAU delegates and certain TAU members reached a climax as farmers — mostly from Mpumalanga and North West, where the TAU had lost support owing to political differences — threatened to withhold R170 000 in affiliation fees from the SAAU and warned it "not to mess with the TAU".

The farmers claimed to be locked in a "pitched battle" to defend their survival within organised agriculture. Shocked SAAU delegates listened as a high-ranking TAU official warned about the "incalcuable abyss of self-sacrifice" that would lead to "never-ending slavery under the dictatorship of the proletariat".

The TAU had only two options: remain united and survive, or unbundle and end up with a confused value system, the official said.

The row has its roots in the SAAU changing its constitution a few years ago to comply with the political dispensation of nine provinces. In terms of the change, only one union per province could be an affiliate of the SAAU. At the time of the change, the TAU represented Gauteng, Mpumalanga, the Northern Province and North West. Its affiliation with the SAAU continued on that basis following a verbal agreement which was never written into the SAAU constitution.

The current tension and looming split was sparked last year when about 900 Mpumalanga farmers broke from the TAU and formed the Mpumalanga Agricultural Union headed by former TAU vice-president Laurie Bosman. This union was now applying to the SAAU for affiliation along with the TAU, a move which places the SAAU in an untenable situation, prompting SAAU vice-president Japie Grobler yesterday to plead with the farmers to find a solution. He offered the SAAU's willingness to have further consultations, but said the national union was bound by its constitution.

TAU members said they suspected that the SAAU was trying to jettison them.

All the unions deny that politics is behind the turmoil, but a source from the former eastern Transvaal said the TAU's conservatism has prompted the breakaways.

Call for SA to return land to Lesotho

DD 3/9/98 (167)

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

MASERU — A motion demanding the return of a large part of the Free State to Lesotho was tabled in the Lesotho parliament yesterday.

The issue is one close to the hearts of many Basotho who lost large tracts of land to the British and the Boers in a series of wars in the 1800s, and there is understood to be widespread support for the motion.

Senator Tankiso Hlaoli, who tabled the motion, wants the senate to urge the Lesotho government to start negotiations with SA for the return of that part of the Free State once occupied and owned by the Basotho.

Although the geographical demands were not outlined yesterday, several parties are said to want the return of eastern and western Free State. Bloemfontein and Welkom do not fall in the disputed territory.

Documents accompanying the motion said the Basotho had never been consulted about the boundaries for Lesotho and Free State when a treaty was signed between the Boers and the British at Aliwal North in 1869.

In his motion Hlaoli set five options for the Lesotho government to consider. The priority should be to demand "the unconditional return of that land". The other options were: Lesotho and SA merge to form one federal state, citizens share voluntary reciprocal citizenship rights, citizens of each country have free movement into each other's territory; or citizens of each country enjoy the right of 12 months or six months free entry and exit into and from each other's territory."

Hlaoli recently asked Lesotho Foreign Affairs Minister Tom Thabane about the Lesotho government's intentions regarding the land the Basotho once owned. Thabane then referred to a 1964 Organisation of African Unity declaration that states: "Independent African states are deemed to have inherited the colonial boundaries which existed at the time of their political independence."

However, Thabane said this did not preclude Lesotho from hauling SA before the International Court of Justice.

Poll 'chamber of horrors'?

CT 8/9/98 (167)

SIMON ZWANE

JOHANNESBURG· The recounting of votes in Lesotho has revealed further evidence of widespread irregularities and opposition parties are becoming confident the task team headed by Justice Pius Langa will recommend a rerun of the May polls

Mmamello Morrison, spokesperson for the tripartite alliance of Basotho Nationalist Party, the Basotholand Congress Party and Mmarumatlou Party, said they were satisfied there had been "fraud on a massive scale" Other sources said the recounting process, which was concluded on Tuesday, had revealed irregularities beyond expectation One source called the revelations "a chamber of horrors" .

Langa is expected to hand a final report on his probe to President Nelson Mandela, who sanctioned the investigation in his capacity as Southern African Development Community chairperson, this weekend.

In his preliminary report, Langa found that Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission had mishandled the polls. He also found that irregularities had occurred in 98% of the constituencies.

Swazi king sends bill to council in bid to stave off US sanctions

BD 4/9/98 (167)

James Hall

MBABANE — King Mswati III will not reconvene parliament in an emergency session to pass the new Industrial Relations Act, but will pass the act through his Council of Ministers, the cabinet of Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) had threatened to call for sanctions against Swaziland if the Industrial Relations Act was not passed by August 31 The act is to replace the 1996 Industrial Relations Act, which made criminal some strike actions and was aimed at circumscribing the activities of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU)

On August 13 the king decreed he had the power to pass legislation through his council in the absence of the parliament.

The king dissolved parliament in early August in preparation for October's general election

The US labour umbrella organisation, the AFL-CIO, put pressure on Congress to issue an August 31 deadline for the passage of the act. The penalty was Swaziland's exclusion from the generalised system of preferences under which the kingdom's goods enter US markets tariff-free.

SFTU secretary-general Jan Sithole is unhappy that the legislation will not be publicly debated by elected MPs

"The Council of Ministers is the same cabinet that passed the draconian 1996 law They will enslave the workers," Sithole said at an SFTU membership meeting at Big Bend

Earlier, Sithole called Enterprise Minister Majanhen'khaba Dlamini a liar for telling the ILO at a Geneva meeting that he would bring the industrial relations act before parliament as a matter of urgency

Instead, the act was gazetted days before parliament's dissolution, and the enterprise minister refused MPs' urgings to shorten the standard 30-day reading period by bringing the act before them as a matter of urgency.

The ministry has since brought the act to the palace to be handled by the king's council

Musa Hlope, executive director of the Federation of Swazi Employers, said: "The ILO and the US Congress do not care if the act is passed by parliament or the king in council, just so workers' rights are protected."

INTERNATIONAL

Clients stranded by bank's closure

BD 4/9/98 (167)

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

MASERU — The sudden closure of the Lesotho Agricultural Bank on Wednesday has left about 138 000 account holders and 281 workers, ranging from top management to the lowest, stranded and angry

The bank's closure has also added ammunition to opposition demands for the dissolution of the present parliament and its government. The opposition alleges rigging in the elections that brought the government to power

Bank customers arrived yesterday morning to find the eight branches and five agencies of the bank closed and manned by armed police The police then drew their attention to a public notice saying the bank had been closed on Wednesday on the orders of the Lesotho government

The notice was signed by Finance Minister Victor Ketso

The principal secretary of the finance ministry, Thabang Thamae, told an angry crowd of workers and account holders who were gathered in front of the bank's main branch in Maseru yesterday that the agricultural bank's money had been transferred to Lesotho Bank. He said arrangements were being made for Lesotho Bank to handle all legitimate claims from the agricultural bank's customers

But Thamae, who was addressing the crowd through a police megaphone, was shouted down by the angry onlookers, most of whom were street vendors who alleged that some of them were at the bank on the day of its closure. They claimed that management had accepted their deposits instead of advising them of the problems.

"We are afraid, we have lost our hard-earned, lifelong savings," several of the investors said in interviews afterwards

Thamae said the bank had been closed because it was insolvent following five years of mismanagement and the failure of some customers to repay their loans.

He declined to comment on whether the present government shared the blame because the five-year period he was referring to fell within its term of running the kingdom

Thamae said· "The government tried various methods to rescue the bank, including the engagement of an international firm of management consultants, but it was all in vain."

The spokesman for the bank's employees, Mokhalinyane Rahlao, said. "As far as we are concerned, we are still employed by this bank. We have not been furnished with letters of dismissal All we know is that, yesterday, a representative of the minister of finance walked into the bank, escorted by armed police, and told us all to leave everything as it then was, gave us the cheques that he said were our terminal benefits and told us to vacate the premises even before we could balance the work of the day "

The workers began to sing liberation songs outside the bank, the same songs sung by protesters who are still demonstrating in front of King Letsie III's palace over the disputed May general election result. Basotho National Party leader Rets'elisitsoe Sekhonyana said the government's action was arrogant. "As the leader of the opposition, I should have been consulted about this bank's closure "

World Bank clears itself over Lesotho scheme

BD 4/9/98 (167)

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON — The World Bank's inspection panel said yesterday it had found no grounds for further investigation into whether the bank violated its own policies and procedures in approving a $45m loan for the next $1,1bn phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water project

The bank's board concurred

The request for an inquiry was filed by three Alexandra residents last April after the civic associations of their own community and Soweto had been persuaded by government to drop demands that Phase 1B of the project be delayed

The panel, which acts as the bank's independent ombudsman, did find that bank management appeared to have committed a "serious abuse of reasonable due process" by discussing details of the request with the board before it had been received by the panel

John Roome, the bank's co-ordinator for the project, acknowledged yesterday that "one or two procedural issues could have been handled better" but stressed that the matter had been dealt with "in good faith".

The three argued that increased water conservation efforts would put off the need for the additional water the project was intended to supply to the Gauteng region Furthermore, the costs of the project would not only have to be borne by poor consumers, but would divert resources from desperately needed infrastructure improvements in their communities

The panel agreed the water prices had risen beyond the ability of some to pay, and that the leaky infrastructure was causing "severe wastage and health problems" in Alexandra, Soweto and other townships where "condition were harsh and unsanitary for millions of people"

But there was "no apparent connection between these conditions and any observance or not by the bank of its own policies and procedures". The panel also found no evidence to support the complainants' allegation that their civics had been "intimidated" into dropping their objections

Rather, the ombudsmen concluded, the civics had changed their minds after being briefed by Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal in March on the "full costs" to both SA and Lesotho of delaying the project

Also unsupported, in the panel's view, was the claim that the bank had not fully considered demand-side alternatives to the scheme At least for the latest phase of the project, management had reviewed the alternatives thoroughly with the SA authorities whose demand reduction programme, since 1995, was "frankly more ambitious" than those of all but a few industrialised countries

As to whether recovering the costs of the project would entail raising prices, the panel found the poor would not face extra burdens if "lifeline rates are undisturbed"

In any event there was be no breach of bank policy involved because "management appears to have supported (the government's) approach to provide water in a manner that is socially equitable while assisting it in aiming for both cost recovery and conservation"

Lesotho warns on strike coercion

Sowetan 7/9/98

MASERU – Basothos were yesterday advised not to allow themselves to be intimidated by organisers of a planned work stayaway today by the opposition parties

Repeated broadcasts on Radio Lesotho over the weekend said the government would not interfere with lawful protests to address legitimate grievances, but would also not tolerate the use of force by anyone intimidating people intending to go to work or conducting their businesses

The government said police had been placed to deal with any disturbances that might arise during the stayaway

Election fraud

Three main political parties have been demonstrating, alleging an election fraud in the Leostho's general election last May

They are calling for the dissolution of parliament and the government

Large numbers of supporters of the three parties have camped outside the gates of the royal palace in Maseru since August 4 to lend support for the call

The parties have sent a petition to King Letsie III to dissolve parliament.

Meanwhile, the opposition supporters have moved into the grounds of the palace since last Thursday when an exchange of gunfire between police and army left a young man dead and 12 people injured

The king was due to travel to Swaziland on Saturday to attend celebrations to mark that country's 30th independence anniversary and the 30th birthday of King Mswati III

The king postponed his departure until yesterday He was scheduled to return to Maseru today, but returned yesterday – *Sapa*

Lesotho braced for trouble from two directions

Star 7/9/98 (167)

By Simon Zwane

Lesotho was bracing itself yesterday for a one-day stayaway today amid claims that a band of 200 to 300 armed mercenaries from South Africa had entered the country to assist the government in removing protesters from palace grounds

Tension increased last night as a young supporter of one of the opposition parties was shot in the neck by a policeman.

Eyewitnesses said the officer and the shooting victim, who was wearing an opposition-party hat, were quarrelling at a taxi rank when the policeman put his service pistol to the man's neck and fired

Mmamello Morrison, a spokesperson for the opposition parties, said she believed the mercenaries were from South Africa and Zimbabwe and were under the command of a South African policeman who was once attached to the Lesotho police service

But the kingdom's Foreign Minister Tom Thabane dismissed the claims as "the biggest rubbish I have ever heard".

"If we need intervention from outside, we shall ask a friendly government in a normal manner through proper channels At the moment there is no need for such intervention," he said

Morrison said the army last night asked protesters to remain inside the palace grounds while they took up positions in anticipation of the attack from the suspected mercenaries

Meanwhile, the government has assured citizens that all measures will be taken to protect them during today's stayaway The stayaway call was made at the weekend funeral of a victim of Thursday night's shooting between police and members of the army

Claim that mercenaries have been sent in

Opposition parties said the stayaway call did not have their blessing

Molapo Qhobela of the Basotholand Congress Party said a member of the youth league sprang a surprise on the opposition leadership by calling for the stayaway at the funeral.

Morrison said the youth had merely expressed support for a stayaway call

The US embassy and the South African high commission have formally warned their citizens to keep out of the tense kingdom

Ray Brown, charge d'affaires at the US embassy, said the warning was issued on Saturday because of a leaflet distributed on Friday by opposition activists that said they would view people in vehicles with foreign licence plates as their enemies

Three people have been killed in the country since the sit-in at the palace grounds started last month

Protester shot in neck as palace sit-in continues

(169) ARG 7/9/98

Maseru – A young supporter of one of the political parties opposing Lesotho's government was critically wounded yesterday after being shot in the neck at close range by a policeman, eyewitnesses said

Hospital sources said the 22-year-old man was rushed into emergency surgery

Eyewitnesses said the officer and the shooting victim, who was wearing an opposition party hat, were quarrelling at a taxi rank when the policeman put his service pistol to the man's neck and fired.

Two people were shot dead last week and several wounded in political tension in the tiny mountain kingdom

The latest shooting came as opposition party supporters continued to gather at the king's palace in the capital Maseru Protesters who claim the May 23 election was rigged have been gathered there for five weeks

The police and army exchanged gunfire outside the palace on Thursday and Friday, leaving two people dead and several wounded

Police have made several attempts to disperse the opposition supporters, now camping inside the palace gates

Four people died early in August in clashes with the police as the demonstrations brought the capital to a standstill

Tensions were defused when the Lesotho government agreed to a probe into the election results headed by a South African judge, Pius Langa, and to a recount of the ballot.

The commission had only recounted votes in 71 of the 80 constituencies before the country's high court barred them from proceeding

The tri-nation commission's final report is due next week The government has said it would step down and prepare for a fresh poll if the report found there had been gross irregularities in the vote – Sapa-AFP

Stayaway is largely ignored, but Maseru's streets remain tense

BD 8/9/98 B (167)

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

MASERU — The streets of Lesotho's capital were tense yesterday, with police and the army patrolling them, but businesses were able to open later in the morning when a stayaway call went largely unheeded.

The stayaway was unsuccessful mainly because it did not have the blessing of opposition leaders, having been called for on Saturday by youths who were addressing mourners at a funeral

Meanwhile, about 800 demonstrators who have been protesting outside King Letsie's palace since August 4 were permitted by the king's guards yesterday to camp inside the palace compound This suggests the king is sympathetic to their cause. The protesters demands include nullification of the May election after alleged irregularities; the dismissal of the current government; and establishment of an interim government to prepare for a fresh election.

It is understood that the king allowed the protesters into his compound in a bid to avoid further shooting incidents following the death of a protester on Thursday.

The deputy leader of the Basutoland Congress Party, Ts'elıso Makhakhe, said that Justice Pius Langa Commission's final report on its probe into the May general elections was due this week.

Lesotho continues to walk a rocky road

After weeks of protests, the mountain kingdom is still deadlocked over the result of its election. John Dludlu looks at developments there

BD 9/9/98 (167)

FOR the past month, leaders of the Lesotho opposition alliance have convinced hundreds of their supporters to stage a vigil at the gates of the royal palace, demanding that King Letsie III dissolve the government because, they say, it was elected fraudulently

The supporters, including children, have braved cold weather, teargas and police bullets in their quest to get the constitutional monarch to appoint a new coalition government At least once, police opened fire, killing two people In total, five people have been killed in the civil strife

The alliance alleges the May general election was rigged to deliver victory to the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy — a claim the party, a breakaway group of the Basutoland Congress Party, vehemently denies

Last week's shooting between the police and army, which left one policeman dead, was unsurprising like public servants, soldiers often join the vigil after work, siding with the protesters

The protests brought government and business to a standstill last month, prompting intervention by SA's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki

After meetings with the opposition — consisting mainly of the Basutoland Congress Party the Basuthu National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party — on one side and the ruling party on the other, Mbeki set up a three nation task team to investigate the opposition alliance's complaint of cheating

A yet-to-be-released interim report by the SA-led task team, headed by Pius Langa, the deputy president of the SA Constitutional Court, inspired excitement within the opposition ranks, after it reportedly discovered widespread electoral irregularities Feeling vindicated by the irregularities said to be contained in Langa's interim report, the alliance's supporters have already demanded the dissolution of the government.

Of concern to Mbeki was the consistent problem in reconciling the election figures

Predictably, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy government, which earlier offered to dissolve parliament should evidence of foul play be found, refused to accept the interim report's findings and called for the inquiry to be concluded with the inspection and recount of the ballots

Langa says the recount has been completed, though he will not say when the commission's final report will be released

The political crisis raises many questions about Lesotho Could the people be right? Was the election rigged? If it had been rigged, what is the way forward? Could Lesotho afford another election after spending R33m in preparing for the May poll? Can the opposition form an effective government? Should King Letsie III's political role be beefed up as demanded by the opposition? Can Lesotho survive as a sovereign state geographically enclosed by SA?

These are not easy questions But indications are that the people may have a point things did not go well in the election in which the Lesotho Congress for Democracy won all but one of the 80 constituencies

This conclusion appears to be borne out by Langa's interim report which, according to those who have laid eyes on it, spoke of "98% worth of irregularities"

What is not conclusive, though, is whether the irregularities were carefully orchestrated to manipulate the outcome or were purely the result of inexperience

Although Foreign Minister Tom Thabane denies suggestions that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy mandate is fraudulent, he says there might have been irregularities And certainly, as with any election there are bound to be irregularities

The country's Independent Electoral Commission headed by lawyer Sekara Mafisa, was hardly a year old when it conducted the election Mafisa himself considers the suspected occurrence of 98% irregularities to be "harrowing"

Although Langa has refused to talk about the evidence emerging from the ballot inspection those involved in the recount say there appears to have been tampering with ballot boxes

If fraud is proven, what then? The opposition wants a coalition government formed to prepare for a fresh election

This multiparty interim government will also oversee a constitutional amendment, granting the monarch the power to intervene during a political stand-off, such as the current one, says Lekhoana Jonathan, secretary-general of the Basuthu National Party

At present, the king is advised by the government on matters, including dissolution of parliament Molapo Qhobela, leader of another opposition party, the Basutoland Congress Party also wants the king to be able to sack his prime minister

Several traditional leaders support the proposed constitutional amendment "It is strange that a foreign country (SA) and a foreign entity (the Southern African Development Community) have to intervene The king must be able to direct the prime minister to seek a solution," says Seeiso Bereng Seeiso, King Letsie III's brother

If Letsie should intervene, he risks losing the throne His father, King Moshoeshoe II, was exiled, and Letsie was crowned on condition he did not play a political role

Thabane says the trend in the world is to reduce the power of unelected officials, and he will not entertain talk of a coalition administration because the constitution makes no provision for it



Opposition party demonstrators gather outside King Letsie III's palace in Maseru

Apart from making the monarch captive to politicians and confining Lesotho's traditional leaders to performing tasks such as adjudicating in petty squabbles or allocating grazing rights, the present constitution has also deprived the Basothu of the wisdom and advice of some of these chiefs

Seeiso says all they want is a meaningful role for the monarch in his nation s affairs and the strengthening of the traditional leadership's advisory role

The constitutional amendment is a sensible proposal but the mecha nism of achieving it looks problematic The Lesotho Congress for Democracy cannot be trusted to make the amendment and the constitutional assembly maintains that only a neutral body can do so

A government of national unity is also a plausible option, though it suggests that the past election outcome has to be ignored, setting a dangerous precedent in Lesotho and in southern Africa

Besides, ignoring the May election outcome would be building democracy, if it could still be called that, on an unstable foundation characterised by coups and other illegitimate means of power-grabbing

In the 1970s, the constitution was suspended by the Basothu National Party after the Basotuland Congress Party won the election In 1986, the military, under strongman Maj-Gen Metsing Lekhanya, now a Basothu National Party member, toppled the government briefly before being ousted in another military coup

In 1993, the military handed over power to Ntsu Mokhehle's Basotuland Congress Party, which won the election only to be sacked by King Letsie III in a radio announcement

An Southern African Development Community troika, consisting of SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe, rescued the administration The king backed down only after being threatened with an economic blockade

Last year, Mokhehle further undermined the integrity of the constitution by breaking away from the Congress Party to form the Lesotho Congress for Democracy The move was undertaken without anyone resigning from government

With this dubious track record with democracy, ignoring the May 1998 election would be tantamount to legitimising poor governance of the past. If seriously flawed to an extent that no legitimate winner can be identified, the May election result should be annulled, those responsible for irregularities punished and a temporary all-inclusive coalition government appointed to govern ahead of a fresh election. Amendments to the constitution can be made in the interim

International donors should assist the kingdom of 2-million people that is economically reliant on SA, to finance a new election

In fiscal 1995, more than 50% of Lesotho's central government income came from Southern African Customs Union revenue With the general fall in levels of import tariffs this source of revenue is set to decline even further

It is difficult to find a vision either from the government or the opposition, despite its support, regarding the future of Lesotho

When this crisis is over, opposition leaders could discover that it might have been easy to get the people to rally behind their cause, but tackling the country's problems, providing jobs and creating wealth for supporters is a bit trickier

Concern voiced over Lesotho privatisation

(167) DD 9/9/98

MASERU — Privatisation of state assets has hit a snag in Lesotho, despite an initial success with Air Lesotho.

Since the process was begun last year, all four privatised businesses have been bought by foreigners, causing concern among the government and business community. As a result, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called on the government to put the privatisation programme on hold.

The airline, Air Lesotho, which saw 105 of its staff members retrenched when the new administration took over, is said to have recorded good profits

The chamber or commerce and industry is one of the bodies which pushed for the privatisation of unprofitable government corporations

But the state privatisation unit says that suspension of the programme would greatly reduce the value of state enterprises, most of which are very inefficient and losing money, as they would deteriorate so much neither local nor foreign investors would be willing to buy them.

The unit maintains that instead of suspending the programme, it will educate local people on the reasons behind the privatisation programme and possibilities of Basotho participation either as investors or as shareholders

Dr Moeketsi Senaoana, the former minister of finance, economic planning and development, said although the government's policy on privatisation was based on the indigenous business population being given preference, it would be difficult for most of them to come up with money.

Senaoana said Lesotho would be better off resorting to a mass privatisation model — in which people, especially workers of privatised businesses, would have a chance to buy shares with any small affordable amount of money — rather than the case by case model the government was planning to undertake —AIA.

Lesotho poll probe still under wraps

(167)

ST 10/9/98

MASERU: Lesotho's government and opposition parties remained in the dark last night about the findings of a probe into alleged election fraud, after they were told that Southern African Development Community leaders should have first sight of its contents

Lesotho Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope said that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki had told a government delegation that he was unable to present the final report of the Langa Commission until it had been seen by SADC leaders who were to meet in Mauritius at the weekend

The meeting revolved around procedures on how the findings were to be made public. "You never know what the reaction of various parties will be, the issue is not only about the findings, but peace and stability," Maope said

SADC leaders were to be informed of the contents first, so that they could prepare for any eventualities.

The government was happy with the way Mbeki and other members of the SADC troika had handled the matter, Maope said

Asked if he had any inkling of the report's findings, he said. "I'm just as curious, perhaps even more curious"

Asked about whether a delayed announcement would not increase tension in the capital, he said this would not be the case as the findings would still not be public

After the meeting with the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, Mbeki went into closed talks with the opposition alliance, who initially made the claim that the May poll was rigged

● SA National Defence Force troops were deployed on the Lesotho border yesterday in anticipation of Mbeki's visit to Maseru

Asked to comment, the SANDF said the troop deployment was part of normal border control operations. — Sapa

Lesotho poll report 'holds no surprises'

PD 11/9/98 (167)

CAPE TOWN — The Langa commission's final report on alleged election fraud in Lesotho contained no surprises and called for a political solution to the crisis in the mountain kingdom, a top SA government aide said yesterday.

The director-general in Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office, Frank Chikane, suggested the findings were similar to the commission's interim report in August, which found the May 23 elections had been mishandled by Lesotho's independent electoral commission

Chikane cautioned against attributing the delay in publicising the report to what he said might be a mistaken belief that the findings were explosive

He was speaking after accompanying Mbeki to Maseru, where the SA leader and his Southern African Development Community troika colleagues on Lesotho received a briefing on the final report from the commission.

Mbeki, Botswana Foreign Minister Mompati Merafhe and Zimbabwean envoy Nelson Moyo held a series of late-night meetings on Wednesday with the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, opposition parties and King Letsie III, about the report The troika members declined to make it public until their principals had seen it.

Chikane said the three were scheduled to consult President Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Botswana's President Festus Mogae on how to handle the report's release.

On the details of the final report, Chikane said the parties involved knew what it contained, (but) "they don't know how it is formulated, and the (commission's) recommendations". He said the difference between the final report and the first one was that "the counting had not happened yet, that's all"

The SADC summit this weekend in Mauritius had been mooted as the best venue for talks on the way forward, as all the principals would be present.

Lesotho's opposition had also been invited to attend

However, the three presidents might choose a different route once they have all been briefed about Wednesday's talks

Meanwhile, opposition parties — concerned that the report would not be released before the summit in Mauritius next week — yesterday urged Mandela to make the commission's findings public immediately. — Sapa.

Officers help protesters in Lesotho coup bid

(167) Star 12/9/98

Maseru – Lesotho's Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope said yesterday there was "something like" a coup in the kingdom, but denied claims that Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili was under house arrest.

He said senior army officers had been arrested, apparently by their juniors, but could give no details

Junior officers say they arrested senior officers, including the commander of the army, Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakheng The General went on state radio last night to announce his resignation He said 26 army officers were resigning with him with immediate effect, and announced Brigadier Anthony Thibeli as his successor.

The announcement came after junior army officers, who reportedly want to rid the defence force of officers partisan to the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), told an AFP correspondent that they had jailed Mosakheng and several top officers.

Witnesses said they saw senior officers being driven to Maseru Central Prison

A statement on Radio Lesotho said: "We, the Lesotho Defence Force .. are telling the nation and the world they should not be disturbed by what is happening."

Lesotho police commissioner Boluti Makoaba said the country was tense Yesterday's events appear to have been sparked by tension within the military concerning the treatment of opposition protesters outside the royal palace since August 4, claiming the May elections were rigged.

The protests, and claims of vote rigging by the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, led to a probe by a team of investigators from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, headed by South African Judge Pius Langa, and a vote re-count.

The Langa Commission handed its report to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki on Wednesday but he refused to release it because, he said, it ought to be discussed at a summit of the Southern African Development Community in Mauritius this weekend.

This delay angered opposition leaders who claimed it vindicated their claims of vote rigging.

Protesters outside the palace yesterday cheered news of the apparent mutiny, saying they were waiting for word that the government had fallen, as this would mean they were nearing their goal of an interim government and fresh elections.

Mbeki said it appeared there had been a revolt by junior army officers, adding that "something urgent

South African Defence Minister Joe Modise (left) is bid farewell by Lesotho prime minister Tathakili Mosisili at the weekend after the two met at Mosilili's residence in Maseru. Modise, on a fact-finding mission to Lesotho after an alleged coup, declined to comment on the fact that Mosilili was under house arrest.

PIC AFP

Crisis in Lesotho set to drag on

Sowetan 14/9/98

(167)

By Political Staff and Sapa-AFP

THE DECISION by Lesotho opposition parties not to attend the Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit in Mauritius means that the impasse over the May elections will continue for some time

President Nelson Mandela, who is chairman of SADC, told journalists in Mauritius that the report by the three-nation Langa commission into elections irregularities would not be discussed by the summit

The report was to have been released to the Lesotho government and opposition leaders as well as King Letsie 3 on Thursday but this was aborted after Prime Minister Pathakili Mosisili objected to this

Instead, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who had gone to Lesotho to hand over the report, decided that it would have to be released to the troika leadership of Mandela, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and Botswana leader Festus Mogae

Mbeki had also proposed that the opposition leaders attend the summit in Mauritius to ensure that it could be tabled there The parties refused

Although Mosisili is in Mauritius, the troika will not confer with him over the report, which he has not seen, for fear that this would raise objections by opposition parties that the findings were being tampered with

While the report has found a number of serious irregularities, reports have said there is no recommendation about what needs to be done That decision would have to be taken by the troika leadership

Also compounding the problem, is the instability within the army Lesotho political observers say solutions to the problem will have to take cognisance of the long standing desire of the king for a constitutional role in the country Presently the monarch is ceremonial

The observers say the king, the army and the opposition parties are at one, wanting a greater role for Letsie, while the government and police are on the other side

The military purge on Friday saw army chief Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakheng replaced by newly-installed Brigadier Anthony Thibeli

The mutineers were at the weekend holed up at military headquarters and appeared to have made no demands on government, diplomatic sources said



Chairman of the Southern African Development Community President Nelson Mandela.

In a statement late on Friday they described their insurrection as an "internal army matter"

South African Defence Minister Joe Modise held a series of meetings in Maseru on Saturday in a bid to resolve the crisis sparked by the insurrection by junior army officers

Urgent talks

On his arrival in the mountain kingdom, Modise went into urgent talks with Mosisili, his deputy, Kelebone Maope, and foreign minister Tom Thabane, according to South African High Commission officials

Modise emerged from Mosisili's house after an hour and 20 minutes but would not speak to reporters He then went to the defence ministry for a meeting with Thibeli, and, with Mosakheng

Mosakheng was rounded up with other senior officers by the junior officers on Friday and locked up in the local jail He went on radio later to announce he and 28 senior officers were resigning with immediate effect and that Thibeli was replacing him as head of the army

Diplomats said they believed Mosakheng made the announcement under duress

Asked to comment during a break in the meeting, Thibeli told AFP he was unsure of his status and that the South African delegation still regarded Mosakheng as head of the military

"I don't know if I'm commander of the army," Thibeli said "Maybe after this meeting, we will know"

The High Commission officials said Modise had wanted to assess for himself the situation on the ground in Lesotho He was due to be joined by his counterparts from Zimbabwe and Botswana but the officials could not say why they had not arrived for the meetings

The mutiny and resignations sparked rumours that a coup was under way, the junior officers adding to the speculation by claiming they had put Mosisili under house arrest

These claims were dismissed by Thabane, who also indicated, however, that the situation was extremely fluid in the capital

"If you are the government you continue to run it until somebody physically stops you from doing so," Thabane told AFP

Asked if there had been a coup, Thabane replied "I genuinely don't know because nobody has openly said that there is one" He said he did not believe the army was under full control and said he feared for his safety and that of his family

Modise's spokesman Puso Tladi said there was an "urgency" about the meetings "because the situation is changing quickly"

Tladi told *Sowetan* yesterday that Modise had returned from Maseru yesterday morning but had left one senior official behind to coordinate matters

Speaking in Mauritius earlier on Saturday, Mandela said there was no crisis in Lesotho and no cause for alarm He said he had spoken to Letsie, who assured him that reports of the arrest of Mosisili were false

"I don't think we need to be alarmed by the situation in Lesotho," Mandela said South African sources said the troika would discuss the Langa report in a meeting separate from the summit either late yesterday or today

The recommendations of the troika would then determine what happens in Lesotho this week It is expected that the recommendations would be made known to the parties at meetings this week, when the report would be released

Until then, the protesters who have camped at the gate to and within the palace grounds since early August will remain there, awaiting the fate of the mountain kingdom

Lesotho still troubled after army insurrection

CT 14/9/98 (167)

MASERU· South African Defence Minister Joe Modise emerged from marathon talks with rival Lesotho military leaders here indicating he had not been able to defuse a crisis sparked by an insurrection by junior army officers on Friday.

Modise met Prime Minister Pathakili Mosisili and rival army factions He said a process had been set in motion to calm the situation. The junior officers rounded up their seniors, among them army commander Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakheng, and locked them in the local jail Mosakheng later announced on state radio that he and 28 senior officers were resigning immediately and that Brigadier Anthony Thibeli was replacing him Diplomats said Mosakheng's statement was made under duress.

Claims that May's elections were rigged to give the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) a landslide victory started an investigation by South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe Although the report has not yet been released, they reportedly concluded that the vote was mishandled. — Sapa-AFP

Youths rebel against SA intervention in Lesotho

(167)

MASERU — Groups of youths from Lesotho's three opposition parties seized government vehicles in Maseru yesterday morning and forced public servants to abandon their cars.

There was confusion along the main entrances to the Lesotho capital when they attacked, causing panic among commuters The situation was brought under control by the army after about an hour

Army trucks patrolled the city and groups of police officers were stationed at strategic points along the main streets

The violence happened the morning after Defence Minister Joe Modise's talks with the Lesotho government and army to mediate an end to insurrection in the defence force and the reinstatement of its commander Lt-Gen Makhule Moshakeng, forced at gunpoint to resign on Friday.

It is understood the protesters were against the intervention of SA and other countries in the region in attempts to resolve a political crisis in Lesotho arising from the alleged rigging of results of Lesotho's general election in May

On Monday night protesters gathered outside the residence of SA high commissioner to Lesotho, Japhet Ndhlovu, to protest against the presence of Modise and his delegation

Radio Lesotho announced yesterday that the talks between Modise and the Lesotho government had been fruitful.

Members of the opposition coalition who met Ndhlovu also objected to what they believed was SA's inept handling of the matter.

Coalition spokesman Mamelo Morrison blamed the tension in the capital on "the fact that the SA authorities for reasons known only to them, are holding this nation hostage by not releasing the (Langa) report" Modise's intervention in the problems in the defence force was a "diversion" to delay its release

She said the lengthy delay had made the opposition suspicious. "We suspect the findings will be tampered with." The opposition coalition believes the report will vindicate its claims of widespread election rigging in the May 23 elections, which the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy won by a landslide.

"People are just demanding the Langa report Whether it is couriered here, sent by fax, mail, plane or on a horse, we just want it here," she said

Selebi had informed Malebo the matter was to be discussed yesterday when Modise and his Zimbabwean and Botswana counterparts met in Gaborone

According to Morrison, Selebi had indicated that depending on the situation in Lesotho, the report might be released tomorrow or Friday

Army officers had complained about Modise's attitude At Monday's meeting with the soldiers he had apparently threatened that he "would force peace down their throats" in his attempts to railroad Mosakheng's reinstatement

Selebi, who accompanied Modise to Botswana on Tuesday, was not immediately available for comment — Sapa.

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Lesotho boils over as Langa report is withheld

CT 16/9/98 (167)

OPPOSITION PARTIES in Lesotho say the delay in delivering results of a probe into the May election has made them suspicious and they expressed fears of tampering with the report.

ANGRY youths went on the rampage in Maseru yesterday in protest against delays in releasing the results of a tri-nation probe into alleged electoral fraud in the mountain kingdom.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Joe Modise was briefing Botswana's Vice-President Ian Khama on the political situation in Lesotho, where opposition parties are demanding the immediate release of the report by the commission headed by South African Judge Pius Langa

Opposition parties say the general election in May this year was rigged to favour the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy.

The report was completed last week, but Deputy President Thabo Mbeki decided to withhold it until it had been seen by the presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana, who form a troika protecting Lesotho's democracy.

Opposition parties in Lesotho again criticised South Africa for its handling of the political crisis. A delegation of Lesotho's opposition coalition yesterday met South African High Commissioner Japhet Ndhlovu at his residence to demand the report be released immediately

They also objected to what they said was South Africa's inept handling of the matter

By the end of Modise's five-hour meeting in Gaborone yesterday, there was still no official word on when the Langa report would be released to Lesotho's people

Mbeki's spokesperson Ronnie Mamoepa said last night that the Gaborone briefing had taken place "within the context of recent Southern African Development Community efforts to restore peace, democracy, stability and the rule of law in Lesotho".

Zimbabwe's defence minister failed to arrive for the meeting in Botswana and the briefing went ahead without him

According to reports from Lesotho youths had seized up to 50 government vehicles and impounded them at the palace of King Letsie III in Maseru

Yesterday's unrest follows a mutiny last week in which junior army officers arrested about 20 senior officers and forced army chief Lieutenant-General Makhule Mosakheng to resign

Mamoepa declined to say when the Langa report would be released to the Lesotho people and King Letsie

"I don't want to commit myself to a date Arrangements are being made for the report to be made available"

The troika's leadership was "fully aware of the deteriorating situation", he said, and the delivery of the report would be expedited as soon as possible

Earlier, Lesotho opposition coalition spokesperson Mamelo Morrison said the protesters were voicing their frustration at the delay in releasing the report, which they believed would prove that the poll was rigged.

"People are just demanding the Langa report Whether it is couriered here, sent by fax, mail, plane or a horse, we just want it here."

Modise's intervention in the Lesotho Defence Force's internal problems was a "diversion and smokescreen" to delay the release of the Langa report, she added.

Morrison was referring to Modise's visit to Lesotho at the weekend and again on Monday to mediate an end to insurrection in the LDF and Moshakeng's re-instatement.

She said the lengthy delay in releasing the report had made the opposition suspicious

"We suspect the findings will be tampered with," she said

Mamoepa dismissed these claims, saying: "South Africa remains impartial in its approach to this matter All parties know that."

A reporter at the scene said an employee at the water and sewerage authority — a government parastatal — was assaulted and stabbed by a group of opposition youths when they seized his vehicle

Lesotho's police commissioner Bolutu Makoaba said his officers were too scared to arrest the protesters because soldiers were assisting them.

Police stood back and did not interfere because of past tensions with the Defence Force, he said.

Morrison denied that soldiers were helping protesters

"The army as well as the police have been standing and watching. If by doing nothing the soldiers are helping us, then the same must be said about the police."

She said supporters from rural areas were pouring into the capital expecting the release of the Langa report — Sapa

Workers abandon their offices

CIVIL servants in Lesotho abandoned their offices and went home yesterday as opposition party supporters took to the streets for the second successive day to protest the delay in releasing the Langa Commission report into alleged electoral fraud in the kingdom

Opposition coalition spokeswoman Mamelo Morrison told Sapa employees in government ministries and parastatals had either closed shop or were in the process of doing so

"The youth are going to some civil servants and requesting them to vacate their officers until the report is released," she said

Some civil servants had stayed away voluntarily and had not bothered to arrive for work yesterday

Those who were absent from work included employees of the Lesotho Defence Force

Earlier yesterday angry youths also blocked entrances to Parliament

Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, cabinet ministers and senior government officials were unable to gain entry to their offices because of the blockade

They locked the parliamentary gates and left a message that anybody who tampered with the lock would do so at their own risk

A spokesman for the protesters said their intention was to make government rule impossible as it had taken power illegally

On Tuesday opposition party supporters seized government vehicles and youths blocked entrances to other government offices in town and parastatals like the Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation

An aide to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Ronnie Mamoepa, told Sapa yesterday the logistics of releasing the report were being seen to and said the findings would be made public as soon as possible – *Sapa*

Coup brewing, says Lesotho minister on eve of Langa report's delivery

MASERU — A coup was brewing in Lesotho, Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said yesterday

Reuter reports that tension reached boiling point in Maseru yesterday morning when opposition supporters challenging the outcome of a May general election prevented government workers from entering their offices

"I have seen coups in this country before so I know what I am talking about. A coup is in the offing," Thabane said "I went to my office this morning, but I had to drive back because I could have been killed"

A western diplomat said the government had lost control of the situation. "Things have gone so far that something must happen in the next 48 hours" He said the government did not have adequate control over the army to use it to regain control, and could be forced to resign. "In one sense a coup is almost in place if demonstrators are able with impunity to close down most government offices .. It is quite clear that the government has lost control Things are so serious that severe decisions have to be taken" (167)

Claire Pickard-Cambridge reports that the director-general in the office of the deputy president, Rev Frank Chikane, said last night a delegation from SA, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique would visit Lesotho today to hand over the Langa commission's report into alleged irregularities in the May election

He said the release of the report had taken longer than expected because protocol demanded that Southern African Development Community presidents be given a report which had been commissioned by the SADC The first opportunity for this had been the SADC summit in Mauritius this week. The delays in handing over the report have been cited as a cause of unrest.

Chikane denied allegations that the report had been deliberately kept away from the people of Lesotho, or that it had been tampered with "I am the carrier of the report and I am quite sure nothing has been changed"

Speaking on behalf of acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chikane said the report would be given to Lesotho's government, the three opposition parties complaining of irregularities and King Letsie III. The delegation would also discuss the outcome of the report and the way forward with the parties.

Chikane said the SADC had decided it would not allow coups in this region or acts that violated the constitutions of member countries. However, he would not speculate on what SADC would do if the Lesotho Defence Force was not kept under control.

BD 17/9/98

Report finds Lesotho election irregularities

Star 18/9/98 (167)

By Simon Zwane
Star Foreign Service

Maseru – Lesotho's government appeared to be on the brink of collapse last night as opposition protesters closed down businesses and government offices, and the army appeared to be in disarray

Opposition parties planned to force the government's dissolution this weekend when the mountain kingdom's political leadership meets with a Southern African Development Community delegation to discuss the findings of the Langa Commission's report

The tri-nation commission, headed by South African Constitutional Court deputy president Judge Pius Langa, said that while it had found some irregularities, it had been unable to establish conclusively that the May 23 election was totally rigged

The commission into the election was appointed after opposition leaders claimed electoral fraud by the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, which won the poll by a landslide.

"We point out, however, that some of the apparent irregularities and discrepancies are sufficiently serious concerns. We cannot, however, postulate that the result does not reflect the will of the Lesotho electorate," the report said

Thousands of supporters from opposition parties, who have been camping at the king's palace, sang and ululated as they were briefed on the findings of the commission.

The commission said that on its calculations – based on the A45 forms which recorded the number of votes cast for each candidate at each polling station and signed by the presiding officers – winning margins in about eight of the constituencies were less than a thousand

The Basotho National Party appeared – on the same basis – to have won two rather than only one constituency

On the re-count of ballot papers, there were small discrepancies between its results and those announced by the Independent Electoral Commission

▶ 'We fled for our lives'

SA troop alert as Maseru mutinies

Sending a peacekeeping force is no longer an option for restoring calm to Maseru, as armed soldiers and civilians prepare to repel the force from the kingdom.

Sechaba ka'Nkosi *and* **Howard Barrell** *report*

(167) M+G 18-24/9/98

Brigadiers in the Lesotho Defence Force have assumed effective control of the country following the complete collapse of the civilian and administrative order

The army takeover follows close on the sacking of 28 senior officers — after allegations that they conspired with the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) to rig the outcome of the general elections in May - and the unceremonious resignation of the head of the army Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng last week

Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi Director General in the Office of the Deputy President Frank Chikane and foreign affairs Director General Jackie Selebi flew into Lesotho on Thursday to hand over the Langa commission s report into alleged irregularities in the May elections

As they handed copies to government and opposition leaders King Letsie III and the Independent Electoral Commission which was charged with overseeing the election statements from opposition leaders expressed fears that there might be military intervention by a Southern African Development Community (SADC) peacekeeping force to restore order

Molapo Qhobela of the opposition Basotho Congress Party warned Any intervention from outside will be interpreted by our people as aggression against King Letsie and his kingdom So whatever happens from now we are ready Lesotho is a sovereign state and not an SADC colony "

Opposition parties want Letsie to appoint an interim administration representing stakeholders across the spectrum to govern the country for up to 18 months until a new election is called

Lesotho government officials played down the impact of the army control saying they were still in total command of the situation Yet the capital Maseru was virtually sealed off by army officers at all strategic points and there were constant foot patrols on all streets this week

The four month old election protests have plunged Lesotho s administration into chaos and brought the economy to a virtual standstill with the army now the only visible sign of government

The explanation given by junior officers for their intervention was that they wanted to protect the Constitution and Letsie and to avert a possible bloodbath between security forces and growing opposition to Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili s embattled regime

The royal palace was this week jointly guarded by Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) members and heavily armed civilian marshals from among the opposition protesters

Since the situation deteriorated last week, Mosisili who is also Lesotho's defence minister, has hardly been seen in public and the government profile has been taken over by Minister of Foreign Affairs Tom Thabane

The news about the arrest of senior officers was broken to Mosisili by junior officers prior to Mosakeng s announcement on state-owned radio and his subsequent resignation

Organised business and civilians interpreted this as the first steps to an effective military coup that could bring Mosisili's government to its knees One businessman, who spoke on condition of anonymity described the current situation in the country as a great cause for concern ' for every citizen He said the economy would take at least a year to recover

We thought business would flourish after the elections but now we are back to square one Some businesses are already shedding jobs which has its own political ramifications because of the instability Once the situation has stabilised we will need to convince investors the country is safe again for business which could take a long time to achieve

Even the findings of the Langa commission appear to have been superseded by the latest development, which has left the military establishment torn between supporters of the ruling LCD and the opposition

According to sources all the sacked officers were members of the country s military intelligence while the officers who arrested them are believed to be sympathetic to the three main opposition parties

The opposition is spearheaded by the Basotho National Party — the largest party and the one believed to have won the May election the Basotho Congress Party and the Maremathlou Freedom Party

The sacked officers are also believed to have been behind last week's confrontation between the security forces and opposition protesters outside the royal palace The confrontation left a number of people injured

The situation in Lesotho has been complicated by plans to send in an SADC peacekeeping force The opposition parties have publicly denounced the SADC and mobilised their growing support base for an open conflict with the peacekeepers "We are faced with this situation because the SADC failed to provide clear leadership out of the conflict said Qhobela In fact they have played political and diplomatic monkey tricks among themselves

The peace initiative, initially hatched by SADC leaders in Botswana on Wednesday is seen largely as foreign aggression against a sovereign state The opposition also dashed any hopes for a peaceful settlement of the crisis by making new demands and seeking more concessions from the collapsing government

As with the Democratic Republic of Congo South Africa and Zimbabwe again find themselves pitted on opposite sides of the conflict

Opposition parties in Lesotho say South Africa and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in particular genuinely tried to find solutions while Zimbabwe and Botswana used diplomacy to block the findings of the Langa commission

A senior South African government official said on Thursday that unfolding events in Lesotho were being viewed very seriously" He said There is an army that is disloyal to the Constitution, to the government of the day, and which does not respect its own officers It is an untenable situation

An official in the Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed that since Wednesday South Africa had received pleas for assistance from between 13 and 15 Lesotho citizens A number of them are soldiers of various ranks the official said But none of them are generals as some media reports have claimed We have no names available at this stage They have lodged applications at our high commission in Maseru "

They have been given permission to remain in South African for one week and have been told they can apply for political asylum The officers, are understood to be in Ladybrand in the Free State

Senior South African military officers and officials were locked in meetings on Thursday One of their main agenda items was the unfolding crisis in Lesotho according to a senior South African National Defence Force official He said. "We do not see any big threat to South Africa in what is happening in Lesotho And we don t want to threaten Lesotho s people and government

He added There has not been any need for us to take any additional measures. The fact that some people have recently noticed increased troop movements on our border with Lesotho can be explained by the fact that we have been changing military units involved in guarding that particular border Whenever a change of units occurs, as it does periodically you have a brief doubling up of soldiers in an area

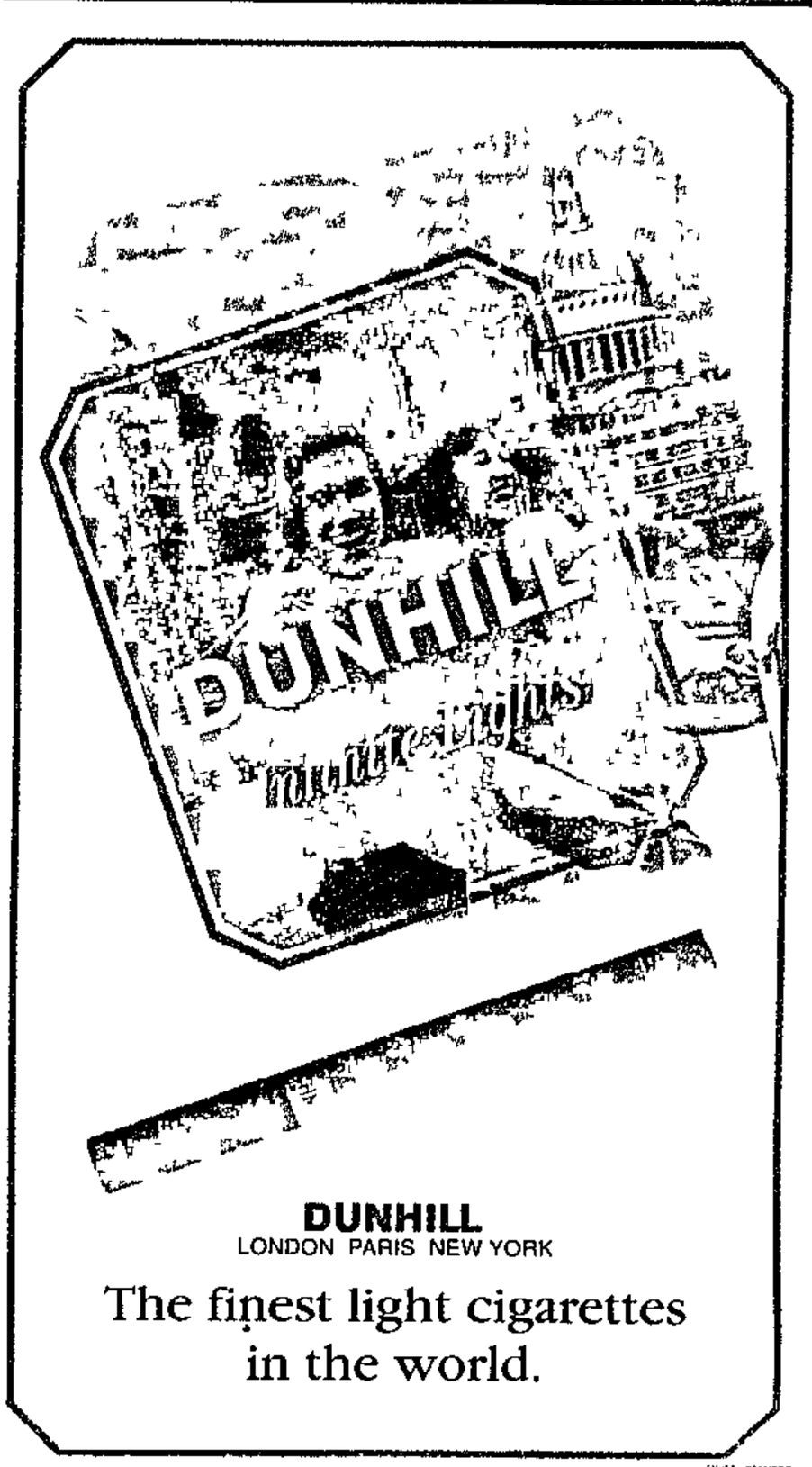
Police in Ladybrand have formulated contingency plans to deal with an expected influx of refugees across the border



Working for peace Opposition parties in Lesotho say Deputy President Thabo Mbeki genuinely tried to find solutions PHOTOGRAPH THEMBA HADEBE

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Langa report on Lesotho election inconclusive despite irregularities

CAPE TOWN — The Langa commission probe into Lesotho's elections says it has serious concerns about apparent irregularities and discrepancies, but is unable to say conclusively that the elections should be declared invalid

In its long-awaited report, released yesterday, the commission said. "We are unable to state that the invalidity of the elections has been conclusively established. We point out, however, that some of the apparent irregularities and discrepancies are sufficiently serious concerns "

(167)

The opposition called on Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili to resign over the report, while Deputy Prime Minister Kalebone Maope said his ruling party would not step down or call for new elections

SA Constitutional Court deputy president Judge Pius Langa headed the 10-member commission into the May 23 elections after opposition leaders claimed electoral fraud by the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, which won 79 seats and the Basotho National Party only one

BD 18/9/98

The commission said that on its calculations — based on the forms which recorded the number of votes cast for each candidate at each polling station and signed by the presiding officers — winning margins in about eight of the constituencies were less than 1 000. The Basotho National Party appeared to have won two rather than one constituency, it said.

On the recount of ballot papers, the commission said there were small discrepancies between its results and those announced by the Independent Electoral Commission. While they were not significant, the appearance of tampering with the ballot boxes and bags, and misfiling of electoral matter, detracted from what would ordinarily have been a decisive exercise

The manner in which records had been kept did nothing to engender confidence in the Independent Electoral Commission's ability. However, the electoral body "admittedly had an extremely difficult task with limited time and resources", the commission said.

Meanwhile, 15 Lesotho army officers have taken refuge in SA after fleeing Lesotho. The officers said they were planning to stay in SA until calm was restored in their country.

The men are among 28 mostly senior officers, including the head of the army, who were arrested during an insurrection by their junior officers on Friday and later released after SA intervention. The officers had no immediate plans to apply to SA for political asylum and expected "many" of their colleagues to join them. — Sapa—AFP.

LESOTHO GOVT 'WON'T RESIGN'

Jubilation greets report

(167)

CT 18/9/98

MASERU: South Africa is to chair a meeting here on Sunday where the Lesotho government and opposition parties will attempt to charter a way forward.

SCENES of jubilation erupted outside the gates of King Letsie III's palace here yesterday when leaders of the country's opposition parties briefed a crowd of about 5 000 on the contents of the long-awaited Langa report into alleged electoral irregularities

The crowd burst into song and ululation while Maseru's main street erupted into a cacophony of jubilant cheering and hooting

The crowd was told the commission had found irregularities and discrepancies in the way Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had managed the May 23 general election

Opposition parties have claimed the results were rigged in favour of the ruling Lesotho Congress Democracy, which won 79 of 80 National Assembly seats

However, the commission in its report said it could not conclusively state the elections were not valid The release of the report coincided with opposition calls for the Lesotho government to step down The government dismissed the calls, saying the report had not found widespread electoral fraud as had been claimed

Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamdi, accompanied by representatives from Zimbabwe and Botswana, arrived in Maseru yesterday to hand over the report

The commission said it had serious concerns about apparent irregularities and discrepancies, but added "We are unable to state that the invalidity of the elections has been conclusively established We cannot postulate that the result does not reflect the will of the Lesotho electorate "

South African Judge Pius Langa headed the 10-member commission, which said in its report that the manner in which records were kept did nothing to engender confidence in the IEC's ability

The leader of the Basotholand Congress Party, Molapo Qhobela, said Mufamadi would return to Maseru on Sunday to attend a meeting with all the political parties to discuss the way forward

The secretary-general of the opposition Basotho National Party (BNP), Chief Lekhooana Jonathan, said opposition supporters were satisfied the commission had found gross irregularities in the electoral process

Deputy Prime Minister Kalebone Maope said his government was surprised at calls for it to step down to pave the way for fresh elections He said the Langa Commission had not unearthed fraud, as alleged by the opposition

Opposition alliance chairperson Vincent Malebo said Mosisili had promised to call a fresh ballot if the Langa report found the election to be flawed

"Mosisili promised the king he would step down He must keep his promise," said Malebo

Discontent with the election result has sparked prolonged protests, which have been sporadically violent Adding to the tension was the mutiny last week in the Lesotho Defence Force in which junior officers arrested their seniors and forced army chief Makhule Mosakheng to resign at gunpoint.

The officers were released after South Africa intervened

● South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs is expecting 13 Lesotho army officers, who fled across the border to apply for political asylum The officers said they feared for their lives — Sapa-AFP

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● South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs is expecting 13 Lesotho army officers, who fled across the border to apply for political asylum The officers said they feared for their lives. — Sapa-AFP



DANCING FOR JOY· Supporters of opposition parties in Lesotho celebrated in the streets of Maseru yesterday after an inquiry into the May 23 election found there had been irregularities *PICTURE: REUTER*

Lesotho politicians fume over poll report

Star 19/9/98

(167)

BY SIMON ZWANE
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – An acrimonious reception awaits Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi and a delegation from Botswana and Zimbabwe when they arrive here tomorrow for talks on the Langa Commission report

Opposition leaders are seething at what they see as South Africa's unfair and shabby handling of the report into allegations of election rigging

This comes amid reports that King Letsie III had personally intervened to stop the Southern African Development Community from sending troops into the country to maintain peace.

The king is reported to have phoned various heads of state advising them that their action would violate the kingdom's constitution.

However, Star Political Correspondent **Jovial Rantao** reports that government sources in Cape Town have denied that SA ever contemplated sending forces into Lesotho They said the South African view was that the Lesotho problem was political and therefore required a political solution

Lesotho opposition leaders have been angered by the public release of the Langa report – the outcome of two weeks of investigations by a commission headed by Mr Justice Pius Langa of SA's Constitutional Court – in SA before they had had an opportunity to read and discuss it with their constituency

The report was released in Parliament in Cape Town on Thursday at the same time as it was being handed to Lesotho political leaders and King Letsie

Meanwhile, the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy was warned against its insistence that it would not resign in spite of the report's finding that because of the chaotic state of electoral material inspected, there was no way of determining which party won the May election. The party had earlier indicated it was prepared to step down if evidence of electoral fraud was uncovered.

Lesotho General

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SEPT - DEC

Turmoil in Lesotho

Sowetan 21/9/98 (167)

By Themba Molefe

THAT'S it, this far and no further, Lesotho's opposition alliance declared yesterday as it pulled out of all negotiations aimed at saving the country from a political crisis

A stayaway has been called from today, with Basothos poised to ignore all efforts so far by Southern African Development Community (SADC) negotiators to resolve the impasse

Lesotho is on the brink of anarchy and the security situation deteriorated yesterday with the opposition alliance of mainly five parties pulling out of the South African-sponsored negotiations.

This was despite the fact that a delegation led by South African Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi had met with the opposition parties

What angered the coalition was the absence yesterday of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) from a series of meetings which were led by South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe despite the LCD saying it would attend

A visibly angry co-leader of the opposition Basotholand Congress Party (BCP), Mr Molapo Qobela, told journalists in Maseru last night "That's it, so far and no further, no more talks, neither with SADC nor with South Africa"

Maseru has been the scene of sporadic acts of unrest with members of the various opposition parties protesting outside King Letsie III's palace for the past six weeks now They have been demanding that he dissolve the government following allegations that the May 23 general elections were rigged.

The Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho declared the elections valid in spite of complaints from the major opposition parties, thus sparking the conflict A commission of inquiry by South African deputy Constitutional Court Chief Justice Mr Pius Langa has been non-committal.

The main bone of contention with the opposition parties is that practical arrangements and responses to the Langa Commission report are not conducive to the restoration of law and order, including the normalisation of the military situation in the country

Taking refuge

More than 20 senior military officers are taking refuge in a house in Ladybrand across the border in the Free State after fleeing Lesotho more than a week ago They refused to speak to *Sowetan* when approached yesterday

Qobela was also specific about what South Africa could contribute to create a climate conducive to negotiations with all the parties involved, especially with regard to security.

However, with yesterday's developments and the fact that the opposition has pulled out of all negotiations, Lesotho has now been seriously plunged into chaos.

Law and order no longer exists in Lesotho where groups of people purportedly belonging to a coalition of opposition parties have been besieging the country's monarch's palace for several weeks now.

Respect for both civilian and traditional law in the country seems to have disappeared as King Letsie III's palace has become the venue of wanton sex on the grounds and general drunken rivalry in the name of democratic idealism

Men clad in colourful Basotho blankets, women resplendent in traditional dishoeshoe (Basotho dresses) swarm the road leading to the entrance of the palace

They sing incessantly what appears to be war songs, but which lack the aggressiveness associated with such songs

Flags belonging to the three major opposition parties – the BCP, the Basotho National Party and Maremaltou Freedom Party – are stuck on a bakkie said to belong to a wealthy member of one of the opposition parties

In fact, he is said to be sponsoring the whole shenanigan. The cows that are being slaughtered, spit-braaied daily and the food consumed on the palace grounds is actually mana for the poor Basotho who converge there daily

A young woman said. "It is only a matter of time before this street bash outside the king's palace wears itself out"

But, "protest", if it has to be called that, does not seem to an outsider anything like that It is more a gathering of free loaders – and if there is any truth to it – who are being sponsored by ambitious politicians in pursuance of personal goals

● See page 8.

A glut of information

The "global village" can easily become a hi-tech club for information elites. **Ashraf Patel** warns South Africans to take an inclusive approach to joining it.

(167) Sowetan 21/9/98

THE advent of the new "information society" – spearheaded by the introduction and proliferation of computing, communications and digital satellite broadcasting – has made a significant impact on the way we live, particularly in South Africa

For South Africans this information revolution has been unfolding against the backdrop of our own profound transition to democracy and an open society

The power of the mass media and control of information has a major resonance and will always be embedded in our society Our past, with its veil of secrecy and censorship, was marred by the iron grip of the apartheid Government on all flows of information This exclusion helped sustain its rule and ideology

The global information revolution is underpinned by a complex set of technological, market, institutional and ideological convergences

The move towards an "intelligent network society" or "networked economy" is being bandied about as an instant panacea by the new high priests and technological gurus who emanate from the North

We constantly read in the media "Welcome to the global village," and "We are now all equal as citizens of the new world"

In many ways these ideas and visions have already laid the framework and set the pace and characteristics for the information and communications revolutions across the world

It is only recently that South African leadership has begun to grapple with such critical issues as the politics of exclusion and marginalisation, as well as the info-communications industry and its role in development and governance

It is this double revolution – a national democratic one in South Africa and a global wave of democracy on the other – that has made the transition so challenging and all the more complex to understand

At the same time this transition and integration into the global economy is fraught with dangers

Very sophisticated challenges lie ahead for our new policy-makers and for civil society formations like Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), unions, civics and consumer groups

In many cases the public spaces and forums for global dialogue have been corporatised, systematically excluding the participation of most of the "information illiterates" in South Africa

It is in this context that many activists in the field are developing alternative responses and



Minister of Communication Jay Naidoo is committed to broadening the public's access to information technology.

movements to the prevailing hegemony of the establishment

In South Africa, the Community Media movement, spearheaded by the National Community Media Forum (NCMF), is part of a global movement that is taking on these challenges

This week there's an international conference in Cape Town on "The Right to Communicate", with global leaders, academics and critics participating

The NCMF's affiliate, Open Windows Network (Own) will display to the world our own means of community media, or the use of media in development.

One of the world's foremost academics in this field, Professor Cees Hamelink, will be an international guest speaker at the conference

Co-author of the *People's Communication Charter*, Hamelink has called the new information society an "information glut"

"Just like censorship, information can be used to control people A glut of unrefined, undigested information flowing from every medium around us and the sustained flooding of such information is an effective way of making us powerless," he said

According to Hamelink the concept of a global village is an non-starter and a myth

The global village is in fact a village of international (urban) elites, meaning that while it links the elites internationally, at a national level it distances them from the life of a village

Hamelink points out that in a village most people know what is going on and know each other The opposite is true in the real world of the global village

Today more is going on and happening than in any other time in human history yet most of us know very little about it and are systematically excluded from participating

Take the example of the internet debates in South Africa For the vast majority of people who are illiterate there is now the added burden of information illiteracy

This will make them dysfunctional in a new informatised economy where the collection, storage, dissection, manipulation and dissemination of information are critical survival skills for the 21st century nomad

Although South Africa is the 16th most connected country in the world almost half its population have never made a telephone call This is our starting point!

The Government has made enormous strides in correcting historical imbalances and placing the issue of "universal service and access" at the forefront of policy debates

The Department of Communications, in conjunction with many NGOs and international partners, has played a major role in this development

The profound and positive leadership displayed by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Minister of Communication Jay Naidoo and the Ministries of Science and Technology and Trade and Industry are great starting points

It is this high level support that is slowly bringing about new partnerships with all line ministries as well as in the private sector, NGOs and unions

For instance, a new statutory agency, the Universal Service Agency, has been instructed to ensure that all our citizens have access to the critical information infrastructure

These steps will assist in wider participation in the information society and broader access to that elusive and exclusive club of global villagers

Maseru coup shock

Crowds at palace as PM flees

ARG 21/9/98

22(167)

FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – Thousands of Basotho gathered at the king's palace here as news spread that opposition parties had taken control in an overnight coup.

All government offices and parastatals remained closed

The apparently bloodless coup ended a six-week stand-off between the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy and opposition parties disputing the validity of the May election

It follows the collapse of an attempt by the South African African Development Community to broker a settlement

Lesotho Foreign Minister Tom Thabane confirmed there had been a coup and was hoping the SADC would intervene

Opposition spokeswoman Mamello Morrison confirmed the opposition had taken charge and said an official announcement would be made later today.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Adri Cronjé, said department director-general Jackie Selebi and Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi were still trying to get the ruling party and opposition chiefs to talk today

She said the department could not confirm there had been a coup

Lesotho opposition supporters last night forced the state-owned radio station off the air in an attempt to stop the government from communicating with the nation

Angry opposition youths last night marched to the official residence of Prime Minister Phakalitha Mosisili, but were told that he had already left Lesotho He was believed to have fled with other ministers

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Deadlock in Lesotho as ruling party refuses to attend all-party talks

BD 21/9/98 (167)

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

MASERU — Lesotho's ruling Congress for Democracy (LCD) refused yesterday to attend all-party talks aimed at ending the country's political crisis, citing lack of security for its delegates

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegation, under the leadership of SA Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, had to hold two separate meetings, much to the annoyance of the opposition alliance "How can the people who claim to be government use lack of security as an excuse not to attend such an important meeting with the opposition under the chairmanship of a credible, regional body?" the alliance asked.

The mediators first met the LCD inside Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili's official residence They then met the opposition at the United Nations House before briefing King Letsie III at the Royal Palace

Before leaving for the palace Mufamadi promised to return, hopefully with the LCD delegation, to the UN House However, he phoned the opposition and called off another planned meeting, and proposed that a subsequent meeting be held today

The failure of yesterday's talks has brought more uncertainty to Lesotho, which since Wednesday last week has been virtually without a government All government business was brought to a standstill by the opposition which encouraged public servants to stay away from work indefinitely

Sapa reports that yesterday's events followed the presentation last Thursday by Mufamadi of the Langa commission report on irregularities in Lesotho's May elections The report said the elections were flawed but there were insufficient grounds to annul them.

On Friday the government said it would not step down and proposed that the opposition accept defeat.

The opposition is demanding that the government step down and a government of national unity be formed to prepare for new elections.

The security situation in Lesotho has been unstable over the past two months since opposition parties petitioned the king to dissolve the government because they believed it had been elected fraudulently.

The military situation has been volatile since last week when the Lesotho Defence Force commander, Lt-Gen Makhula Mosakeng, resigned and dismissed 26 senior army officers, apparently under duress The crisis in the army has not yet been resolved and Mosakeng and the dismissed officers have reportedly fled to SA.

Telkom expands its links undersea

ET (BR) 21/9/98 (167)

NCABA HLOPHE

Johannesburg — Telkom, together with more than 20 telecommunications operators, had embarked on a R4,2 billion undersea cable project that will link African nations with Asia and Europe, Telkom said last week

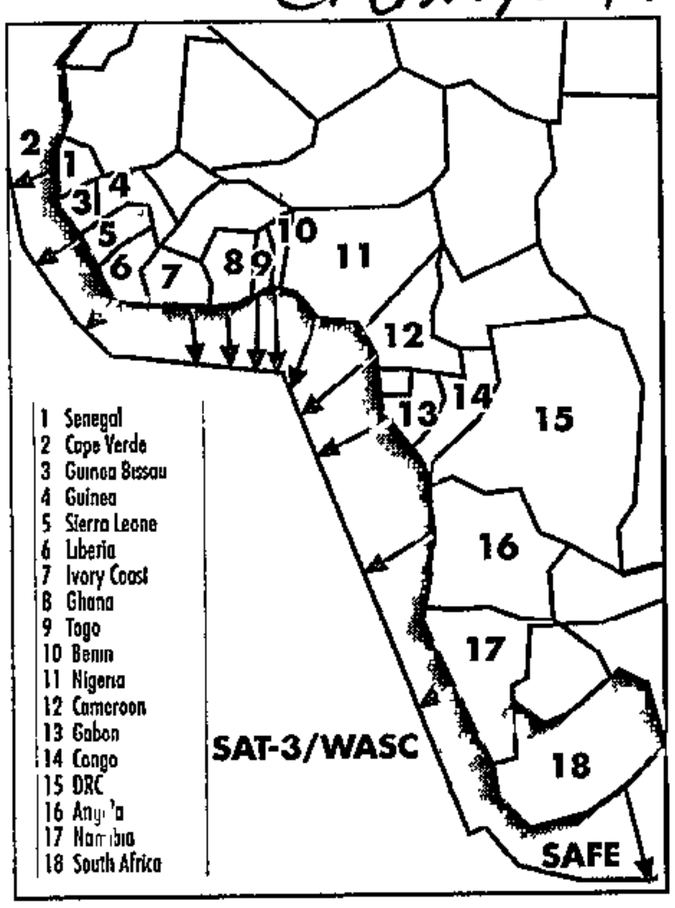
John Swart, head of Telkom Satellite Business, said the the depth of the optical fibre cable network could be between 1 000 and 3 000 metres. It will snake along the west African coast from Senegal via the Cape to Eastern countries such as India

He said the project had been motivated by the demand for bandwidth to cope with the increasing application of the Internet It aimed to launch Africa to the centre stage of the telecommunications industry in the next century

He said the project would be divided into two components called the South Africa-Far East (Safe) and Southern Africa-Western Africa (SAT-3/WASC) to form the integrated single telecommunications network Telkom was a key promoter of both components

Swart said tenders for Safe to the Far East, which was initiated in June 1996, were already under adjudication and the cable system was expected to be ready by 2000

The project would then be extended from west Africa to Europe and there is a possibility that it could be extended to the east African coast



Swart said the developers were also considering an earth station in the Cape Town area to allow land-locked countries such as Rwanda and Uganda to link up with a pool of satellites Southern African countries could also access this line by building strong terrestrial lines.

Potential investors from Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, the Americas and India earlier this year pledged R2,8 billion of the total investment

Johan Meyer, from Telkom's international and special market services department, said "This clearly underlines the overwhelming support amongst African and global telecommunications operators for a cable system owned, controlled, operated and maintained by the operators "

South Africa installed its first submarine cable system, Sat-1, in 1964 It operated from Portugal to Cape Town and was upgraded to Sat-2 in 1993 to interlink with the satellite system.

Lesotho in crisis as peace efforts fail

(167) Sowetan 22/9/98

By Themba Molefe

LESOTHO, the smallest constitutional monarchy in Africa, is now without a government.

Yesterday efforts to get both government and opposition alliance to comment on the state of affairs proved fruitless

Lesotho was plunged into chaos after more than eight opposition parties recently joined up to try and unseat the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), accusing it of rigging elections.

The party won 79 of the 80 seats of parliament in elections earlier this year

Supporters belonging to at least five major opposition parties, particularly the Basutoland Congress Party, Basotho National Party and Maremathou Freedom Party, have been holding camp in protest outside the palace gates of King Letsie III for the past six weeks.

They are demanding that the king use his powers to dismantle the current parliament as they believe it was fraudulently elected.

The Lesotho constitution does not allow the king to intervene in a constitutional matter. In terms of Lesotho's constitution, the king cannot decide on the matter.

Opposition party alliance spokesman Molapo Qhobela was adamant yesterday that they were no longer interested in talking to the ruling party after the indaba facilitated by Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufamadi and the Southern African Development Community troika of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa failed to reach a solution.

In fact, the LCD was now central to the problem in Lesotho because it failed to show at all negotiations, he said.

The encampment at the palace continues to evoke mixed feelings

There are those who still respect it and are unhappy about the demonstrations outside and inside the gates where illicit sex, drinking and wanton revelry have been taking place for several weeks.

They are adamant that the king's palace should be afforded the respect it deserves, while others have nicknamed it the "street bash" venue because of the ongoing parties, singing and sex orgies there.

Senior government and military officers are swelling the numbers of those who have fled Lesotho to neighbouring South African.

Lesotho defence force commander Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng and about 30 other officers are currently housed in a disused building in Ladybrand. They are seeking asylum in this country.

They have persistently refused to speak to *Sowetan* about their stay in South Africa.

Concern is growing over Lesotho's economy, which might plummet because of dwindling tourism. Lesotho depends on tourism to boost its economy and is virtually a crime-free country.

But now the sound of sporadic gunfire has become commonplace in the landlocked country.

All government buildings have been closed and all civil servants are staying away from work for their own safety

At the moment parliament is still a no-go zone as protesters see to it that no one enters or leaves the building.



An anti-government protester outside the palace of Lesotho King Letsie III in Maseru yesterday. The Lesotho government, beset by street protests, has accused the opposition of trying to squeeze it out of power as talks which were scheduled for yesterday on a vote-rigging row between the ruling party and its rivals were called off.

PIC: AFP

Lesotho in the grip of anarchy

(167) Star 22/9/98

Mobs go on the rampage as government loses control

By Simon Zwane and Ryan Cresswell
Maseru

Drunken youths yesterday rampaged through the streets of the Lesotho capital, as opposition-party supporters became frustrated with their leaders' reluctance to seize control of the country

Chaos reigned in the tiny mountain kingdom, which effectively spent a whole day without leadership after Sunday night's collapse of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy government

Opposition Basutoland Congress Party leader, Molapo Qhobela, confirmed yesterday that the government had for all intents and purposes collapsed

Foreign Minister Tom Thabane – who wrongly claimed in late editions of The Star yesterday that the opposition had taken control – expressed hope that the Southern African Development Community would intervene.

Many state departments and parastatals were closed, and ministers and officials deserted their state houses and fled to private homes or to South Africa.

The army, rendered ineffective by a junior officers' mutiny over the past week, stood by as bands of youths hijacked state vehicles and intimidated Asian traders

State radio has been shut down by the opposition.

Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, who heads the SADC delegation trying to facilitate talks, told a Pretoria press conference that the SADC did not consider coups to be "the politically correct way to act" and the organisation could take action He appeared to be talking about possible military intervention

The three opposition parties had planned to form a coalition government yesterday, but held back because they feared military intervention by the SADC

Opposition-party sources said they wanted the government to resign before they could announce a coalition government.

The SA Foreign Affairs Department reported that four senior army officers on Sunday joined 20 of their colleagues in Ladybrand in the Free State, and more were expected.

Sapa reports that Lesotho Prime Minister Phakalitha Mosisili, while insisting his government was still in control of the country, admitted it "cannot carry out its mandate in full" as it had lost control of the army and other state agencies

He said the government had the option of requesting the SADC to do "something that can bring the country back to order and normality".

Mufamadi lays down law on Lesotho

(167)

Kevin O'Grady

AN SA-LED Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegation laid down the law to the Lesotho government and opposition parties yesterday, telling them to cease their squabbling over a venue for talks aimed at ending the kingdom's protracted political crisis

Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, heading the four-nation delegation that is mediating in a dispute over the results of the country's May election, said the parties would be "judged harshly by history" for allowing their dispute over a venue to derail the talks

Mufamadi was speaking in Pretoria after several failed attempts to bring Lesotho's ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and opposition parties together to discuss an independent report which last week found nothing to suggest the election results should be declared invalid

Mufamadi's comments also came amid what he termed a "deteriorating security situation" in Lesotho and reports, subsequently denied by both the LCD and opposition parties, that the Lesotho government had been toppled in a coup

"We have impressed on the Basotho that any such stupid thing (a coup) must not happen The position in the SADC on coups is well known — they are not tolerated," he said

Lesotho's Foreign Minister Tom Thabane also denied reports of a coup, and also that Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and his cabinet had fled the country "I spoke to the prime minister about 20 minutes ago and he was still in his residence," he said yesterday afternoon

"The makings of a coup were all there this morning but there has been no proclamation to that effect," he said "A coup would be the logical climax of the opposition's unconstitutionality so I would not be surprised if they opted for that "

Sapa reports Mosisili said his government was still in power, despite the recent loss of control over the military He hinted at a possible call for military intervention in terms of an SADC treaty which gave it the option of requesting the assistance of its partners if it was unable to resolve a domestic problem internally

Mufamadi said the talks collapsed when opposition parties declined an offer — accepted by the LCD — of a neutral venue for a meeting which would have been held in Pretoria yesterday

BD 22/9/98

Continued on Page 2

Lesotho

(167)

BD 22/9/98

Continued from Page 1

The offer was made after both groups rejected each other's suggested venues in Maseru on Sunday.

Mufamadi said that in order to arrest the deteriorating security situation, it was important that Lesotho's political leaders "be seen to be saying that the disagreement has such damaging consequences that they are prepared to set it aside".

He could not rule out military intervention but said the delegation's priority was avoiding the need for such action.

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane reports from Maseru that the opposition alliance leadership claimed the coup talk was a pretext on the SADC's side to send in troops

Mufamadi "knew very well that there was no coup in the mountain kingdom", they said, and distanced themselves from any coup talk

The alliance said Mosisili and his cabinet had abdicated their responsibility to the extent that some of his ministers were living in SA.

Picture: Page 3

Lesotho: 'Govt will see through mandate'

(167)

CT 22/9/98

MASERU: Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili yesterday ruled out any form of government of national unity for his strife-torn country and said his ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy would see through its five-year mandate.

Lesotho opposition party representatives were locked in discussions late last night to find a suitable venue for a meeting with the government on the crisis in the country

Earlier it had demanded that the government step down and put in place a government of national unity.

The opposition parties had yesterday morning boycotted a meeting with the government

Opposition party coalition spokesperson Vincent Malebo said he suspected the government was behind rumours of an attempted coup to "present the opposition in a bad light to the outside world"

Mosisili said Lesotho's May 23 elections, which saw his party win by a landslide, had been declared free and fair by an international team of independent observers

In spite of this and in the wake of allegations from the opposition that the elections were rigged, the government had agreed to an independent tri-nation probe

The Langa Commission, although it pointed out some shortcomings, was unable to state conclusively that the election should be declared invalid, Mosisili said. It was also unable to say that the will of the people had not been demonstrated.

"All in all, the verification process has actually cleared the May elections of any fraud.

"The election has been given a clean bill of health, and we expect people to accept that."

Asked whether his government could truly be said to be in power when it lacked the support of the Lesotho Defence Force, Mosisili said: "It is the tragedy of the present situation in Lesotho that the government cannot carry out its mandate in full.

"Any government, but more so a democratically elected government that respects the rule of law and human rights, has to be backed by the law enforcement agencies of the state"

He said Lesotho, if it was unable to resolve a domestic problem internally, was entitled to ask the Southern African Development Community for assistance

Mosisili was referring to an SADC treaty in 1994 which put South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe in charge of protecting Lesotho's democracy. Asked if this included the possibility of deploying SADC troops, he said, "It would be the very last resort" — Sapa

SA SOLDIERS DIE IN LESOTHO

Protesters torch SA shops, cars

(167) ARG 22/9/98



King Letsie 'He is shocked He would never invite troops to kill his people,' said the opposition

ARGUS CORRESPONDENTS

Three South African soldiers are reported dead and 11 wounded in fierce fighting around Maseru today – as acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi prepares to explain today's military intervention in the troubled kingdom.

A strong backlash against the action was reported in Maseru, where city centre buildings blazed as angry protesters torched shops and offices with South African links

And a storm of opposition criticism erupted in South Africa after a 600-strong SA National Defence Force contingent, to be joined by Botswana troops, crossed the border at 5am in a peacekeeping action called Operation Boleas

Defence Minister Joe Modise flew to Pretoria this morning for urgent talks with SANDF chief Siphiwe Nyanda and other government officials

Chief Buthelezi was to address Parliament and the nation in the National Assembly at 2.15pm.

As acting president, Chief Buthelezi had the constitutional power to give the order for troop deployment, spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said "However, he would obviously have been in touch with the president and deputy president." Both are abroad.

The troops entered Lesotho as part of a Southern African Development Community peacekeeping operation, Mr Mamoepa said.

The Government has until today consistently declined to participate in peacekeeping or peace support operations in Africa, citing inexperience and lack of capability and money as the reasons.

SANDF joint operations directorate spokesman Laverne Machiné said that by 11am parts of Maseru had been secured "and it looks as if the situation is settling"

The taskforce met heavy resistance when it stormed the capital in a bid to end two months of anti government riots

The troops first crossed the Caledon Bridge in Ratel armoured carriers Botswana troops had not yet arrived.

The troops first headed for King Letsie III's palace, where hundreds of anti government supporters had been protesting for six weeks, then to the main army barracks.

Airborne troops in Oryx helicopters landed at the main airport and at the army base on the northern outskirts of the city They immediately came under sporadic gunfire from Lesotho Defence Force units

The intervention by land and airborne troops took Lesotho by surprise, but anger against South Africa soon erupted.

Buildings were burning, cars were on fire and the combined forces were coming under fire from anti government forces.

Official cars were set alight in several parts of the city, and on Kingsway, Maseru's main street, South African stores including the OK Bazaars, Beares and Ackermans, were set alight Cars with South African number plates were stoned.

Opposition alliance spokeswoman Mamello Morrison, speaking to Sapa from the palace in Maseru, where the dissidents had taken refuge, expressed outrage at the South African military intervention as gunfire rattled in the background.

"I am appalled, disgusted. This action is unconstitutional in terms of your own constitution Your forces cannot just walk in like this Our people hate South Africans, they hate President Nelson Mandela.

"The ordinary people came out of the houses to meet the South African invaders They are burning South African shops That is our war against South Africa."

Looking out of a window, she reported. "They are shooting again, can you hear that? They are not satisfied yet. They want to kill more of us We will resist them to the very last baby born in Lesotho

"As I speak to you, your armoured cars are turning their guns around, they are pointing their guns towards the palace.

"The king is here He is shocked, scandalised. He cannot believe that this type of action could be taken by our neighbours It is a lie that the king invited the South Africans He would never invite troops to come and kill his own people"

The home of Lesotho Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope was attacked by a mob of protesters after the South African troops arrived in Maseru.

To page 3



Flashback: the current upheaval in Lesotho began in May with protests by opposition supporters who insisted the general election this year was rigged

P.T.O.

Day of war and madness

(167) Star 22/9/98

South African force, sent into Lesotho on behalf of the SADC after coup overthrows the government, under heavy fire while looters ransack Maseru



Simon Zwane reports from the Lesotho frontline

Hell reigned in Maseru yesterday as Lesotho citizens and the kingdom's army vented their anger at what they saw as a South African invasion of their kingdom that left more than 30 people dead and scores injured.

Heavy gunbattles raged in central Maseru and in surrounding mountains while mobs torched government buildings, South African businesses and anything associated with South Africa.

By late last night, buildings were still burning and drunken youths were still in control of the central business district. They stood in groups, consuming looted liquor and food. Motorists were charged "toll fees" at makeshift roadblocks.

By the time 200 Botswana Defence Force troops rolled into Maseru at 7pm to join the Southern African Development Community initiative to restore political order in the wake of an attempted coup, at least 30 people lay dead. Five were South African soldiers.

Captain Johan Nel (27) of Krugersdorp and Sergeant Jerome Sax (25) of Cape Town were among the casualties in post apartheid South Africa's first foreign military foray. Nine injured South African soldiers were airlifted to Bloemfontein's 3 Military Hospital and Universitas Hospital.

Up to 16 rebel soldiers were estimated to have died. The other fatalities were civilians.

Chinese and Indian businessmen and foreign tourists took their children and the little they could salvage and fled the country as their businesses were set alight and plundered. Without visas, they spent hours at the border at an emergency Home Affairs facility.

At Makonyane army base on the outskirts of Maseru, a heavy gunbattle broke out as rebel soldiers fiercely resisted the South Africans.

In Maseru, the privileged and the destitute alike descended on the capital from towns and villages in four-wheel-drive vehicles and vans and indulged in Lesotho's worst orgy of looting.

The buildings were set alight by youths who had been forced out of King Letsie III's palace when troops broke up a six week sit-in.

The protest had forced the collapse of the government, and the previous evening unruly youths had engaged in crime, hijacking cars in full view of the local army and police, who did not raise a finger.

Strong anti-South Africa sentiments were expressed.

"We don't want to be ruled by South Africa," said Marematlou Freedom Party leader Vincent Malebo.

Basotholand National Party leader Retsidisitsoe Sekgonyane said "We were invaded in 1982 by the apartheid government, now we are being invaded by our own brothers. This is sad." – Star Foreign Service

▶More reports, pictures Pages 2, 3, 5, 13, 18 & 19

WALTER DHLADHLA / AFP



Under fire . . members of the SA National Defence Force take up position in central Maseru, near the palace of King Letsie III yesterday.

King 'bitter' at SA action

Maseru – Lesotho's King Letsie III was "greatly embittered" by the deployment of SA troops in his kingdom – after he brokered a deal between the political parties on Monday night, said sources close to the monarch

King Letsie apparently had convinced the government and opposition of the need for a political solution and this decision was due to be communicated to the Southern African Development Community task team yesterday

He was shocked to wake up to the presence of foreign troops and the sounds of gunfire outside his palace, said the sources

"Had he been consulted, he would have been able to tell them he had brokered a deal," the sources said.

His brother, Prince Seiso said King Letsie had telephoned President Mandela in New York to confront him over the decision to send in troops. – Sapa-AFP, Staff Reporter

Battle for ruins of Maseru

Troops fight looters after night of chaos

(169) ARGT 23/9/98

Maseru – Botswana soldiers and Lesotho police battled in the streets of the gutted Lesotho capital today to control bands of looters after heavy fighting overnight.

Journalists saw dozens of armoured vehicles armed with cannon crossing from South Africa into Lesotho early today to reinforce the 600 men sent in on Tuesday

On the streets it was soldiers from Botswana who helped Lesotho police trying to stop the looting and burning that had gone on through the night.

Correspondents and television crews watching from rooftops saw no sign through the night of Botswana or South African soldiers on the streets, giving looters a free hand to run riot through the town and burn the few shops still standing.

A 3km row of shops was reduced to smouldering ruins after being stripped bare after the battle began yesterday South African owned shops have been targeted.

Today Lesotho police were seen firing automatic rifles at looters, while the Botswana Defence Force troops chased and arrested people fleeing with bundles of stolen goods

A director of Maseru's hospital said three more bodies were brought in overnight pushing the possible death toll in the conflict to 33

Thick smoke covered the city as gangs of youths filtered through the streets, avoiding patrols and stealing whatever they could lay their hands on.

"The situation in Lesotho has reached a high state of anarchy The government of Lesotho has been reduced to a position where it is unable to govern, ' said Botswana President Festus Mogae's senior permanent secretary Elijah Legwaila.

With everything completely destroyed in Maseru, the looting rampage moved to villages on the outskirts of the city

At Masianokeng, 15km outside the city, new looting and destruction took place early today

Heavy gunbattles raged in central Maseru and in surrounding mountains yesterday while the mobs torched government buildings, businesses and anything associated with South Africa.

By late last night, buildings were still burning.

Drunken youths were at that stage in control of the city centre.

The privileged and the destitute alike descended on the capital and indulged in an orgy of looting.

They came down from the hills in four-wheel-drive vehicles and vans, to loot whatever they could lay their hands on as dark smoke from burning buildings covered the skyline.

Strong anti South Africa sentiments were expressed and drivers of SA-registered cars were singled out for harassment.

"Does South Africa want to annex us? We will never give in to that! We don't want to be ruled by South Africa," said Maremation Freedom Party leader Vincent Malebo.

On the "occupation" of the royal palace, he said "What kind of respect is this that Mandela wants to show to our king?" – Reuters , Foreign Service



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Casualties of 'peace' dead South African soldiers in the back of a truck in Maseru yesterday

600 seek refuge in Ladybrand

Ladybrand – About 600 supporters of Lesotho's ruling party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, spent last night in a community hall in Ladybrand after fleeing across the Caledon River into the Free State

The refugees – mostly elderly people, women and children – were picked up by members of 1 SA Infantry battalion from Bloemfontein last night.

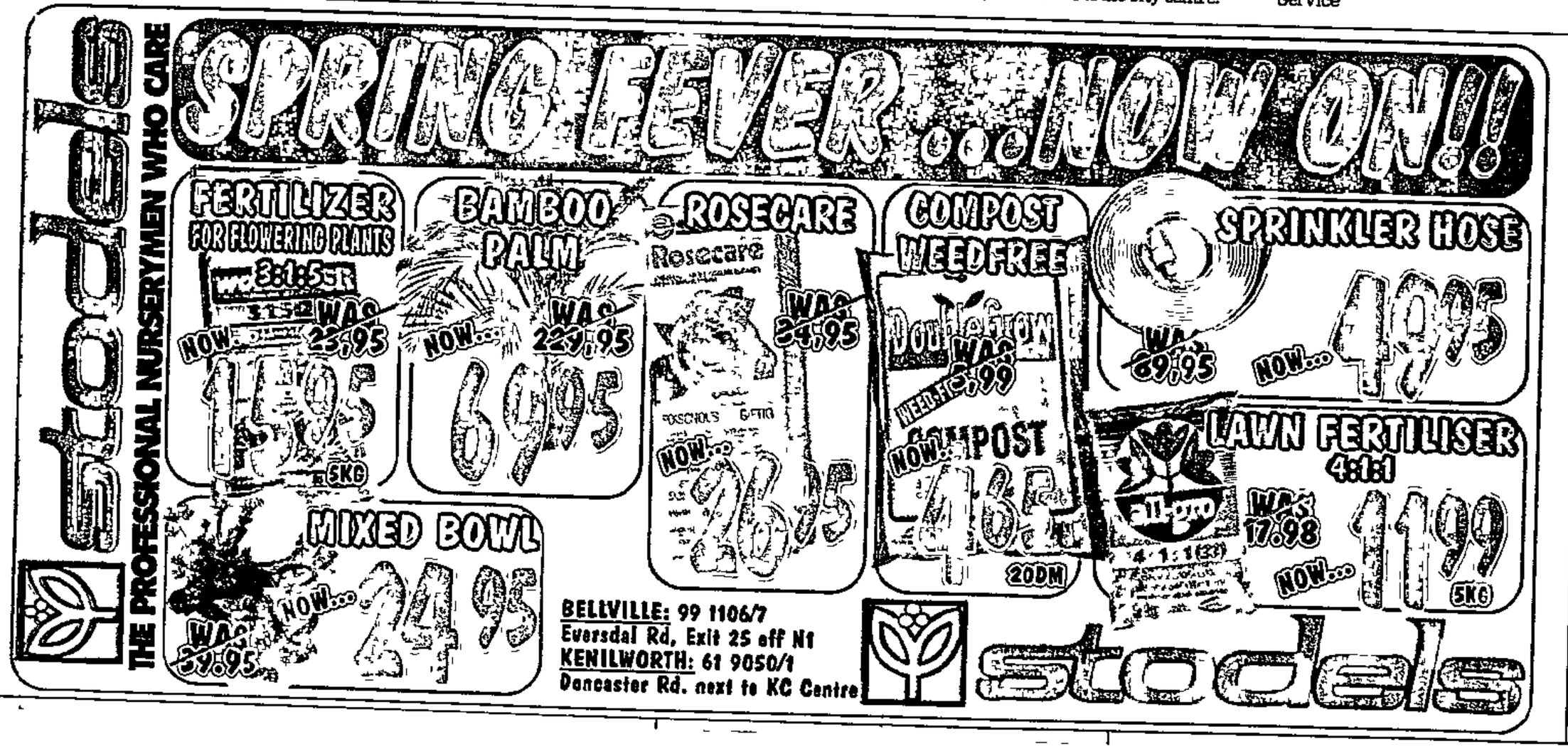
A young woman from a village 5km outside Maseru said she was part of a group of 15 women and children who had forded the river and walked several kilometres before meeting up with other fleeing LCD supporters

The woman said she had fled her village after neighbours told her LCD supporters would be killed during the night.

Other refugees said opposition supporters had threatened to chop off their arms as a symbol of clipping the wings of the LCD flying bird emblem.

Many sat huddled around radio sets, anxiously awaiting an update on the situation in their country

Meanwhile South African reporters who crossed into Maseru this morning reported heavy-calibre gunfire in the east of the city – Sapa



LESOTHO INVASION BACKFIRES

'Everything South African is burning'

(167) ET 23/9/98

THERE was chaos in Lesotho yesterday as looting mobs went on the rampage and anti-South African sentiment reached a peak, reports **SIMON ZWANE** of the Independent Foreign Service

MASERU Lesotho citizens and the country's army yesterday vented their anger at what they described as a South African invasion of their kingdom

Heavy gun battles raged in the city centre and in the surrounding mountains while mobs torched government buildings, South African businesses and anything else associated with South Africa.

Twelve hours after the Southern African Development Community (SADC) troops from South Africa had entered the kingdom yesterday to restore political order, at least 30 people lay dead.

South African National Defence Force Captain Johan Nel, 27, of Krugersdorp, and Sergeant Jerome Sax, 25, of Cape Town were among the five killed in post-apartheid South Africa's first foreign military foray

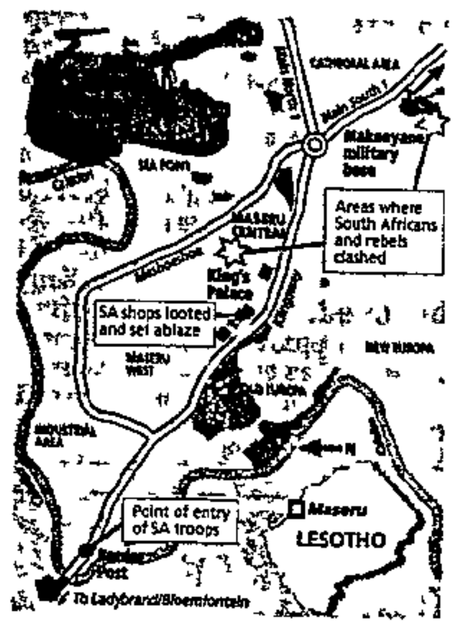
Nine other South Africans were injured and flown to hospitals in Bloemfontein and Lady Grey

It was estimated that up to 16 rebel Lesotho soldiers had died, with a number of others wounded by gunshot The other casualties were civilians.

Chinese and Indian business owners and foreign tourists took the little they could salvage and fled the country — some with their children — as their businesses were torched and plundered.

A convoy of more than 100 vehicles carrying foreign refugees waited to pass through the Lesotho border post into South Africa shortly after dusk yesterday as two bodies covered in grey blankets were unloaded from a Defence Force ratel personnel carrier by South African military officials

The refugees were stranded at the border for most of the day without visas Some had just received clearances to pass through the posts when the ratel arrived. Refugees and journalists watched and waited while military personnel unloaded the bodies



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SANDF meet resistance — PAGE 3

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A country riven by dissent — PAGE 4

Buthelezi's moment of fame — PAGE 4

Miscalculation in Lesotho — PAGE 19



At the Makonyane army base on the outskirts of Maseru a heavy gun battle ensued as Lesotho soldiers fiercely resisted the SA soldiers

From the villages and smaller towns the rich and the poor descended on the capital like starving vultures and engaged in what is believed to be the country's worst plundering orgy

People came down from the hills — some running, others in four wheel-drive vehicles and vans — to loot whatever they could lay their hands on as dark clouds of smoke from burning government buildings and torched shops billowed into the sky above the capital

Late into the night, buildings were still burning while angry, drunken mobs continued to roam the city

The buildings were torched by fleeing youths who had been forced out of the king's palace by the troops, who broke up a six-week protest sit-in demanding the resignation of the government

The previous evening unruly and drunken youths had engaged in criminal activity, hijacking cars in full view of local army and police officials, who looked on without raising a finger

By midday the streets were teeming with young children, women and men carrying an assortment of stolen property, including beds, furniture, music systems, food and liquor

A drunken woman staggering next to a burning shopping complex was robbed of her loot by youngsters who arrived too late to get anything valuable.

The looting orgy spread to other areas outside the city, with residents attacking all businesses owned by outsiders By late afternoon businesses owned by locals were also being targeted.

Drunken youths, in stolen government and private vehicles with registration numbers removed, drove recklessly through the streets while others commandeered motorists to take their loot to their homes.

As the shops ran out of their wares, the looters turned on each other Street fights broke out as young boys fought each other for the spoils.

The youngsters also turned on tourists and foreigners trying to escape the chaos, with some shouting anti-South African slogans They barricaded the main road to the Ladybrand border gate, forcing everyone in a foreign-registered car to give a bribe before passing through.

● Sapa reports that Botswana Defence Force troops were deployed in Lesotho yesterday to conduct a joint military action with units of the SA National Defence Force. The action was confirmed by Elijah Legwaila, senior permanent secretary in the office of Botswana President Festus Mogae.



CASUALTY The body of an unidentified South African soldier, who was shot dead yesterday in fighting with forces loyal to the Lesotho opposition, lies in an armoured vehicle yesterday He was part of a peacekeeping force sent to Maseru

PICTURE: AP

CAPE ARGUS ISSUES

Lesotho conflict has deep roots

Apartheid meddling played role

(167 ARG 23/9/98

INSIDE STORY

The mountain kingdom of Lesotho has a history of often violent conflict that goes back to the last century, writes our correspondent from Johannesburg

Lesotho began as a mountain refuge for scattered clans fleeing the wars of Imfecane in the early 19th century

Under the leadership of Chief Moshoeshoe, who welded the refugees into the Basotho nation, they held hilltops against Zulu, Ndebele, Briton and Boer, until 1868 when Chief Moshoeshoe secured British protection against the Vrystaaters.

His great grandson, King Moshoeshoe II became the country's head of state at independence.

In the 1960 elections, Chief Leabua Jonathan's party was defeated.

The dominant political force then was Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), which had close links with the African National Congress and Kwame Nkrumah's Pan Africanism (after 1962, claiming plots against him in the ANC, Mr Mokhehle switched allegiance to the Pan Africanist Congress)

Chief Jonathan's narrow victory in the 1965 election was thanks to South African support. He found himself in conflict with the young king, who demanded a measure of power

The king was placed under house arrest and later exiled He returned from exile in The Netherlands in December 1970 after accepting a proclamation that prohibited him from taking part in politics

As the last results came in during the 1970 election, Chief Jonathan declared a state of emergency and detained opposition BCP members until 1971 He dissolved the elected parliament and replaced it with a National Assembly of appointed members. The country became a one-party state

The BCP attacked police posts in 1974, but were put down.

Some analysts trace the seeds of the present conflict to Chief Jonathan's 1970 coup

His actions antagonised the kingdom and polarised the country The opposition then formed the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA)

Chief Jonathan antagonised the apartheid government, which sent then Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha on numerous visits to complain about their intelligence on African National Congress activities

Lesotho complained about the cross-border activities of the LLA, which operated out of South Africa.

This impasse culminated in a "blockade" by the apartheid government in 1986, which resulted in a military coup by Metsing Lekhanya.



King Moshoeshoe II



Chief Leabua Jonathan



King Letsie II

General Lekhanya's Military Council cracked down on ANC structures within Lesotho

One of the things the military government did was to commission a new flag, hoisted for the first time on January 19 1987, the anniversary of the coup Exiles began returning in mid 1988, among them BCP leader Ntsu Mokhehle, but were warned to stay out of politics

ments with General Lekhanya, King Moshoeshoe was stripped of his crown and forced into exile again.

In his place the military government installed his son, Prince Mohato as King Letsie III, who had to swear not to involve the crown in politics

On April 30 1991, General Lekhanya was ousted as chairman of the Military Council and replaced by Elias Pishona Ramaema.

The coup was believed to have been carried out by juniors of the defence force over a pay dispute.

Mr Mokhehle's BCP won Lesotho's first multiparty elections in April 1993, but in August 1994, King Letsie III deposed Mr Mokhehle s government, triggering a mass stayaway

It took the conflict resolution efforts of regional leaders to restore order and for King Letsie to reinstate Mr Mokhehle's government.

The Lesotho government had to make regular progress reports to the presidents of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa.

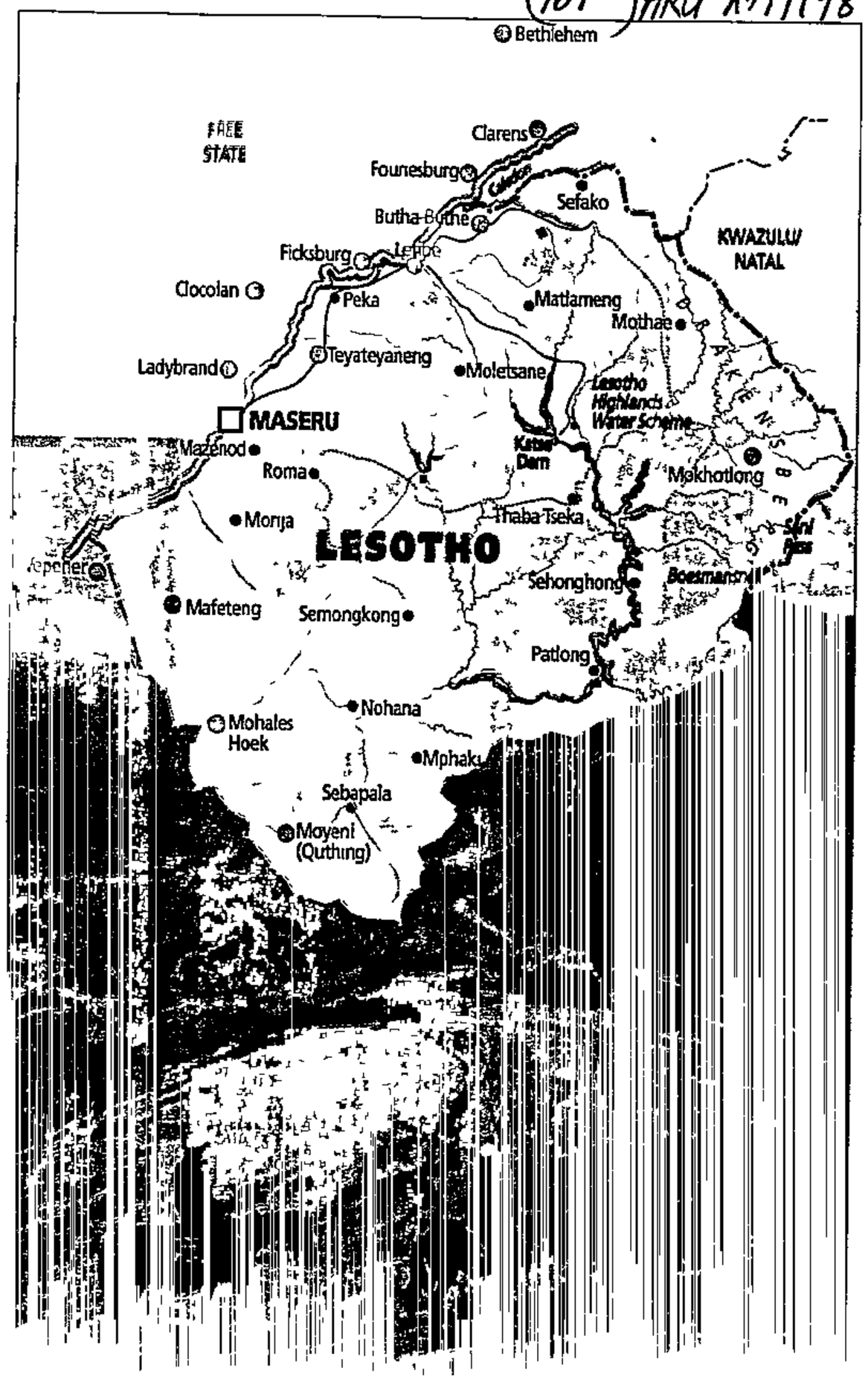
King Moshoeshoe II regained his throne in 1995, but died in a car accident in 1996 and was again succeeded by King Letsie

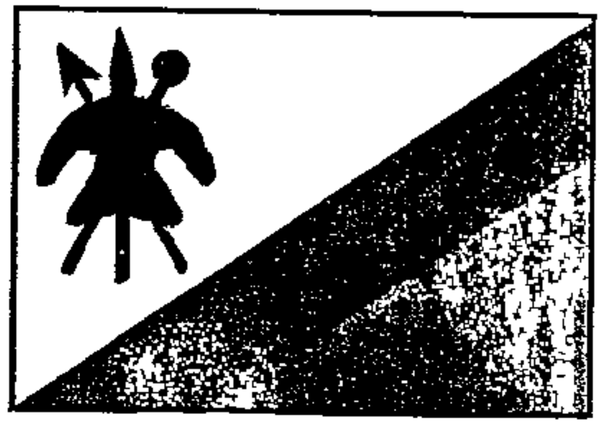
In 1997, after a challenge from elements in the BCP, Mr Mokhehle formed the Lesotho Congress for Democracy

When the LCD won the elections in May by a landslide, the BCP, the MaremaTlo Freedom Party and the Basotho National Party rejected the results

They accused the Independent Electoral Commission of bias and alleged the poll had been rigged Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa appointed Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa to head a probe into the election.

The Langa report, released last week, found some irregularities but could not establish conclusively that





The tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho has about 2 million inhabitants. It is surrounded totally by South Africa. Maseru, the capital, is the only urban centre.

Wool, mohair, maize and wheat sustain a poor economy Only 16% of the land is arable, and even that is under threat of erosion.

Jobs are scarce. About half the active adult population works in South Africa, mainly on the mines. Their earnings are an important source of income Estimates put this at around 75% of the country's gross domestic product.

Lesotho mines diamonds in the mountains near Letseng-la Terai, but production is variable.

An important development is the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a R19-billion joint South Africa-Lesotho venture to build two dams in Lesotho

Water from the project travels through 35km of channels from the Katse Dam in the Lesotho Highlands to Muela Dam, from where the water is channelled 30km to the Ash River, which crosses the SA border and eventually links with the Vaal River

The project will supply water to SA households and industries and generate electricity for the kingdom over a 30-year period.

Economy and resources

GDP purchasing power parity $2,8-billion (1994 estimate)

GDP real growth rate 13,5% (1994 estimate)

GDP per capita: $1 430 (1994 estimate).

Industries food, beverages, textiles, handicrafts, construction, tourism.

Agriculture. corn, wheat, pulses, sorghum, barley, livestock.

Exports $142-million (1994 estimate) clothing, furniture, footwear, wool.

Trade partners SA 39%, EU 22%, North and South America 33% (1993)

Imports $1-billion (1994 estimate)

Currency 1 loti (L) = 100 lisente

Basic facts

Total area. 30 350km²

Population. 1 970 781 (July 1996 estimate)

Government: modified constitutional monarchy

Legal system. Based on English common law and Roman-Dutch law

The BCP attacked police posts in 1974, but were put down.

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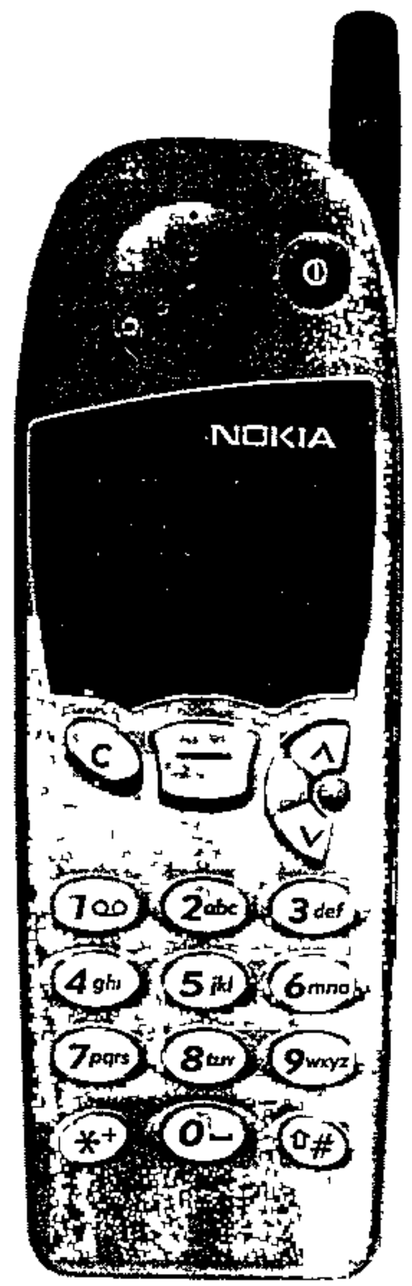
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■ *Source. The World Factbook (1996)*

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Peak local calls R1,50 Monthly subscription F

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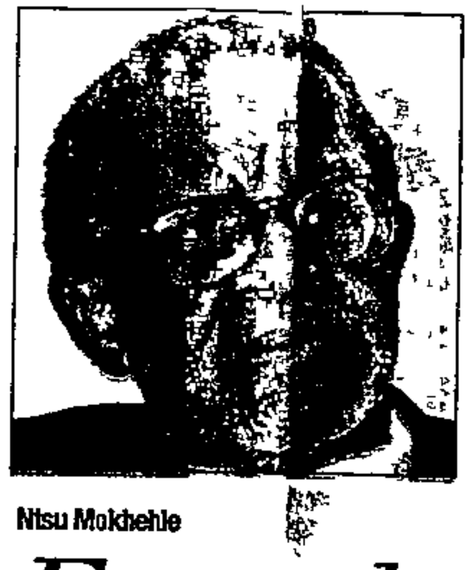
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Ntsu Mokhehle



General Metsing Lekhanya



Colonel Elias Ramaema



Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said to be the author of the letter asking South Africa for military intervention

Foray lacks clear doctrines

ARG 23/9/98 (167)

RICHARD CORNWELL AND JAKKIE POTGIETER

The intervention in Lesotho by South African and Botswana forces raises several questions about the future posture of these governments to intervention in the internal affairs of other regional states, and the conditions under which this will be attempted.

Throughout the early stages of the larger crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Botswana had followed the line that internal political quarrels and systemic breakdowns were not amenable to military solutions, negotiation and political outcomes were what mattered if regional peace was to be assured in the longer term.

This led to a serious rift between members of the Southern African Development Community, three of whose members – Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia – committed forces to the defence of the embattled Kabila regime in mid-August, ostensibly under the banner of the SADC

A week later President Mandela, then chairman of SADC, repudiated this action at a summit in Pretoria, which Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe dismissed as "superfluous"

Yet September 3 provided one of the great surprises in the diplomacy surrounding the regional body's approach to the Congo crisis Mr Mandela suddenly announced at a news conference in Durban that the SADC had unanimously supported the military intervention in the Congo

"It is quite reasonable when the legitimate head of a government of a country says 'I have been invaded by a foreign force Come and help me defend my country ', for the neighbouring country to respond positively "

Mr Mandela's explanation for this potentially embarrassing about face was less than convincing "There was some confusion before But once Sam Nujoma gave me this explanation and he repeated it in the summit, we unanimously supported that initiative and expressly acknowledged President Kabila as the legitimate head of that government.

"There is no difference whatsoever on this point now that explanations have been given."

Since any serious observer of the central African scene had been aware from the beginning of August that Rwandan and Ugandan troops were on Congolese soil, it seems astonishing that Mr Mandela had to await this enlightenment from President Nujoma.



A more charitable interpretation would see Mr Mandela's statement as a selfless effort to broaden the peace process, albeit in uncertain hands

So surprising was Mr Mandela's intervention that there was some speculation that South Africa was genuinely concerned that Mr Mugabe's continued commitment in the Congo could destabilise Zimbabwe

As it happened, the Durban decision paved the way for a set of regional meetings on the Congo that proved almost totally fruitless and left the initiative fully in the hands of the armies of the two opposing alliances.

There still seems to be little clarity about the doctrines to be applied in addressing the problems of incipient conflict in the region, most of which have internal not external origins.

The Congo crisis has both internal and external dynamics Until yesterday, the Lesotho crisis was entirely internally driven

The question then arises whether Mandela's Durban statement represented a watershed in the South African approach to all political disputes threatening regional peace

Did it signify that South Africa was at last going to adopt the regional role commensurate with its relative size and power? Or is this latest intervention merely a one off, provoked by South Africa's concerns that instability was becoming endemic in Lesotho and that the principal players seemed impervious to rational debate? Almost all the political crises and alarms that have shaken the benighted kingdom since 1994 have demonstrated the difficulty of getting the protagonists to sit down and discuss their differences with a view to finding an acceptable solution short of absolute victory for one side or the other

Matters appear to have been compounded by the way in which the findings of the Langa report into the disputed Lesotho election were handled and delivered.

It would be a pity if the Lesotho intervention does signify a sea change in South Africa's approach to regional crises. Hard cases make for bad law

The best we can now hope for is that this crisis will help us to realise that the polite and evasive language of diplomacy is singularly unsuited to addressing those of the region's problems created or exacerbated by personal ambition, greed and simple incompetence

This crisis has been at least four years in the making; straighter talking at the outset might have allowed us to escape the current tragedy

Africa Early Warning Programme, Institute for Security Studies Midrand

Year of living dangerously

Events leading up to yesterday's military intervention in Lesotho.

May 24-26: Ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) wins election. Opposition parties allege fraud and warn of violence.
August 4. Opposition parties mount protest vigil outside King Letsie's palace.
August 5: Protesters storm parliament.
August 6-11 Soldiers patrol Maseru as hundreds of protesters continue round-the-clock vigil outside palace Youths from blockade city to enforce mass stayaway.
August 10-13: Deputy President Thabo Mbeki brokers deal to allow electoral experts from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe to probe disputed poll.
August 17: Two people shot dead and scores injured when police open fire on anti-government protesters.
September 3. One person killed, scores wounded when gunmen fire on protesters.
September 4. Policeman shot dead in fighting outside palace
September 10: Opposition parties warn of fresh unrest as politicians haggle over the release of a election fraud report.
September 11. Army chief Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakeng resigns after he and senior commanders are taken prisoner by junior officers
September 12-13: South African Defence Minister Joe Modise arrives in Maseru to discuss growing divisons within the Lesotho army Modise wins the release of army officers detained after a mini-mutiny by junior officers
September 21: Foreign Minister Tom Thabane says Lesotho is teetering on brink of coup SADC says it will not tolerate overthrow of government.
September 22: About 600 South African soldiers enter Lesotho at dawn to prop up government. – Reuters

NP SLAMS 'ACT OF AGGRESSION'

IFP a lone voice in defending govt action

CT 23/9/98 (167)

MOST PARTIES in Parliament have come out against the deployment of SA troops in Lesotho, **JOVIAL RANTAO** and **KERRY CULLINAN** of the Parliamentary Bureau report.

THE first post-apartheid cross border troop deployment has been criticised by most politi parties in Parliament, as well as opposition parties in Lesotho

Six hundred SA soldiers were sent to Maseru at 6am as SA and Botswana responded to a call from Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili. Talks to resolve the political impasse are scheduled to take place in Maseru today

The NP condemned "this act of aggression" and said Lesotho's King Letsie III had not been consulted on the troop deployment.

DP leader Tony Leon echoed the NP He said Everestus Sekhonyana, leader of the main opposition group, the Basotho National Party, had said the king had not been advised.

However, Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi said he had been in touch with the king throughout the crisis and had spoken to him after the military action yesterday

The king had later phoned Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi after SANDF troops had entered his palace He had been assured that the soldiers were trying to secure the area.

NP spokesperson Boy Geldenhuys asked why the SA flag had been hoisted at the king's palace It had given the impression Lesotho had been annexed. He added that the intervention contradicted SA's stance on the Democratic Republic of Congo, when the government argued for a political rather than a military solution

Geldenhuys also asked Buthelezi who had instructed him to "prop up the allies of the ANC" Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party was the only opposition party in favour of the SANDF's action

Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen questioned the constitutionality of the intervention, saying the action was not fulfilling an "international obligation", as the Constitution required.

He recommended further political negotiation take place in SA rather than in Maseru.

He added that the South African forces should "reorganise the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) as soon as possible and hand over to the king"

PAC leader Stanley Mogoba said that if the Langa Report revealed that the Lesotho government was illegitimate, then the intervention would be an embarrassment to South Africa.

Buthelezi authorised the SANDF intervention in Lesotho after the kingdom's prime minister had made an urgent appeal to the Southern African Development Community for military assistance.

However, according to Lesotho's constitution, any outside military assistance must be sanctioned by Lesotho's king if it is to be constitutional.

"The SADC intervention is to stabilise the situation for the purposes of achieving a lasting political solution," Buthelezi told Parliament yesterday

"The purpose is not to achieve a military solution to a political problem The SADC has made it clear that a military force in one state cannot take it into their heads to assume a political function."

Military action was aimed at controlling the Maseru Bridge border post, LDF military bases, radio stations, embassies, the palace, airports, government buildings and power and water supply facilities, Buthelezi said. "It is not intended to force the Lesotho parties to negotiate The solution to Lesotho's problems is the sovereign right of the people in Lesotho to resolve in the manner they choose."

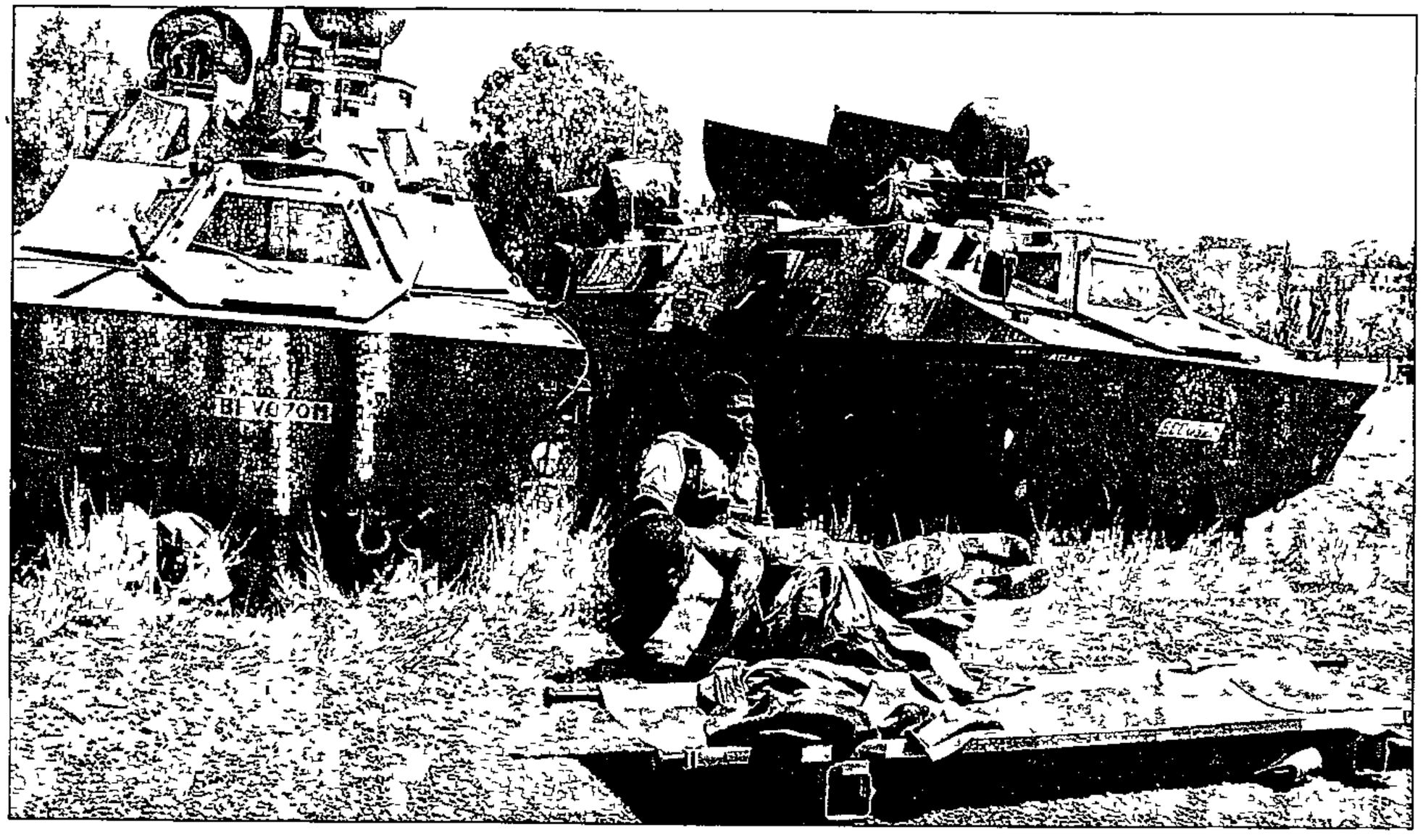
Last Wednesday Mosisili wrote to the SADC leaders saying that "in essence a coup is on our hands" and asked for "strong military intervention before it is too late"

Immediately after the letter was received, the President's Office told the SANDF to plan for an intervention and gave permission for Botswanan troops to enter SA However, action was postponed after the government and opposition parties had agreed to meet last Sunday, said Buthelezi

On the eve of that meeting, Mosisili once again appealed to the SADC to rescue his government, saying "the government and (Maseru) are under siege and the situation is so desperate we may not see the next day"

Buthelezi said he had given the go-ahead for the troops after extensive consultations with President Nelson Mandela in the US, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in Malaysia, and "several discussions with Lesotho's prime minister, the king and Botswana's president."

"Unfortunately, President Mugabe was not available and President Chissano was in Brazil, but they had agreed to support the SADC's position."



TO THE RESCUE. A military medic attends to an injured South African soldier while under fire in Maseru yesterday

PICTURES. GREG MARINOVICH-AP

Military intervention 'doesn't address problem'

(167) CT 23/9/98

MILITARY intervention was no answer to Lesotho s political problems, political analyst Jan van Eck said yesterday

"What we are seeing again is an attempt to solve a problem through military means, and that principle has to be severely questioned," said Van Eck, a former MP who is now engaged in conflict prevention in the Great Lakes region.

He questioned the decision to use force without addressing the underlying causes of a conflict that had gone on for many years

"We need a far more pro-active approach in addressing the causes of the conflicts before we engage in emergency action "

Van Eck said force used in other African countries had not brought lasting peace

Much as one might reject the concept of a coup in Lesotho, it was again merely symptomatic of underlying causes that had not been addressed.

"If there has been a coup, you need to facilitate a process where those in charge of the coup, and those ousted, get together privately to find a way forward agreeable to all of them

"South Africa can't be seen as the new Uncle Sam of Africa. That would be devastating to our role in Africa, which is potentially so positive

"Military action (can be used) for humanitarian purposes in a chaotic situation, but you can bring back the former government and you still won't have peace."

The Anglican Church called for the immediate withdrawal of Southern African Development Community troops from Lesotho, saying it could not support armed intervention of this kind.

The church's synod of bishops said in a statement it was appalled at the escalation of violence following the arrival of SADC troops in Lesotho

Their continued presence would only exacerbate an already tense situation The church had consistently called on South Africa to reject situations of conflict, and to work at what it did best — mediation, negotiation and reconciliation

"There is an urgent need for our government and other SADC nations to contribute to a process of dialogue and negotiation that will lead to a lasting peace."

The South African Council of Churches called for the immediate withdrawal of South African troops "This is an intolerable situation which calls for the immediate withdrawal of our forces and an apology to the people of the kingdom of Lesotho "

The incursion went against the basic premise upon which South Africa's own democracy was founded — that of negotiated settlement and peaceful resolution.

The Ceasefire Campaign Gun Free South Africa and the Black Sash condemned South Africa's military action and called for the immediate withdrawal of South African and Botswanan troops

"Our intervention in the Lesotho crisis has been a disaster from the beginning," the organisations said in a statement. — Sapa

SA business losses will run into millions

(167)

BRYAN CRE[illegible]

SOUTH AFRICAN com[illegible] o[illegible]er-

side Lesotho and this would cost the entire region in the long-term.

Vo[illegible] acom[illegible] financial [illegible]

action yesterday

The king had later phoned Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi after SANDF troops had entered his palace He had been assured that the soldiers were trying to secure the area.

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MILITARY intervention was no answer to Lesotho's political problems, political analyst Jan van Eck said yesterday

"What we are seeing again is an attempt to solve a problem through military means and that principle has to be severely questioned," said Van Eck, a former MP who is now engaged in conflict prevention in the Great Lakes region.

He questioned the decision to use force without addressing the underlying causes of a conflict that had gone on for many years

"We need a far more pro-active approach in addressing the causes of the conflicts before we engage in emergency action"

Van Eck said force used in other African countries had not brought lasting peace.

Much as one might reject the concept of a coup in Lesotho, it was again merely symptomatic of underlying causes that had not been addressed.

"If there has been a coup, you need to facilitate a process where those in charge of the coup, and those ousted, get together privately to find a way forward agreeable to all of them.

"South Africa can't be seen as the new Uncle Sam of Africa That would be devastating to our role in Africa, which is potentially so positive

"Military action (can be used) for humanitarian purposes in a chaotic situation, but you can bring back the former government and you still won't have peace"

The Anglican Church called for the immediate withdrawal of Southern African Development Community troops from Lesotho, saying it could not support armed intervention of this kind.

The church's synod of bishops said in a statement it was appalled at the escalation of violence following the arrival of SADC troops in Lesotho

Their continued presence would only exacerbate an already tense situation The church had consistently called on South Africa to reject situations of conflict, and to work at what it did best — mediation, negotiation and reconciliation

"There is an urgent need for our government and other SADC nations to contribute to a process of dialogue and negotiation that will lead to a lasting peace"

The South African Council of Churches called for the immediate withdrawal of South African troops "This is an intolerable situation which calls for the immediate withdrawal of our forces and an apology to the people of the kingdom of Lesotho"

The incursion went against the basic premise upon which South Africa's own democracy was founded — that of negotiated settlement and peaceful resolution

The Ceasefire Campaign Gun Free South Africa and the Black Sash condemned South Africa's military action and called for the immediate withdrawal of South African and Botswanan troops

"Our intervention in the Lesotho crisis has been a disaster from the beginning ' the organisations said in a statement — Sapa

SA business losses will run into millions

RYAN CRESSWELL

SOUTH AFRICAN companies operating in Lesotho have already lost millions in damage and stand to lose much more in lost business as the long-term effects of the intervention settle in.

Almost all South African businesses, from retailers and hotels to construction and engineering concerns, are now closed.

Many South African owned shops and branches in Maseru have been burnt or looted and hundreds of workers are being protected by South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members or are evacuating the area.

Pep Ltd financial director Pieter Erasmus estimated South African businesses had already "lost millions" in damages or stock losses and stood to lose more in profits There are 29 Pep stores in Lesotho, seven of them in Maseru. One was seen burning in TV footage.

Erasmus also said some of the SA factories in the region would now have to get supplies from outside Lesotho and this would cost the entire region in the long-term.

Vodacom financial director Leon Crouse said when trouble started in Lesotho cellphone sales went up but had now stopped. The network is not being serviced.

Crouse said insurance companies would take a knock and those companies without proper riot and looting coverage could be in even more trouble He said anti-South African sentiment in Lesotho could also cause problems.

Rob Hellings of Sun International said business had been badly affected because the Maseru Sun and the Lesotho Sun were now virtually empty, with only journalists and staff still staying in them.

Frik Venter of Group Five Roads Africa said work on a road leading to the Mohale Dam has been suspended and the delivery time would now change.

He said this would cost the Lesotho Highland Development Authority and even South African tax payers, because of involvement in water schemes in the kingdom.



CASUALTIES: Injured troops were flown to Bloemfontein for treatment.



UNDER FIRE South African troops encountered heavier resistance than anticipated

Operation runs into unexpected resistance

LADYBRAND The South African-led operation into Lesotho yesterday met with greater resistance than expected, said spokesperson Ben van Zyl, an SANDF major

Speaking at operations headquarters in this Free State town near the Lesotho border, Van Zyl said fierce resistance from Lesotho Defence Force rebels meant that the operation's objectives could not be achieved in one day

Van Zyl said SA troops had met resistance in the form of 14,5mm anti-aircraft and small-arms fire when they tried to secure Ratjemose and Makonyane military bases near Maseru and the Katse Dam in the Lesotho highlands

Three SANDF soldiers were killed and 11 injured.

The force was still having problems at Katse Dam, where South African workers were under threat. Rebels had fired on SANDF helicopters in the area.

The major said he had also received information that rebel soldiers were arming citizens with assault rifles, and that men in Maseru had been seen hiding rifles under their traditional blankets

Anti-South African feeling was high, and he advised South Africans not to enter the country

According to a pamphlet distributed to Lesotho citizens by the South African soldiers, the aim of the invasion is to prevent anarchy, and once this has been achieved, to create a stable environment for the restoration of law and order

Under the heading, "Attention People of Lesotho", the pamphlet said "Your friends the Southern African Development Community are assisting in resolving the current crisis situation in Lesotho

"A special military force consisting of the Botswana and South African national defence forces has been mobilised"

The pamphlets said military aggression would not be tolerated and ordered rebels to hand over their weapons to the task force in order to escape prosecution.

The pamphlet said the combined task force, called "Boleas", was a legitimate SADC force.

"It is professional and apolitical and will protect all citizens of Lesotho and their belongings fairly and humanely"

The pamphlet was signed by the commanding officer of the task force, Colonel Robbie Hartslief — Sapa

SA photographer shot in the foot

A TOP South African photographer was shot in the foot and several journalists came under fire during the fighting.

Pulitzer Prize winning photographer Greg Marinovich was shot in his right foot during a "direct attack" on three SA journalists by Lesotho troops The shaken news team said 60 rounds were fired at them

"Everyone in Lesotho was very anti-SA. When they saw three whiteys, they fired on us," said photographer Joao Silva.

Marinovich was transferred to Johannesburg, where he was recovering well

Associated Press journalists Adiel Bradlow and Andrew Selsky bunkered down in a trench in an army barracks for fear of their lives They managed to reach some SA troops last night and were reported safe



AUCTION SALE AUCTION SALE
FRANSCHHOEK
A RARE COLLECTION OF OREGON PINE AND OLD CAPE TEAK DOORS AND WINDOWS • OREGON PINE AND YELLOWWOOD BEAMS • OLD HORSE CARRIAGES • ANTIQUE CAPE YELLOWWOOD AND STINKWOOD FURNITURE • VICTORIAN FURNITURE • ANTIQUE CAPE DUTCH COPPER AND BRASSWARE • ANTIQUE PLOUGHS • OLD PERSIAN CARPETS • KELIMS AND RUGS • OIL PAINTINGS • ANTIQUE BRASS OIL LAMPS • STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERY AND CHINA
To be held on the premises of
A BIT OF OLD CAPE
HUGUENOT STREET
FRANSCHHOEK - CAPE
(LARGE SHED ALONGSIDE THE RAILWAY LINE)
SATURDAY MORNING 26 SEPT 1998

Country riven by dissent since independence from Britain

(167) CT 23/9/98

MASERU The fighting in Lesotho is the latest drama in a post independence history that has seen a king deposed, two military coups and frequent meddling by South Africa

South Africa and Botswana sent troops in early yesterday to prop up the embattled government of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili

Opposition and government supporters have clashed for seven weeks over a controversial general election in May that returned the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy to power

Lesotho's two million people are among the world's poorest

Economically, Lesotho is at the mercy of South Africa, where nearly 50% of its male labour force works

After independence in 1966, the former British protectorate's hopes for democracy were dashed when Chief Leabua Jonathan of the then ruling Basutoland National Party (BNP) annulled its first election in 1970 when he appeared destined to lose

About 500 people were killed in subsequent fighting Jonathan declared a "holiday from politics" in which the opposition were harassed, exiled or imprisoned.

Initially Jonathan was friendly with the South African white minority government, but they clashed over his support for the ANC.

Relations deteriorated in 1982 when South African troops raided Maseru and killed 30 ANC members and 12 others.

Jonathan forged links with the Soviet Union Cuba and China and accepted military training from North Korea for a paramilitary group

South Africa pulled the plug on Jonathan's government with a blockade in January 1986 halting the flow of food and essential supplies, and days later installed South African-trained soldier Major-General Justin Lekhanya as head of a military junta

Lekhanya forced King Moshoeshoe into exile in Britain and Moshoeshoe's son was installed as King Letsie a monarch without power

In April 1991, Colonel Phitsoane Ramaema overthrew Lekhanya and, after riots in which 30 people were killed, allowed Moshoeshoe home from Britain

In 1993, Lesotho held its first free election since independence, and Ntsu Mokhehle was elected prime minister

The losers challenged the 1993 result, but UN observers judged the election to have been free and fair

Mokhehle was deposed in a row within his party, and Mosisili won the poll by a landslide, which opposition leaders said was fraudulent.

South Africa and Botswana went to Mosisili's rescue yesterday after seven weeks of opposition paralysed the government. — Reuter

IN THE HOT SEAT

Buthelezi's Maseru moment of fame

THE DECISION to send troops was not his alone, but the acting president was involved in the crisis from the beginning **JOVIAL RANTAO** and **KERRY CULLINAN** report.

THE announcement of South Africa's involvement in the military intervention in Lesotho represents the first major decision taken by Inkatha Freedom Party leader and Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi in the eight times that he has been acting president

President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki were extensively consulted but in the end left it to Buthelezi to decide They were keen, the *Star* was told, not to be seen to be overlooking his authority

Mandela is in New York and Mbeki on an official visit to Malaysia.

Buthelezi has been involved in top level telephone diplomacy in the past two weeks, trying to find a solution to the Lesotho crisis

Buthelezi's biggest mission started on September 11, when Mandela handed him a copy of the Langa Report on the May 23 elections in Lesotho

The report did not make specific findings on whether or not there was electoral fraud.

A few hours later, in the first minutes of September 12, Buthelezi took his first action as acting president He telephoned Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to discuss the report.



IN CHARGE: Buthelezi

Four days later, when he was back in South Africa, he received a letter from a distressed Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili asking for help

After he had received the letter, Buthelezi held conversations with Mandela, Mbeki, Mugabe and Botswana President Festus Mogae and was in meetings with Defence Minister Joe Modise, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi and Foreign Affairs director general Jackie Selebi.

The consultations were still continuing on September 19 when what amounted to a mayday call was received from Mosisili.

The prime minister said he was not sure how long he and members of his cabinet would remain alive.

The plea for help came after South African National Defence Force members had been deployed along the Lesotho border in an exercise.

On Sunday about 10pm, after consultations, Buthelezi took a decision that a joint SANDF-Botswana Defence Force contingent should be deployed in Lesotho and that the South Africans should, because of their proximity, be allowed to enter first — and on their own.

Yesterday, Buthelezi received a call from King Letsie who was worried that there were South African soldiers in his palace He was assured that they were there to secure his safety

Buthelezi's moment of fame — his historic address as acting president — was watched by other Inkatha leaders.



WAITING Chinese nationals who fled Maseru yesterday were stranded at the border for most of the day without visas They were later taken to Ladybrand The refugees said they had lost hundreds of thousands of rand in the looting and arson which they said was sparked by the entry of SANDF troops into Lesotho

PICTURE: THE STAR

Transcript of request for help

THIS is the text of the September 16 letter in which Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili asked regional heads of state for military assistance.

The letter was addressed to presidents Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Festus Mogae of Botswana and Joachim Chissano of Mozambique.

In my capacity as prime minister and head of government of the kingdom of Lesotho, I wish to urgently request your excellencies, heads of state of Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, to come to the rescue of the government and people of Lesotho

The only intervention I can and do request urgently is of a military nature.

Since returning from the SADC (Southern African Development Community) meeting in Mauritius, I have come back into a city and a government held at ransom by the demonstrators of the BCB, BNP and MFB (opposition parties), with their leaders urging them on.

Yesterday before my arrival into Lesotho over 80 government vehicles were taken by force from civil servants and impounded in the palace premises. Several others, including ministers' vehicles, were stoned by the rampaging demonstrators.

This morning the situation has worsened. Most workers, civil servants and employees of parastatal organisations are being stopped from going to work. More vehicles have been confiscated. The rampaging demonstrators are congregating at various offices, literally denying workers entry and threatening to occupy government offices.

They have made public statements that they are closing parliament and all government business from today

Further serious threats being made include abducting ministers, killing the prime minister, deputy prime minister and foreign minister (at) any time Ministers are not able to enter offices safely for obvious reasons

The most serious tragedy is that the police, and in particular the army, are at best, spectators.

The mutiny in the LDF (Lesotho Defence Force) is taking root. The brigadier who has been forced to be commander, has had to go into hiding

SADC running chaotic Lesotho

Sowetan 23/9/98 (167)

By Themba Molefe

LESOTHO is now effectively under the control of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) following the collapse of administrative rule in the kingdom over the past few days

The fact that Lesotho is totally surrounded by South Africa does not make its political outlook any brighter and the government s opponents are trying to get to grips with the latest developments

It is common knowledge that about 800 troops from South Africa and Botswana crossed the border into the kingdom yesterday at the request of King Letsie III to protect him after seven weeks of demonstrations outside his palace

Lesotho foreign minister Tom Thabane yesterday defended his government s request for the SADC military intervention saying there had been a complete breakdown in the kingdom's security

"The intervention follows a well-judged situation by the four SADC governments – Moz.mbique, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana," he said

But the arrival of the SADC soldiers has angered the opposition s supporters and heightened anti-South African sentiment in Lesotho Anything linked to South Africa is being destroyed

Heavy automa .ic fire

When the SADC troops arrived in Maseru yesterday they were met with heavy automatic fire from inside the palace by the prote ters

The city is under siege. All shops are closed.

Business has come to a complete halt.

The SADC's sending in of a peace-keeping force was almost inevitable, since tensions have simmered in the tiny kingdom after the five opposition parties rejected the outcome of the May general election They alleged the election was rigged

The Lesotho independent electoral commission was accused of fraud after the outcome of the election and South Africa has been instrumental in trying to resolve the situation with its SADC partners

However, over the past few days brigadiers in the Lesotho Defence Force assumed effective control of the country after the collapse of civilian rule

The takeover followed the dismissal of 28 defence force officers after allegations that they conspired with the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy to rig the election results



A South African National Defence Force soldier, deployed in Lesotho as part of the Southern African Development Community forces to restore order, takes up position near the palace in Maseru. PIC AFP

Head of the army General Makhula Mosakeng and the other officers are holed up in a house in Ladybrand inside South Africa, where they are expected to seek asylum

The crisis in Lesotho comes after South African Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi and offi cials from Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office have been involved in shuttle diplomacy – trying to find a political solution to the explosive situation in Lesotho

Nevertheless deputy presidential aide Ronnie Mamoepa said yesterday the SADC intervention was aimed at creating a climate conducive for the Lesotho government and opposition to resolve the political crisis peacefully

"We believe the political process should continue as agreed with political parties at a mutually accepted venue, particularly after the intervention of his majesty King Letsie III," he said

Responding to accusations that South Africa had invaded Lesotho, Mamoepa said "This is not a South African initiative, it's an intervention by the SADC"

Yet the opposition seems to have had enough. In the words of fiery opposition leader Molapo Qhobela. "This far, no further We are tired of this whole matter We no longer want this government and we are not going to negotiate with anybody anymore – and that includes South Africa."

Furious opposition spokeswoman Mamelo Morrison underlined this rejection of talks with government "It s unrealistic to call people for talks when they are shooting at our people No one will push us to talk with guns

This particular stance throws the SADC efforts into a quandary as the country falls deeper into chaos Yet Lesotho depends wholly on South Africa economically

Meanwhile, King Letsie III was still inside his palace yesterday despite the mid-morning arrival of the foreign troops

It was not clear whether he would be lifted out by air or whether he would just be given the desired protection

Embattled prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili could not be found anywhere but was believed to be inside the country

Youths went on the rampage in the city centre yesterday setting certain government and business buildings on fire They torched the High Court and the house of deputy prime minister Kedibone Maope.

It is not uncommon to meet people in the street who shout 'We do not want South Africa. Go away South Africa!

Many South Africans travelling with cars that bear registration numbers from their country have had to remove the plates for fear of being victimised.

Economic life has virtually come to a standstill

A senior South African government official recently predicted "There is an army that is disloyal to its constitution to the government of the day, and which does not respect its own leaders It is a n untenable situation"

Just tow the line

This is what appears to anger the ordinary Basotho, who feel South Africa wants to dictate to them They feel that South Africa has already made a judgment and that Lesotho should just tow the line

This feeling is prevalent mainly among opposition followers

Meanwhile, the senior soldiers in Ladybrand were being kept abreast of developments in Lesotho and the police in Ladybrand said they had prepared contingency plans to deal with an expected influx of refugees across the border

But most Basotho stayed in the country yesterday, waiting for more information on the crisis

South Africa cannot afford a mutiny in a country that is locked inside its borders

Mountain refuge for scattered clans has, over decades, fought off many enemies, including Zulus, Britons and Boers

Tales of many wars and woes

Star 23/9/98 (167)

STAFF REPORTERS

Lesotho began as a mountain refuge for scattered clans fleeing the wars of Imfecane in the early 19th century

Under the leadership of Chief Moshoeshoe who welded these refuges into the Basotho nation, they held their hilltops against Zulu, Ndebele, Briton and Boer, until 1868 when Moshoeshoe secured British protection against the Vrystaaters.

His great grandson, King Moshoeshoe II became the country's head of state at independence.

In the 1960 elections Chief Leabua Jonathan's party was soundly defeated. The dominant political force then was Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) with its close links with South Africa's ANC and Dr Kwame Nkrumah's Pan Africanism (after 1962, claiming plots against him in the ANC, Mokhehle switched his friendship to the Pan Africanist Congress)

Jonathan's narrow victory in the 1965 election was thanks to South African organisational and financial support. He soon found himself in conflict with the young king who demanded some measure of power.

The King was placed under house arrest and later exiled. He returned from exile in The Netherlands in December 1970 after accepting a proclamation that prohibited him from taking part in politics

As the last results came in during the 1970 election, Chief Jonathan declared a state of emergency and detained opposition BCP members until 1971. He dissolved the elected parliament and replaced it with a National Assembly which consisted exclusively of appointed members. The country became a one party state.

The BCP attacked police posts in 1974 but were put down with reported brutality.

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He also antagonised the apartheid government, which sent then Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha on numerous occasions to the kingdom to complain about their intelligence on ANC activities there.

Lesotho complained about the cross-border activities of the LLA, which operated out of South Africa.

> **Soon found himself in conflict with young king**

This impasse culminated in a "blockade" by the apartheid government in 1986, which resulted in a military coup by Major General Metsing Lekhanya.

Under Lekhanya's chairmanship, the Military Council cracked down on ANC structures within Lesotho

One of the things the military government did was to commission a new flag, hoisted for the first time on January 19, 1987, the anniversary of the coup. Exiles began returning in mid-1988, among them BCP leader Ntsu Mokhehle, but were warned to stay out of politics.

In March 1990, after disagreements with Lekhanya, King Moshoeshoe was stripped of his crown and powers as head of state, and forced into exile again

son Prince Mohato as King Letsie III, who had to give a public oath at his swearing in ceremony not to involve the monarchy in politics

On April 30 1991 Major-General Lekhanya was ousted as chairman of the Military Council and replaced by Colonel Elias Phishona Ramaema.

The lightening-quick coup was believed to have been carried out by rank and file junior elements of Lesotho's defence force, after demands for a pay rise failed.

Ntsu Mokhehle's BCP won Lesotho's first multiparty democratic elections in April 1993, but in August 1994 King Letsie III deposed Mokhehle's government, triggering a mass stayaway. It took the conflict resolution efforts of regional leaders to restore order and for King Letsie to reinstate Mokhehle's government.

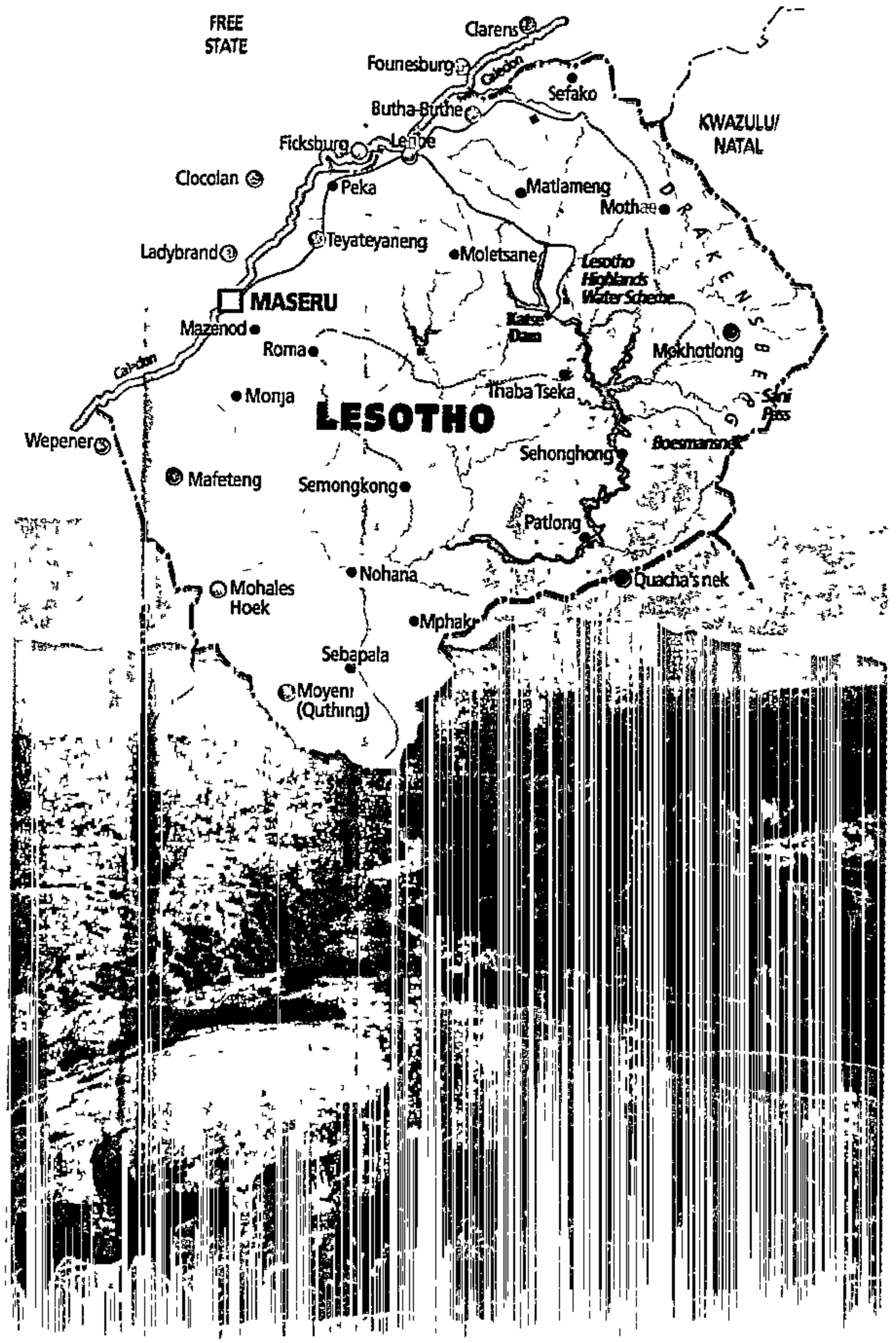
The Lesotho government had to present regular progress reports to the presidents of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa.

King Moshoeshoe II regained his throne in January 1995, but died in a car accident in 1996 and was succeeded by Letsie again.

In 1997, after a challenge from younger elements in the BCP, Mokhehle formed the Lesotho Congress for Democracy. When the LCD won the elections in May by a landslide, the opposition parties, the BCP, the MaremaTlo Freedom Party and the Basotho National Party rejected the results and their supporters took to the streets.

They accused the Independent Electoral Commission of bias and alleged that the poll had been rigged. Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa appointed Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa to head a probe into the election.

The Langa report, released last week, found some irregularities, but could not establish conclusively



The tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho has about 2 million inhabitants.

It is surrounded totally by South Africa. Maseru, the capital is the country's only urban centre.

Wool, mohair, maize and wheat sustain a poor economy. Only 16% of the land is arable, and even that is under threat of erosion.

Jobs are scarce. About half the active adult population works in South Africa, mainly on the mines. Their earnings are an important source of income. Estimates put this at around 75% of the country's gross domestic product.

Lesotho mines diamonds in the mountains near Letseng-la-Terai but production is variable.

An important development is the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a R19-billion joint South Africa-Lesotho venture to build two dams in Lesotho.

Water from the project travels through 35km of channels from the Katse Dam in the Lesotho Highlands to Muela Dam, from where the water is channelled 30km to the Ash River, which crosses the SA border and eventually links with the Vaal River.

The project will supply water to SA households and industries and generate electricity for the mountain kingdom over a 30-year period.

Economy and resources

GDP purchasing power parity: $2,8-billion (1994 estimate)
GDP real growth rate: 13,5% (1994 estimate)
GDP per capita. $1 430 (1994 estimate)
Industries: Food, beverages, textiles, handicrafts, construction, tourism
Agriculture. Corn, wheat, pulses, sorghum, barley, livestock.
Exports: $142-million (fob, 1994 estimate) clothing, furniture, footwear, wool
Trade partners: SA 39%, EU 22%, North and South America 33% (1993)
Imports: $1-billion (cif, 1994 estimate)
Commodities. Mainly corn, building materials, clothing, vehicles, machinery, medicines, petroleum products.
Partners: SA 83%, Asia 12%, EU 3% (1993)
Currency: 1 loti (L) = 100 lisente

Basic facts

Total area 30 350sq km.
Population 1 970 781 (July 1996 estimate)
Population growth: 1 9% (1996 estimate)
Government: Modified constitutional monarchy
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WORLD CHIEF WORDS

Sun 23/9/98 (167)

STAFF REPORTERS

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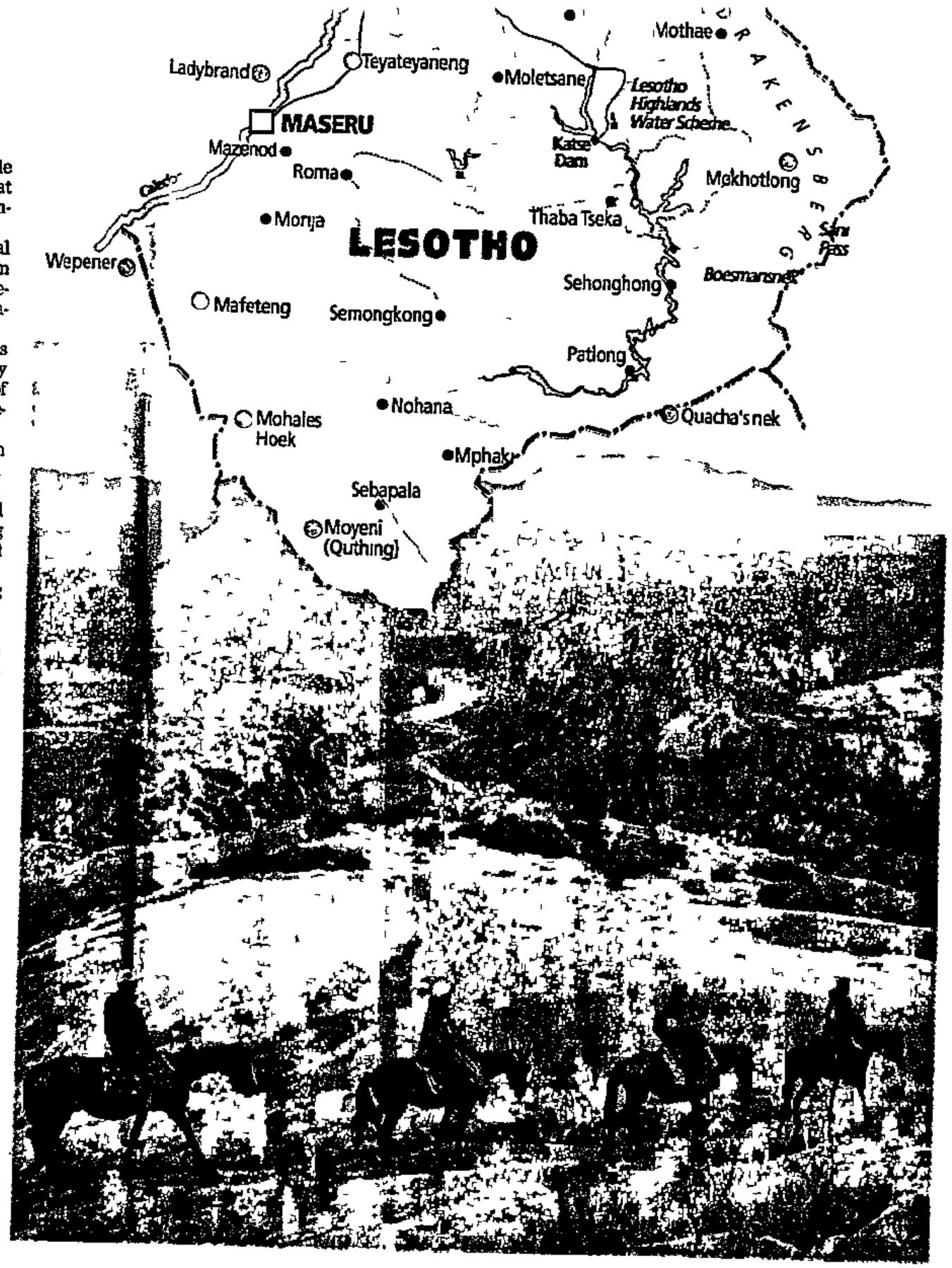
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Suffrage. 21 years of age, universal.

Source: The World Factbook (1996)



The driver of the king's jeep was drunk when it plunged down a ravine, killing **King Moshoeshoe II** on the morning of January 15 1996



The dictatorial rule of **Chief Leabua Jonathan** lasted 20 years, until he was toppled by his military in 1986. He died of stomach cancer on April 5 1987



Ntsu Mokhehle waited in the wings through 40 years of struggle. When he won the 1993 election, he could barely hear, speak or see



General Metsing Lekhanya kicked the ANC out of Lesotho. In February 1990 he took over control of both the executive and legislative functions



King Letsie III no longer has the power to dissolve parliament, or to appoint and remove the prime minister



Colonel Elias Ramaema took power in a bloodless coup in April 1991 but handed power over to an elected government in 1993



Acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi says Mokhehle's successor **Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili** is the author of the letter asking for military intervention

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Lesotho Post Office burns after being set alight by anti-government supporters protesting against SA National Defence Force troops being deployed in the country

Picture AFP

Eight killed as looters burn shops and buildings

AT LEAST eight people are believed to have been killed and 60 wounded as looters and protesters burnt shops and government buildings, causing millions of rands worth of damage during demonstrations sparked by SA's "invasion" of Lesotho yesteday

THE SA National Defence force said SA casualties rose to five yesterday afternoon after two of the 18 SA soldiers wounded earlier in the day died in hospital

They were Capt Johan Nel, 27, of Krugersdorp, and Sgt Jeremy Sax, 25, of Cape Town Three others were shot dead in skirmishes with Lesotho soldiers

The Red Cross said more than six Basotho civilians had died and 56 injured There were no figures available for casuaties sustained by the Lesotho army

Prince Seeiso, brother to Lesotho King Letsie, claimed a young man was shot in the head and killed in the palace grounds by SA soldiers

Government sources said ministers' residences had been burned down Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili's residence is also believed to have come under attack

SA-owned shops were set ablaze amid intense anti-SA sentiment from the locals Five people were certified dead on arrival at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Maseru after street clashes

Hospital superintendent Dr Piet McPherson said late yesterday afternoon 54 people were taken to the hospital, most with bullet wounds He said 29 were shot while 11 were injured in road accidents during the unrest

SA stores, including OK Bazaars, Beares and Ackermans, were set alight in the main street of the capital Cars with SA number plates were stoned.

Maseru burns, foreigners flee after invasion

Kevin O' Grady

MASERU — As dusk fell on Lesotho's capital last night, hiding the thick plumes of smoke from burning buildings, hundreds of foreigners were besieging the border post at Maseru Bridge in an attempt to flee the country before nightfall

Fires raging in Maseru's plundered central business district could still be seen from kilometres away, and looters continued to drag their booty out into streets strewn with glass and makeshift barricades

Other bands of young men patrolled the streets in vehicles, hooting and shouting verbal abuse at people they perceived to be foreigners or South Africans Every so often an SA National Defence Force (SANDF) convoy of armoured personnel carriers and Ratels trundled through the streets, paying scant attention to the looting and mayhem around them

The once thriving capital will this morning start to count the cost of yesterday's incursion by SANDF and Botswana Defence Force troops

The dawn invasion, at the request of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, sparked such outrage among Maseru residents that by late yesterday there were few properties in the city that remained unscathed. SA and Lesotho-owned businesses were indiscriminately targeted, along with government-owned premises and vehicles

Staff at the Maseru Sun hotel adopted emergency procedures and were busy evacuating the last remaining guests Americans, Germans and other foreigners were making their way to the nearby US embassy, where they were given refuge while they awaited an army escort to the border posts

Outside the palace of King Letsie III in central Maseru, opposition supporters kept vigil in a tense stand-off with five SANDF armoured vehicles They could not understand how a relatively peaceful six-week protest against the results of Lesotho's May elections could have this outcome "We hate South Africans now, we hate all foreigners We don't want you here," one man shouted.

Motorists with foreign registration plates were urged to remove them soon after crossing the border to minimise the risk of attack by angry residents

Even this was no guarantee At a barricade on the eastern side of the city, motorists were threatened and manhandled by angry young men There were also reports of foreigners' being searched and stripped of their possessions, including vehicles

Ashraf Abubaker, a businessman, third-generation Lesotho citizen and personal friend of the king, said it would be difficult and costly for the city and the country to recover from yesterday's rioting

Abubaker, who planned to evacuate his family last night, said many businesses would go under as they had no insurance cover for political violence and would be unable to service loans or pay bills

Maseru was practically deserted as night fell and streams of vehicles ferried frightened foreigners across the border Hotels in small Free State towns like Ladybrand experienced an unexpected boom

$A business losses will run into millions

RYAN CRESSWELL

SOUTH AFRICAN companies operating in Lesotho have already lost millions in damage and stand to lose much more in lost business as the long-term effects of the intervention settle in.

Almost all South African businesses, from retailers and hotels to construction and engineering concerns, are now closed.

Many South African owned shops and branches in Maseru have been burnt or looted and hundreds of workers are being protected by South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members or are evacuating the area.

Pep Ltd financial director Pieter Erasmus estimated South African businesses had already "lost millions" in damages or stock losses and stood to lose more in profits. There are 29 Pep stores in Lesotho, seven of them in Maseru. One was seen burning in TV footage.

Erasmus also said some of the SA factories in the region would now have to get supplies from outside Lesotho and this would cost the entire region in the long-term.

Vodacom financial director Leon Crouse said when trouble started in Lesotho cellphone sales went up but had now stopped. The network is not being serviced.

Crouse said insurance companies would take a knock and those companies without proper riot and looting coverage could be in even more trouble. He said anti-South African sentiment in Lesotho could also cause problems.

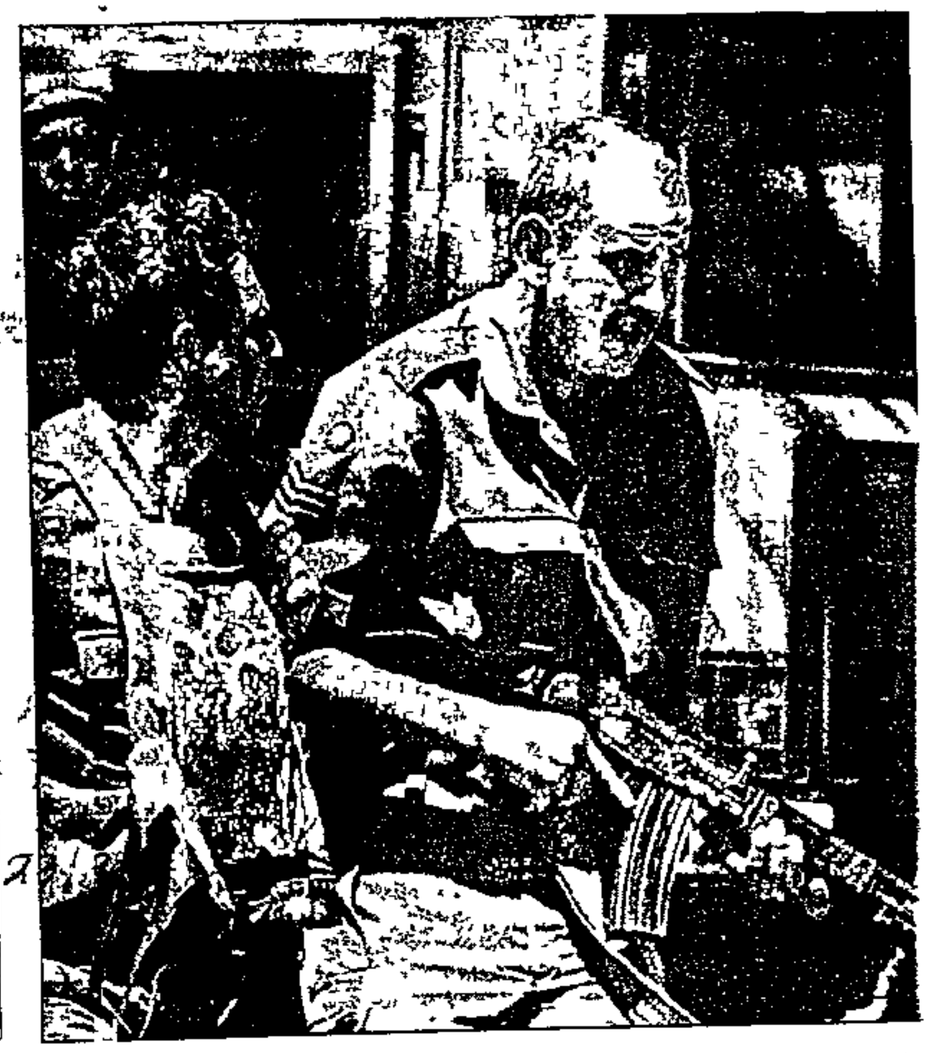
Rob Hellings of Sun International said business had been badly affected because the Maseru Sun and the Lesotho Sun were now virtually empty, with only journalists and staff still staying in them.

Frik Venter of Group Five Roads Africa said work on a road leading to the Mohale Dam has been suspended and the delivery time would now change.

He said this would cost the Lesotho Highland Development Authority and even South African tax payers, because of involvement in water schemes in the kingdom.



CASUALTIES: Injured troops were flown to Bloemfontein for treatment



UNDER FIRE: South African troops encountered heavier resistance than anticipated

Operation runs into unexpected resistance

LADYBRAND The South African-led operation into Lesotho yesterday met with greater resistance than expected, said spokesperson Ben van Zyl, an SANDF major.

Speaking at operations headquarters in this Free State town near the Lesotho border, Van Zyl said fierce resistance from Lesotho Defence Force rebels meant that the operation's objectives could not be achieved in one day.

Van Zyl said SA troops had met resistance in the form of 14,5mm anti-aircraft and small-arms fire when they tried to secure Ratjemose and Makonyane military bases near Maseru and the Katse Dam in the Lesotho highlands.

Three SANDF soldiers were killed and 11 injured.

The force was still having problems at Katse Dam, where South African workers were under threat. Rebels had fired on SANDF helicopters in the area.

The major said he had also received information that rebel soldiers were arming citizens with assault rifles, and that men in Maseru had been seen hiding rifles under their traditional blankets.

Anti-South African feeling was high, and he advised South Africans not to enter the country.

According to a pamphlet distributed to Lesotho citizens by the South African soldiers, the aim of the invasion is to prevent anarchy, and once this has been achieved, to create a stable environment for the restoration of law and order.

Under the heading, "Attention People of Lesotho", the pamphlet said "Your friends the Southern African Development Community are assisting in resolving the current crisis situation in Lesotho.

"A special military force consisting of the Botswana and South African national defence forces has been mobilised."

The pamphlets said military aggression would not be tolerated and ordered rebels to hand over their weapons to the task force in order to escape prosecution.

The pamphlet said the combined task force, called "Boleas", was a legitimate SADC force.

"It is professional and apolitical and will protect all citizens of Lesotho and their belongings fairly and humanely."

The pamphlet was signed by the commanding officer of the task force, Colonel Robbie Hartslief — Sapa

SA photographer shot in the foot

A TOP South African photographer was shot in the foot and several journalists came under fire during the fighting.

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Greg Marinovich was shot in his right foot during a "direct attack" on three SA journalists by Lesotho troops. The shaken news team said 60 rounds were fired at them.

"Everyone in Lesotho was very anti-SA. When they saw three whiteys, they fired on us," said photographer Joao Silva.

Marinovich was transferred to Johannesburg, where he was recovering well.

Associated Press journalists Adiel Bradlow and Andrew Selsky bunkered down in a trench in an army barracks for fear of their lives. They managed to reach some SA troops last night and were reported safe.



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NP SLAMS 'ACT OF AGGRESSION'

IFP a lone voice in defending govt action

CT 23/9/98 (167)

MOST PARTIES in Parliament have come out against the deployment of SA troops in Lesotho, **JOVIAL RANTAO** and **KERRY CULLINAN** of the Parliamentary Bureau report.

THE first post-apartheid cross-border troop deployment has been criticised by most political parties in Parliament, as well as opposition parties in Lesotho

Six hundred SA soldiers were sent to Maseru at 6am as SA and Botswana responded to a call from Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili Talks to resolve the political impasse are scheduled to take place in Maseru today

The NP condemned "this act of aggression" and said Lesotho's King Letsie III had not been consulted on the troop deployment.

DP leader Tony Leon echoed the NP He said Everestus Sekhonyana, leader of the main opposition group, the Basotho National Party, had said the king had not been advised.

However, Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi said he had been in touch with the king throughout the crisis and had spoken to him after the military action yesterday

The king had later phoned Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi after SANDF troops had entered his palace He had been assured that the soldiers were trying to secure the area.

NP spokesperson Boy Geldenhuys asked why the SA flag had been hoisted at the king's palace. It had given the impression Lesotho had been annexed. He added that the intervention contradicted SA's stance on the Democratic Republic of Congo, when the government argued for a political rather than a military solution

Geldenhuys also asked Buthelezi who had instructed him to "prop up the allies of the ANC" Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party was the only opposition party in favour of the SANDF's action

Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen questioned the constitutionality of the intervention, saying the action was not fulfilling an "international obligation", as the Constitution required.

He recommended further political negotiation take place in SA rather than in Maseru

He added that the South African forces should "reorganise the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) as soon as possible and hand over to the king"

PAC leader Stanley Mogoba said that if the Langa Report revealed that the Lesotho government was illegitimate, then the intervention would be an embarrassment to South Africa.

Buthelezi authorised the SANDF intervention in Lesotho after the kingdom's prime minister had made an urgent appeal to the Southern African Development Community for military assistance

However, according to Lesotho's constitution, any outside military assistance must be sanctioned by Lesotho's king if it is to be constitutional.

"The SADC intervention is to stabilise the situation for the purposes of achieving a lasting political solution," Buthelezi told Parliament yesterday

"The purpose is not to achieve a military solution to a political problem The SADC has made it clear that a military force in one state cannot take it into their heads to assume a political function"

Military action was aimed at controlling the Maseru Bridge border post, LDF military bases, radio stations, embassies, the palace, airports, government buildings and power and water supply facilities, Buthelezi said. "It is not intended to force the Lesotho parties to negotiate The solution to Lesotho's problems is the sovereign right of the people in Lesotho to resolve in the manner they choose."

Last Wednesday Mosisili wrote to the SADC leaders saying that "in essence a coup is on our hands" and asked for "strong military intervention before it is too late"

Immediately after the letter was received, the President's Office told the SANDF to plan for an intervention and gave permission for Botswanan troops to enter SA However, action was postponed after the government and opposition parties had agreed to meet last Sunday, said Buthelezi.

On the eve of that meeting, Mosisili once again appealed to the SADC to rescue his government, saying "the government and (Maseru) are under siege and the situation is so desperate we may not see the next day"

Buthelezi said he had given the go-ahead for the troops after extensive consultations with President Nelson Mandela in the US, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in Malaysia, and "several discussions with Lesotho's prime minister, the king and Botswana's president."

"Unfortunately, President Mugabe was not available and President Chissano was in Brazil, but they had agreed to support the SADC's position."



TO THE RESCUE. A military medic attends to an injured South African soldier while under fire in Maseru yesterday

PICTURES. GREG MARINOVICH-AP

Military intervention 'doesn't address problem'

(167) CT 23/9/98

MILITARY intervention was no answer to Lesotho's political problems, political analyst Jan van Eck said yesterday

"What we are seeing again is an attempt to solve a problem through military means and that principle has to be severely questioned," said Van Eck, a former MP who is now engaged in conflict prevention in the Great Lakes region

He questioned the decision to use force without addressing the underlying causes of a conflict that had gone on for many years

"We need a far more pro-active approach in addressing the causes of the conflicts before we engage in emergency action"

Van Eck said force used in other African countries had not brought lasting peace.

Much as one might reject the concept of a coup in Lesotho, it was again merely symptomatic of underlying causes that had not been addressed.

"If there has been a coup, you need to facilitate a process where those in charge of the coup, and those ousted, get together privately to find a way forward agreeable to all of them.

"South Africa can't be seen as the new Uncle Sam of Africa That would be devastating to our role in Africa, which is potentially so positive

"Military action (can be used) for humanitarian purposes in a chaotic situation, but you can bring back the former government and you still won't have peace."

The Anglican Church called for the immediate withdrawal of Southern African Development Community troops from Lesotho, saying it could not support armed intervention of this kind.

The church's synod of bishops said in a statement it was appalled at the escalation of violence following the arrival of SADC troops in Lesotho

Their continued presence would only exacerbate an already tense situation The church had consistently called on South Africa to reject situations of conflict, and to work at what it did best — mediation, negotiation and reconciliation.

"There is an urgent need for our government and other SADC nations to contribute to a process of dialogue and negotiation that will lead to a lasting peace"

The South African Council of Churches called for the immediate withdrawal of South African troops "This is an intolerable situation which calls for the immediate withdrawal of our forces and an apology to the people of the kingdom of Lesotho"

The incursion went against the basic premise upon which South Africa's own democracy was founded — that of negotiated settlement and peaceful resolution

The Ceasefire Campaign, Gun Free South Africa and the Black Sash condemned South Africa's military action and called for the immediate withdrawal of South African and Botswanan troops

"Our intervention in the Lesotho crisis has been a disaster from the beginning" the organisations said in a statement. — Sapa

King Letsie III tells Mandela of shock over SA 'invasion'

(167) Star 23/9/98

Maseru – The arrival of South African troops in Lesotho early yesterday came as a "bombshell" to the mountain kingdom's monarch, King Letsie III, who viewed it as an invasion, the king's brother told AFP.

Prince Seeiso said Letsie had telephoned President Nelson Mandela in New York to confront him over the decision to send in troops

"He tracked down Mandela in New York and managed to speak to him. He wanted to know why they are doing this," the prince said

"This was a bombshell (for the king)," he said. "We knew for days there had been a possibility of military intervention, but we have had no warning that they (the troops) were going to come rolling in We were sure that the South Africans would first do everything to achieve a diplomatic solution.

"Of course the king is not happy about this," he said "How can he be happy when they are invading his country?"

Letsie was in his palace in the centre of Maseru early yesterday when South African soldiers chased anti-government protesters into the grounds and fired on them.



King ... arrival of SANDF was a "bombshell".

"The king is very upset that South African soldiers twice opened the gates to the palace to shoot at people inside," Seeiso said

"For a Basotho, the palace is the last cultural place of refuge. How can they come shooting in there?"

He claimed a boy was shot in the head and killed in the palace grounds, a claim also made by opposition supporters, who said the victim was about 21 years old – AFP

Analyst queries use of military intervention

(167)

Cape Town – Military intervention was no answer to Lesotho's political problems, political analyst Jan van Eck said yesterday

Van Eck, a former MP, and now engaged in conflict prevention in the Great Lakes region, said he questioned the decision to use force without addressing the underlying causes of a conflict which had gone on for many years

"It's a fundamental problem throughout Africa that we have permanent early warnings that conflict will turn violent

"If there has been a coup, you need to facilitate a process where those in charge of the coup, and those ousted, get together privately to find a way forward agreeable to all of them.

"(South Africa) can't be seen as the new Uncle Sam of Africa that would be devastating to our role, which is potentially so positive in Africa.

"Military action (can be used) for humanitarian purposes in a chaotic situation, but you can bring back the former government and you still won't have peace." – Sapa

Only ANC, IFP back incursion

(167) Star 23/9/98

Other parties say SA forces should pull out and that peace hopes have been dented

SAPA
Cape Town

Opposition parties, except for the IFP, were sharply critical of South Africa's military intervention in Lesotho during a special debate in the National Assembly yesterday

NP foreign affairs spokesperson Dr Boy Geldenhuys said the intervention was shortsighted and held serious implications for future relations with Lesotho.

The NP expressed sympathy to the injured SA soldiers and condolences to the families of those killed "We convey our apology to the people of Lesotho," Geldenhuys said

In terms of Lesotho's constitution, King Letsie III had to be consulted before foreign military intervention in his country, and it appeared he had not been

Geldenhuys wanted to know why the SA flag was hoisted on the palace "I think it's a disgrace."

The NP urged the Government to pull out its forces immediately and to facilitate a new general election under international supervision

Freedom Front leader General Constand Viljoen criticised acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi for telling political parties only yesterday, when the letter from the Lesotho government asking for aid was dated September 16

He suggested the Lesotho peace talks be switched to Ladybrand across the border so that they could be held in peace

Viljoen, a former SA Defence Force chief, said the Lesotho Defence Force should take over in that country and the SA forces be withdrawn.

He also questioned the constitutionality of SA's intervention, saying he did not think a request to the Southern African Development Community could be regarded as enough of an international obligation

DP leader Tony Leon said he had been told yesterday that the king had not asked for the SADC intervention.

> **Don't turn it into political slanging match**

SA's intervention had made a political resolution of Lesotho's problems more difficult Lesotho's opposition parties had said the chances of a breakthrough in peace talks were now less possible

Leon added that the "guts of the matter" was why the publication of the Langa report on the validity of the May elections in Lesotho had been delayed so long

There was also concern, in view of the casualties, over how carefully SA had planned its military operation

Leon asked whether the intervention had not discredited SA's earlier position on the Democratic Republic of Congo, when it had criticised Zimbabwe's intervention.

PAC leader Dr Stanley Mogoba said the critical point was that, when SA did intervene, it should have done so to protect Lesotho's people rather than the current government.

An appeal should be conveyed to the Lesotho people from the SA Parliament that, if they instituted a government of national unity, "it would be a great help to all".

African Christian Democratic Party leader Kenneth Meshoe said the decision on the Congo had been a wise one, "so we fail to see why our executive did not display the same wisdom in Lesotho".

Fatima Hajaji (ANC), acting chair of Parliament's foreign affairs portfolio committee, said SA could not allow the situation in Lesotho to deteriorate

Inka Mars of the IFP said her party fully supported the incursion SA had intervened to restore law and order and to support the legitimate government.

Replying to the debate, Buthelezi, who is also leader of the IFP, said he did not believe the issue should be subject to a political slanging match between parties It should also be noted that there was no mileage to be gained for the ruling ANC in the handling of the issue.

Events leading to war

Sowetan 23/9/98 (167)

THE following is a chronology of events leading up to South Africa's military intervention in Lesotho yesterday

● May 24-26 – The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) wins a landslide victory in elections but opposition parties allege electoral fraud and warn of violence if King Letsie III fails to reject the results

● May 28 – The LCD nominates Pakalitha Mosisili to succeed ailing 79-year-old Ntsu Mokhehle as prime minister A new cabinet is sworn in on June 4

● August 4 – Opposition parties mount a protest vigil outside King Letsie's palace to pressure him to annul the election

● August 5 – About 1 000 protesters storm parliament as Mosisili addresses the nation to calm rising tensions

● August 6-11 – Soldiers patrol the streets of Maseru as hundreds of protesters continue a round-the-clock vigil outside the king's palace Youths from opposition parties blockade the city to enforce a mass job stayaway

● August 10-13 – South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki brokers a deal among the rival parties to allow electoral experts from Botswana, SA and Zimbabwe to probe the disputed poll

● August 17 – Two people are shot dead and scores are injured when police open fire on anti-government protesters

● September 3 – One person is shot dead and scores are wounded when gunmen open fire on protesters

● September 4 – A policeman is shot dead and at least 10 people are wounded in fighting between police and soldiers outside the king's palace

● September 10 – Opposition parties warn of a fresh wave of unrest as politicians haggle over the release of a report by a regional inquiry probing possible election fraud

● September 11 – Army chief Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakeng announces his resignation on national radio after he and 24 other senior army commanders are taken prisoner by junior officers reported to be sympathetic to the opposition parties

● September 12-13 – SA Defence Minister Joe Modise arrives in Maseru to discuss growing divisions within the Lesotho army Modise wins the release of army officers detained in a mini-mutiny by junior officers

● September 21 – Foreign minister Tom Thabane says his country is teetering on the brink of a coup The Southern African Development Community says it will not tolerate the overthrow of the Lesotho government

● September 22 – About 600 South African soldiers enter Lesotho at dawn to prop up Mosisili's government amid reports of an army mutiny – *Reuters*

SA has 'made a big mistake'

A CONVOY of more than 100 vehicles carrying foreign refugees waited to pass through the Lesotho border post into South Africa shortly after dusk yesterday as two bodies covered in grey blankets were unloaded from an SA National Defence Force Ratel personnel carrier by South African military personnel

The refugees, mostly Chinese nationals fleeing the anarchy in Maseru, were stranded at the border for most of the day without visas, and had just received clearance to pass through the post when the Ratel arrived

Refugees and journalists watched and waited while military personnel unloaded the bodies

A seriously injured South African soldier was evacuated from the scene in a SAAF Oryx helicopter while another received medical treatment in a military ambulance at the scene

A reporter saw 13 armoured troop carriers at the border post heading back towards Ladybrand

A refugee, who wished to remain anonymous, said the South African Government had made "a big mistake"

He said they received no prior warning and lost hundreds of thousands of rands in the looting and arson which they said had been sparked by the entry of SANDF troops into Maseru

A number of vehicles crossed the border into South Africa with smashed windows

Ladybrand resident Gert Lindeque said he went to Maseru yesterday morning to help his brother, a motor vehicle retailer, get his stock, including vehicles, out of the Lesotho capital

He walked into his brother's shop and a few minutes later looters drove a truck through the shop window

Lindeque was covered in blood from cuts he sustained from broken glass

The convoy carrying refugees left the border post shortly after 7pm last night

Eight Bedford trucks followed the convoy of refugees to Ladybrand and six armoured troop carriers remained at the border post

● Sergeant Jeremy Sax (25), the SANDF medic who died in Lesotho yesterday, had lived for soldiering, and as a boy had dreamed of joining the French Foreign Legion

At least five SA soldiers were killed

"He treated it very seriously as a career He used to get impatient that some of the people he worked with took things so casually," said journalist Stan Maher, partner of Jeremy's mother Faith, from their home in Cape Town last night

"It was his great delight, the army he literally just ate, slept and dreamed the military"

Maher said Jeremy, an experienced parachutist, had been attached as a medic to 44 Parachute Battalion, and had only recently been promoted to sergeant – *Sapa*

Mob rule in Maseru

5 SA soldiers killed in Lesotho clashes

(167)

Sowetan 23/9/98

By Themba Molefe

MASERU – Burning and looting continued in Maseru yesterday as South African troops entered Lesotho and lost five soldiers who were killed in clashes with protesters, while unconfirmed reports said at least 13 local soldiers were killed

SA National Defence Force (SANDF) spokeswoman Laverne Machine said five soldiers were killed and nine wounded early yesterday

SANDF chief General Siphiwe Nyanda released the names of two of the dead soldiers

They are Captain (Dr) Johan Nel (27) of Krugersdorp and Sergeant Jeremy Sax (25) of Cape Town Both were members of 7 Medical Battalion Group of the SA Military Health Service

However, claims of 13 Basotho soldiers being killed could not be confirmed, although it is believed that at least five Lesotho officers were injured and 11 arrested when the South African troops arrived

Quoting unconfirmed reports last night, SABC TV news reported that 30 people had so far died in the conflict.

Dr Piet McPherson, superintendent of Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Maseru, said late yesterday afternoon that 54 people were treated, most of them for bullet wounds

SA troops arrived in the country by helicopter early yesterday and quickly secured the border gate, radio station, king's palace and a number of army bases.



An injured member of South African National Defence Force (SANDF) deployed in Lesotho is carried into an army ambulance near King Letsie III palace in Maseru yesterday. PIC AFP

The action provoked widespread anger among Basotho opposition supporters who started an orgy of burning and looting of South African-owned shops

Opposition alliance spokeswoman Ms Mamello Morrison, speaking from outside the royal palace, expressed outrage at the military intervention

"I am appalled and disgusted Your forces cannot just walk in like this without due parliamentary approval," she said

South African stores, including OK Bazaars, Beares and Ackermanns were set alight in the main street of Maseru Cars with South African registration numbers were stoned.

SANDF troops blitzed Maseru with pamphlets yesterday stating that the Southern Africa Development Community-backed task force wanted to help restore peace and maintain law and order.

Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi told a media briefing in Pretoria yesterday that military intervention in Lesotho had been on the cards since last week and only a dramatic development could have prevented it.

He said there was nothing sudden about the decision to send a SADC peacekeeping force to restore order in the country

Lesotho prime minister Mr Pakalitha Mosisili had requested the move as far back as last Wednesday as the likelihood of a negotiated settlement between his government and opposition parties dimmed

"Even if the parties met on Sunday in a joint meeting, there is nothing that would have forced the guarantors (SADC) not to intervene militarily unless something very, very dramatic had happened," Mufamadi said

A coup had prompted SADC to go ahead with its peacekeeping mission by forces from South Africa and Botswana.

Lesotho's opposition party coalition last night condemned what it called the unwarranted invasion of Lesotho by the South African military

Coalition spokesman Mr Vincent Malebo said Mufamadi's statement that the Lesotho government had asked for military assistance from South Africa was false

"Those who made the statement, and continue to use such a statement, are malicious," Malebo said "The Lesotho king himself was oblivious to this purported request."

Lesotho has been gripped by unrest since May when opposition parties rejected the outcome of the general election, claiming it had been rigged.

According to reports, no Botswana troops were present when SA troops entered Maseru in the early hours of yesterday But later reports said 200 Botswana Defence Force troops arrived in Maseru yesterday afternoon.

The whereabouts of King Letsie III were unknown yesterday. His younger brother Seeiso Seeiso said South Africa's action had undermined the monarchy

● **See pages 2, 3, 12 and 13.**

SADC running chaotic Lesotho

Sowetan 23/9/98 (167)

By Themba Molefe

LESOTHO is now effectively under the control of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) following the collapse of administrative rule in the kingdom over the past few days

The fact that Lesotho is totally surrounded by South Africa does not make its political outlook any brighter and the government's opponents are trying to get to grips with the latest developments

It is common knowledge that about 800 troops from South Africa and Botswana crossed the border into the kingdom yesterday at the request of King Letsie III to protect him after seven weeks of demonstrations outside his palace

Lesotho foreign minister Tom Thabane yesterday defended his government's request for the SADC military intervention, saying there had been a complete breakdown in the kingdom's security

"The intervention follows a well-judged situation by the four SADC governments – Mozambique South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana," he said

But the arrival of the SADC soldiers has angered the opposition's supporters and heightened anti-South African sentiment in Lesotho Anything linked to South Africa is being destroyed

Heavy automatic fire

When the SADC troops arrived in Maseru yesterday they were met with heavy automatic fire from inside the palace by the protesters

The city is under siege All shops are closed.

Business has come to a complete halt.

The SADC's sending in of a peace-keeping force was almost inevitable, since tensions have simmered in the tiny kingdom after the five opposition parties rejected the outcome of the May general election They alleged the election was rigged

The Lesotho independent electoral commission was accused of fraud after the outcome of the election and South Africa has been instrumental in trying to resolve the situation with its SADC partners.

However, over the past few days brigadiers in the Lesotho Defence Force assumed effective control of the country after the collapse of civilian rule

The takeover followed the dismissal of 28 defence force officers after allegations that they conspired with the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy to rig the election results.



A South African National Defence Force soldier, deployed in Lesotho as part of the Southern African Development Community forces to restore order, takes up position near the palace in Maseru. PIC AFP

Head of the army General Makhula Mosakeng and the other officers are holed up in a house in Ladybrand inside South Africa, where they are expected to seek asylum

The crisis in Lesotho comes after South African Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi and officials from Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office have been involved in shuttle diplomacy – trying to find a political solution to the explosive situation in Lesotho

Nevertheless deputy presidential aide Ronnie Mamoepa said yesterday the SADC intervention was aimed at creating a climate conducive for the Lesotho government and opposition to resolve the political crisis peacefully

"We believe the political process should continue as agreed with political parties at a mutually accepted venue, particularly after the intervention of his majesty King Letsie III" he said

Responding to accusations that South Africa had invaded Lesotho, Mamoepa said "This is not a South African initiative, it's an intervention by the SADC"

Yet the opposition seems to have had enough. In the words of fiery opposition leader Molapo Qhobela. "This far, no further We are tired of this whole matter We no longer want this government and we are not going to negotiate with anybody anymore – and that includes South Africa."

Furious opposition spokeswoman Mamelo Morrison underlined this rejection of talks with government "It's unrealistic to call people for talks when they are shooting at our people No one will push us to talk with guns"

This particular stance throws the SADC efforts into a quandary as the country falls deeper into chaos Yet Lesotho depends wholly on South Africa economically

Meanwhile, King Letsie III was still inside his palace yesterday despite the mid-morning arrival of the foreign troops

It was not clear whether he would be lifted out by air or whether he would just be given the desired protection

Embattled prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili could not be found anywhere but was believed to be inside the country

Youths went on the rampage in the city centre yesterday, setting certain government and business buildings on fire They torched the High Court and the house of deputy prime minister Kelibone Maope

It is not uncommon to meet people in the street who shout "We do not want South Africa. Go away South Africa!"

Many South Africans travelling with cars that bear registration numbers from their country have had to remove the plates for fear of being victimised.

Economic life has virtually come to a standstill

A senior South African government official recently predicted "There is an army that is disloyal to its constitution, to the government of the day, and which does not respect its own leaders It is an untenable situation"

Just tow the line

This is what appears to anger the ordinary Basotho, who feel South Africa wants to dictate to them They feel that South Africa has already made a judgment and that Lesotho should just tow the line

This feeling is prevalent mainly among opposition followers

Meanwhile, the senior soldiers in Ladybrand were being kept abreast of developments in Lesotho and the police in Ladybrand said they had prepared contingency plans to deal with an expected influx of refugees across the border

But most Basotho stayed in the country yesterday waiting for more information on the crisis

South Africa cannot afford a mutiny in a country that is locked inside its borders

Foray lacks clear doctrines

Star 28/9/98 (167)

By Richard Cornwell and Jakkie Potgieter
Africa Early Warning Programme,
Institute for Security Studies, Midrand

Yesterday's intervention in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho by South African and Botswana forces raises several questions about the future posture of these governments to intervention in the internal affairs of other regional states, and the conditions under which this will be attempted.

Throughout the early stages of the larger crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Botswana had followed the line that internal political quarrels and systemic breakdowns were not amenable to military solutions, negotiation and political outcomes were what mattered if regional peace was to be assured in the longer term

This led to a serious rift between members of the Southern African Development Community, three of whose members – Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia – committed forces to the defence of the embattled Kabila regime in mid-August, ostensibly under the banner of the SADC

A week later President Mandela, then chair of SADC, repudiated this action at a summit in Pretoria, which Zimbabwe's President Mugabe dismissed as "superfluous".

Yet September 3 provided one of the great surprises in the diplomacy surrounding the regional body's approach to the Congo crisis Mandela suddenly announced at a press conference in Durban that SADC had unanimously supported the military intervention in the Congo.

"It is quite reasonable when the legitimate head of a government of a country says 'I have been invaded by a foreign force. Come and help me defend my country ...', for the neighbouring country to respond positively."

Mandela's explanation for this potentially embarrassing about-face was less than convincing: "There was some confusion before. But once Sam Nujoma gave me this explanation and he repeated it in the summit, we unanimously supported that initiative and expressly acknowledged President Kabila as the legitimate head of that government.

"There is no difference whatsoever on this point now that explanations have been given."

Since any serious observer of the central African scene had been aware from the beginning of August that Rwandan and Ugandan troops were on Congolese soil, it seems astonishing that Mandela had to await this enlightenment from Nujoma.

A more charitable interpretation would see Mandela's statement as a selfless effort to broaden the peace process, albeit in uncertain hands.

So surprising was Mandela's intervention that there was some speculation that South Africa was genuinely concerned that Mugabe's continued commitment in the Congo could destabilise Zimbabwe.

As it happened, the Durban decision paved the way for a set of regional meetings on the Congo that proved almost totally fruitless and left the initiative fully in the hands of the armies of the two opposing alliances.

Whether this experience will contribute to the diplomatic lessons learnt in Pretoria, in particular, must be open to doubt.

There still seems to be little clarity about the doctrines to be applied in addressing the problems of incipient conflict in the region, most of which have internal as opposed to external origins

The Congo crisis has both internal and external dynamics. Until yesterday, the Lesotho crisis was entirely internally driven.

The question then arises whether Mandela's Durban statement represented a watershed in the South African approach to all political disputes threatening regional peace.

Did it signify that South Africa was at last going to adopt the regional role commensurate with its relative size and power?



Or is this latest intervention merely a one-off, provoked by South Africa's concerns that instability was becoming endemic in Lesotho and that the principal players seemed impervious to rational debate?

Almost all the political crises and alarms that have shaken the benighted kingdom since 1994 have demonstrated the difficulty of getting the protagonists to sit down and discuss their differences with a view to finding an acceptable solution short of absolute victory for one side or the other.

This is national politics at a "parish pump" scale, with all the personal animus and lack of skills this term implies.

Matters appear to have been compounded by the way in which the findings of the Langa report into the disputed Lesotho election were handled and delivered

No clear recommendations emerged from this commission, and there were suspicions that it had been tampered with to avoid creating offence.

Now the Lesotho cabinet, virtually impotent to reduce or contain the political anger building in Maseru, has asked for assistance from four other regional states – South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Its foreign minister hints that King Letsie III, the titular head of state, is conniving with the opposition in defiance of the constitution.

The South African response, though possibly justifiable in terms of the threatening anarchy in Maseru, where police and army units were ranged against each other, can be only an emergency measure.

Whether it will facilitate or hinder a political solution remains to be seen. A more resolute and even-handed political and diplomatic initiative would possibly have made the military option unnecessary.

Now that blood has been spilt and the opposition convinced of South Africa's partiality in the matter, it will be even more difficult to convince hard-headed politicians of the need to compromise.

It would be a pity, indeed, if the Lesotho intervention does signify a sea-change in South Africa's approach to regional crises. Hard cases make for bad law

The best we can now hope for is that this crisis will help us to realise that the polite and evasive language of diplomacy is singularly unsuited to addressing those of the region's problems created or exacerbated by personal ambition, greed and simple incompetence.

This crisis has been at least four years in the making: straighter talking at the outset might have allowed us to escape the current tragedy – Star Foreign Service

Mountain refuge for scattered clans has, over decades, fought off many enemies, including Zulus,

Tales of many wars and woes

SAdv-23/9/98 (167)

STAFF REPORTERS

Lesotho began as a mountain refuge for scattered clans fleeing the wars of Imfecane in the early 19th century.

Under the leadership of Chief Moshoeshoe who welded these refuges into the Basotho nation, they held their hilltops against Zulu, Ndebele, Briton and Boer, until 1868 when Moshoeshoe secured British protection against the Vrystaaters

His great grandson, King Moshoeshoe II became the country's head of state at independence.

In the 1960 elections Chief Leabua Jonathan's party was soundly defeated The dominant political force then was Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) with its close links with South Africa's ANC and Dr Kwame Nkrumah's Pan Africanism (after 1962, claiming plots against him in the ANC, Mokhehle switched his friendship to the Pan Africanist Congress)

Jonathan's narrow victory in the 1965 election was thanks to South African organisational and financial support He soon found himself in conflict with the young king who demanded some measure of power

The King was placed under house arrest and later exiled He returned from exile in The Netherlands in December 1970 after accepting a proclamation that prohibited him from taking part in politics

As the last results came in during the 1970 election, Chief Jonathan declared a state of emergency and detained opposition BCP members until 1971 He dissolved the elected parliament and replaced it with a National Assembly which consisted exclusively of appointed members The country became a one party state

The BCP attacked police posts in 1974 but were put down with reported brutality

Some analysts trace the seeds of the current conflict to Jonathan's 1970 coup His actions antagonised the king and polarised the country, compelling the opposition to form The Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) He also built a powerful army

He also antagonised the apartheid government, which sent then Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha on numerous occasions to the kingdom to complain about their intelligence on ANC activities there.

Lesotho complained about the cross border activities of the LLA, which operated out of South Africa

> **Soon found himself in conflict with young king**

This impasse culminated in a blockade" by the apartheid government in 1986, which resulted in a military coup by Major General Metsing Lekhanya

Under Lekhanya's chairmanship, the Military Council cracked down on ANC structures within Lesotho

One of the things the military government did was to commission a new flag, hoisted for the first time on January 19, 1987, the anniversary of the coup. Exiles began returning in mid 1988, among them BCP leader Ntsu Mokhehle, but were warned to stay out of politics

In March 1990, after disagreements with Lekhanya, King Moshoeshoe was stripped of his crown and powers as head of state, and forced into exile again

In his place, the military government installed his 27 year-old son Prince Mohato as King Letsie III, who had to give a public oath at his swearing in ceremony not to involve the monarchy in politics

On April 30 1991 Major General Lekhanya was ousted as chairman of the Military Council and replaced by Colonel Elias Pishona Ramaema

The lightening-quick coup was believed to have been carried out by rank and file junior elements of Lesotho's defence force, after demands for a pay rise failed.

Ntsu Mokhehle's BCP won Lesotho's first multiparty democratic elections in April 1993, but in August 1994 King Letsie III deposed Mokhehle's government, triggering a mass stayaway It took the conflict resolution efforts of regional leaders to restore order and for King Letsie to reinstate Mokhehle's government

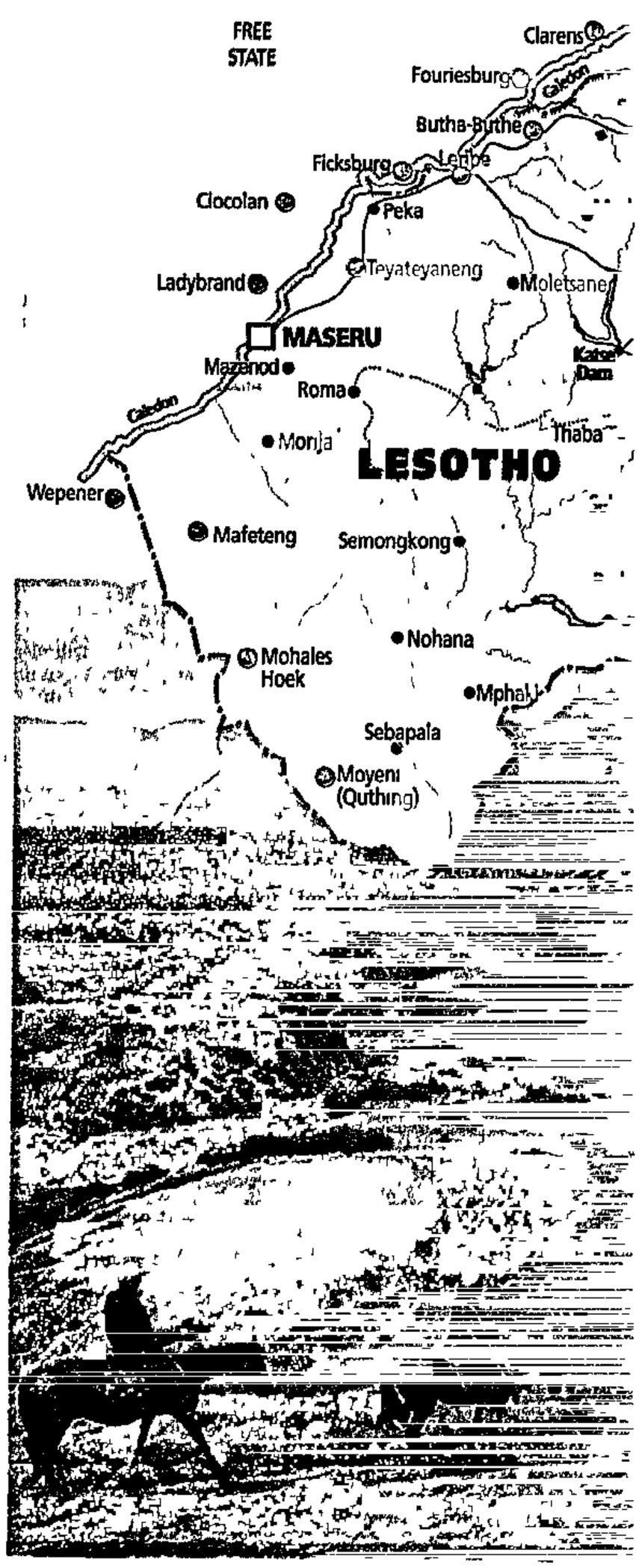
The Lesotho government had to present regular progress reports to the presidents of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa

King Moshoeshoe II regained his throne in January 1995, but died in a car accident in 1996 and was succeeded by Letsie again

In 1997, after a challenge from younger elements in the BCP, Mokhehle formed the Lesotho Congress for Democracy When the LCD won the elections in May by a landslide, the opposition parties, the BCP, the MaremaTlo Freedom Party and the Basotho National Party rejected the results and their supporters took to the streets

They accused the Independent Electoral Commission of bias and alleged that the poll had been rigged. Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa appointed Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa to head a probe into the election.

The Langa report, released last week, found some irregularities, but could not establish conclusively that the May election was totally rigged





The driver of the king s jeep was drunk when it plunged down a ravine, killing **King Moshoeshoe II** on the morning of January 15 1996



The dictatonal rule of **Chief Leabua Jonathan** lasted 20 years, until he was toppled by his military in 1986 He died of stomach cancer on April 5 1987



Ntsu Mokhehle waited in the wings through 40 years of struggle When he won the 1993 election, he could barely hear, speak or see



General Metsing Lekhanya kicked the ANC out of Lesotho. In February 1990 he took over control of both the executive and legislative functions



King Letsie III no longer has the power to dissolve parliament, or to appoint and remove the prime minister



Colonel Elias Ramaema took power in a bloodless coup in April 1991 but handed power over to an elected government in 1993



Acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi says Mokhehle's successor **Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili** is the author of the letter asking for military intervention

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Kt.

fought off many enemies, including Zulus, Britons and Boers



The tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho has about 2 million inhabitants.

It is surrounded totally by South Africa. Maseru, the capital, is the country's only urban centre.

Wool, mohair, maize and wheat sustain a poor economy. Only 16% of the land is arable, and even that is under threat of erosion

Jobs are scarce. About half the active adult population works in South Africa, mainly on the mines. Their earnings are an important source of income. Estimates put this at around 75% of the country's gross domestic product.

Lesotho mines diamonds in the mountains near Letseng-la-Terai, but production is variable.

An important development is the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a R19-billion joint South Africa Lesotho venture to build two dams in Lesotho.

Water from the project travels through 85km of channels from the Katse Dam in the Lesotho Highlands to Muela Dam, from where the water is channelled 30km to the Ash River, which crosses the SA border and eventually links with the Vaal River.

The project will supply water to SA households and industries and generate electricity for the mountain kingdom over a 30-year period.

Economy and resources

GDP purchasing power parity* $2,8-billion (1994 estimate)
GDP real growth rate* 13,5% (1994 estimate)
GDP per capita $1 430 (1994 estimate)
Industries* Food, beverages, textiles, handicrafts, construction, tourism
Agriculture Corn, wheat, pulses, sorghum, barley, livestock.
Exports. $142-million (fob, 1994 estimate), clothing, furniture, footwear, wool
Trade partners. SA 39%, EU 22%, North and South America 33% (1993)
Imports $1-billion (cif, 1994 estimate)
Commodities Mainly corn, building materials, clothing vehicles, machinery medicines, petroleum products.
Partners. SA 83%, Asia 12%, EU 3% (1993)
Currency* 1 loti (L) = 100 lisente

Basic facts

Total area. 30 350sq km
Population* 1 970 781 (July 1996 estimate)
Population growth: 1 9% (1996 estimate)
Government: Modified constitutional monarchy
Legal system Based on English common law and Roman Dutch law
Suffrage 21 years of age, universal

Source: The World Factbook (1996)



Colonel Elias Ramaema took power in a bloodless coup in April 1991 but handed power over to an elected government in 1993



Acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi says Mokhehle's successor **Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili** is the author of the letter asking for military intervention

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Foray lacks clear doctrines

Star 28/9/98 (167)

By Richard Cornwell and Jakkie Potgieter
Africa Early Warning Programme,
Institute for Security Studies, Midrand

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Matters appear to have been compounded by the way in which the findings of the Langa report into the disputed Lesotho election were handled and delivered

No clear recommendations emerged from this commission, and there were suspicions that it had been tampered with to avoid creating offence.

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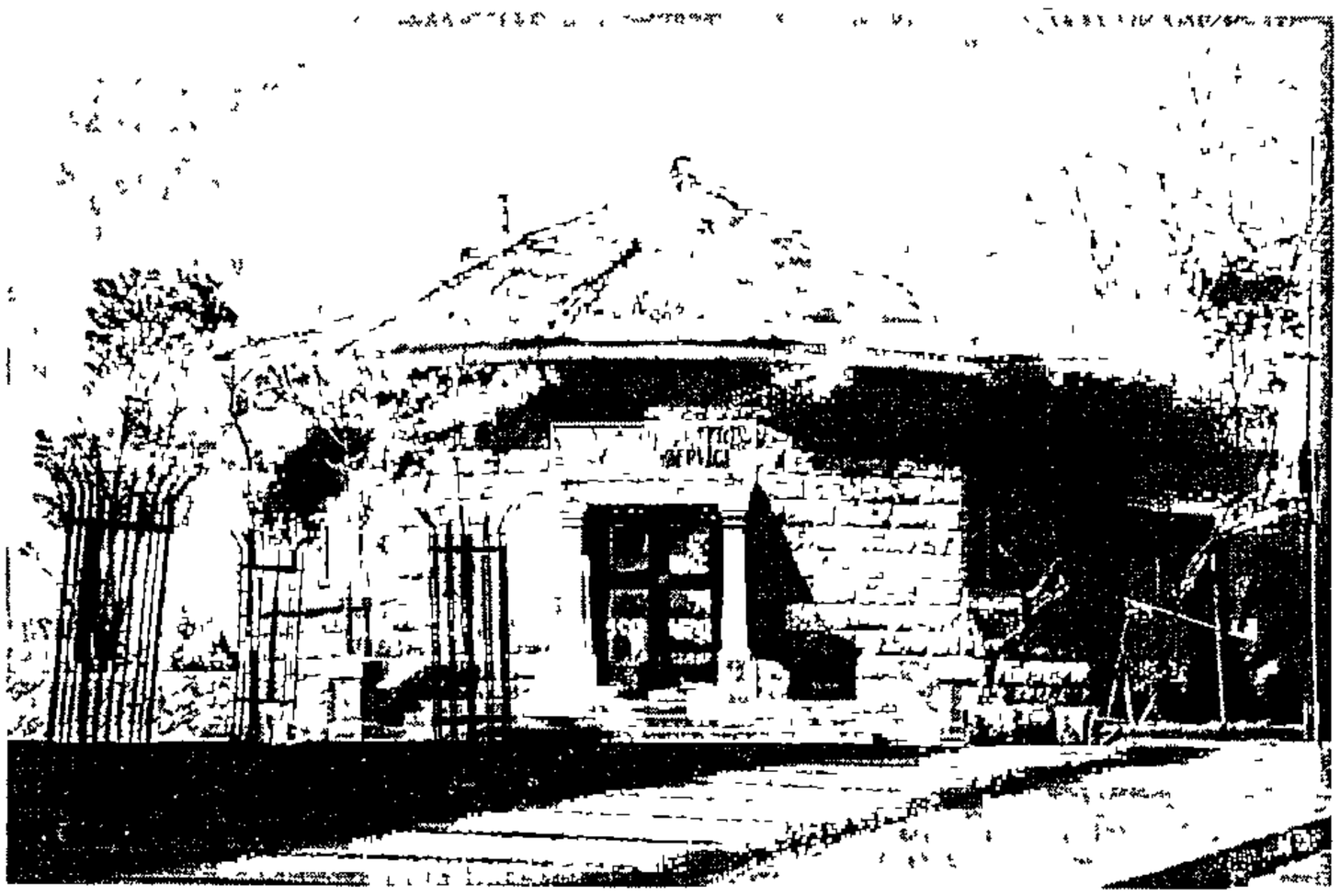
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Lesotho Post Office burns after being set alight by anti-government supporters protesting against SA National Defence Force troops being deployed in the country Picture AFP

Eight killed as looters burn shops and buildings

AT LEAST eight people are believed to have been killed and 60 wounded as looters and protesters burnt shops and government buildings, causing millions of rands worth of damage during demonstrations sparked by SA's "invasion" of Lesotho yesteday

THE SA National Defence force said SA casualties rose to five yesterday afternoon after two of the 18 SA soldiers wounded earlier in the day died in hospital

They were Capt Johan Nel, 27, of Krugersdorp, and Sgt Jeremy Sax, 25, of Cape Town Three others were shot dead in skirmishes with Lesotho soldiers

The Red Cross said more than six Basotho civilians had died and 56 injured There were no figures available for casuaties sustained by the Lesotho army

Prince Seeiso, brother to Lesotho King Letsie, claimed a young man was shot in the head and killed in the palace grounds by SA soldiers

Government sources said ministers' residences had been burned down Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili's residence is also believed to have come under attack

SA-owned shops were set ablaze amid intense anti-SA sentiment from the locals Five people were certified dead on arrival at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Maseru after street clashes

Hospital superintendent Dr Piet McPherson said late yesterday afternoon 54 people were taken to the hospital, most with bullet wounds He said 29 were shot while 11 were injured in road accidents during the unrest

SA stores, including OK Bazaars, Beares and Ackermans, were set alight in the main street of the capital Cars with SA number plates were stoned

Maseru burns, foreigners flee after invasion

Kevin O' Grady

MASERU — As dusk fell on Lesotho's capital last night, hiding the thick plumes of smoke from burning buildings, hundreds of foreigners were besieging the border post at Maseru Bridge in an attempt to flee the country before nightfall

Fires raging in Maseru's plundered central business district could still be seen from kilometres away, and looters continued to drag their booty out into streets strewn with glass and makeshift barricades

Other bands of young men patrolled the streets in vehicles, hooting and shouting verbal abuse at people they perceived to be foreigners or South Africans Every so often an SA National Defence Force (SANDF) convoy of armoured personnel carriers and Ratels trundled through the streets, paying scant attention to the looting and mayhem around them

The once thriving capital will this morning start to count the cost of yesterday's incursion by SANDF and Botswana Defence Force troops

The dawn invasion, at the request of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, sparked such outrage among Maseru residents that by late yesterday there were few properties in the city that remained unscathed SA and Lesotho-owned businesses were indiscriminately targeted, along with government-owned premises and vehicles

Staff at the Maseru Sun hotel adopted emergency procedures and were busy evacuating the last remaining guests Americans, Germans and other foreigners were making their way to the nearby US embassy, where they were given refuge while they awaited an army escort to the border posts

Outside the palace of King Letsie III in central Maseru, opposition supporters kept vigil in a tense stand-off with five SANDF armoured vehicles They could not understand how a relatively peaceful six-week protest against the results of Lesotho's May elections could have this outcome "We hate South Africans now, we hate all foreigners We don't want you here," one man shouted.

Motorists with foreign registration plates were urged to remove them soon after crossing the border to minimise the risk of attack by angry residents

Even this was no guarantee At a barricade on the eastern side of the city, motorists were threatened and manhandled by angry young men There were also reports of foreigners being searched and stripped of their possessions, including vehicles.

Ashraf Abubaker, a businessman, third-generation Lesotho citizen and personal friend of the king, said it would be difficult and costly for the city and the country to recover from yesterday's rioting

Abubaker, who planned to evacuate his family last night, said many businesses would go under as they had no insurance cover for political violence and would be unable to service loans or pay bills

Maseru was practically deserted as night fell and streams of vehicles ferried frightened foreigners across the border Hotels in small Free State towns like Ladybrand experienced an unexpected boom.

Coup justified Lesotho incursion, says SA

BD 23/9/98

(167)

Reports by Kevin O'Grady, Candi Ratabane Ramainoane, Wyndham Hartley, Taryn Lamberti, Pearl Sebolao, Sapa-AFP and Reuter

MASERU — As Lesotho's capital burned, SA justified its decision to send troops into the country, saying a coup had effectively taken place

At least 10 people were killed yesterday, including five SA soldiers, and scores were injured as some Lesotho soldiers resisted the incursion

The capital city erupted in flames yesterday as buildings were burnt and looted A source said fighting was continuing at Makonyane military base outside Maseru last night.

There were further reports of gunfire late into the night, while looting continued unabated with no soldiers or police in sight. The main targets were SA-owned shops, but other foreign-owned shops were also attacked. Anti-SA sentiment was running high

Lesotho's opposition parties expressed outrage at what they described as an act of aggression by SA. They claimed the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy had abandoned the country's constitution by inviting Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention.

The houses of deputy prime minister Kedibone Maope and Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili were burned down Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said his house was hit by bazooka fire.

The Maseru city centre was completely ravaged by rioting that erupted after the dawn invasion by 600 SA troops By late yesterday afternoon flames were still billowing from many buildings while others had long burnt out. Few remained untouched.

Looters continued to carry off furniture, appliances and clothing unhindered by SANDF troops, who seemed more preoccupied with the fighting still raging outside the city

The order to send SA troops to Lesotho as part of an SADC peacekeeping operation was taken by acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi in consultation with President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who are both abroad Buthelezi, as acting president, had the powers to give the order, said deputy presidential aide Ronnie Mamoepa

Buthelezi said Mosisili had asked for the intervention of SADC troops from SA and Botswana. About 200 Botswana troops set up camp near Ladybrand last night. They are expected in Lesotho.



A SANDF member in Lesotho takes position near the king's palace. Picture AFP

The arrival of SA troops came as a "bombshell" to Lesotho's monarch, King Letsie III, who viewed it as an invasion, the king's brother said. Prince Seeiso said Letsie had telephoned Mandela in New York to confront him over the decision to send in troops "Of course the king is not happy about this How can he be happy when they are invading his country?"

Mosisili said he was unable to consult Letsie about a request for foreign military intervention because the monarch was part of the problem. The king harboured anti-government protesters in the grounds of his royal palace, he said

Mosisili also denied opposition claims that he acted unconstitutionally by requesting military intervention. "I used the Lesotho Defence Force Act, which empowers me as Minister of Defence, to invite foreign forces" There was nothing in his country's constitution saying the head of state should be the one to invite foreign troops, he said.

By late yesterday foreigners were being evacuated in droves Hundreds gathered at the US embassy for protection and hundreds more Chinese queued for visas at the Maseru Bridge border with SA.

SANDF spokesman Laverne Machine said SA troops drew fire at the palace, at two military bases and at the Katse Dam — part of the Lesotho highlands water project.

Ungovernable situation amounted to a coup, says Mufamadi

Taryn Lamberti

SAFETY and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi said the situation in Lesotho amounted to a coup because the ruling party was unable to give orders and the police were ineffectual.

Mufamadi headed a Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegation met in Pretoria yesterday

Mufamadi said mutineers in Lesotho refused to obey orders from the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, and were looting and hijacking government vehicles and taking them to the palace of King Letsie III.

The mutineers took control of the military last week by detaining 22 high-ranking army officers and by holding the commander of the army at gun-point, ordering him to resign and to dismiss 28 senior officers They had also taken control of the national radio station.

Mufamadi said SA was one of three countries, with Botswana and Zimbabwe, who were the guarantors of peace in Lesotho in terms of a 1994 SADC agreement

He said Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili had asked the SADC to intervene in an effort to "normalise" the situation, which was rapidly deteriorating.

Mufamadi said SA was a guarantor of peace in Lesotho "and that is the reason for the intervention by the troops from SA and Botswana They (the defence force) are enforcing SADC protocols with regard to coups which are unacceptable in the region," he said.

Mufamadi dismissed reports that the Lesotho people were against SA's military intervention as being "one-sided".

Mufamadi stressed the reason for SA's intervention was not to ensure the ruling and opposition parties negotiate over the findings of the Langa commission "because they have agreed to talk anyway". The reason for the intervention was that the parties needed to conduct their talks in conditions of stability, he said

Mufamadi expressed his sympathy to the families of the five SA soldiers who were killed yesterday. "Our forces were sent in to carry out an obligation we have as a member of the SADC family to stabilise another area of the family. There can be no debating our interdependence in the region. We have a joint responsibility to ensure that the interdependence occurs in a situation of stability," he said.

The political issues needed to be resolved by the people of Lesotho themselves "but if the security situation reaches a certain level of deterioration, then we must assume collective responsibility", he said

He did not know how long the situation would take to "normalise", or before SA troops would be withdrawn from the area

LESOTHO

Countdown to Lesotho invasion by SA troops

BD 23/9/98 (167)

Dustin Chick

May 18 1998: Three of Lesotho's main political parties lodge an urgent application in the Lesotho High Court asking for a postponement of the elections because of alleged irregularities. The Basotholand Congress Party, Basotho National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party ask for the postponement to enable the Independent Electoral Commission to investigate the allegations

May 19 1998: The Lesotho High Court reserves judgment on the application by political parties to have general elections postponed

May 20 1998: Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission welcomes the dismissal of the application The court said the electoral commission was wrong to deny political parties access to the voters' list, but said that the denial was not serious enough to result in a postponement.

May 23 1998: General elections go ahead as planned Early indications are that the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy party won more than 50 of the 80 seats in the national assembly

May 25 1998: Supporters of the three main opposition parties gather at the residence of Basotho National Party member Evurastus Sekhonyane in protest at the election result

May 27 1998: Opposition parties call on King Letsie III to reject the outcome of general elections, claiming they were rigged

May 29 1998: Lesotho's ruling party formally nominates former deputy prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili as prime minister and awaits confirmation by the king.

August 5 1998: A large crowd of people throng the road leading to the Royal Palace in Maseru during demonstrations against the new government The protesters, all supporters of the three main opposition parties, want to present a petition to the king

August 6 1998: Police use water cannons and rubber bullets to disperse several hundred protesters outside the parliament in Maseru Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, ministers and MPs are trapped inside parliament

August 10 1998: Lesotho government agrees to the appointment of a regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) committee to investigate opposition allegations of electoral fraud.

August 11 1998: The crisis in Lesotho deepens as opposition parties formally reject an SA-brokered deal, raising the spectre of violence and instability

August 12 1998: Lesotho armed forces fire teargas into a crowd of demonstrators who are camping at the palace, prompting an angry response

August 17 1998: At least two people are killed and more than 30 injured when the Lesotho police open fire on the supporters of the anti-election opposition alliance.

August 20 1998: Political division widens as the opposition alliance boycotts a meeting which was called by the government.

August 24 1998: The government takes another step towards legitimising its election victory by tabling a law in parliament enabling an SA-led international commission to open the ballot boxes of the disputed election

August 26 1998: SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki heads off a potential conflict between political parties by convincing them to wait for a final report into the disputed outcome of the May election

September 3 1998: Lesotho police and soldiers open fire on each other outside King Letsie III's palace, killing one civilian

September 9 1998: Opposition parties in Lesotho reject a proposal by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki that the findings of a probe into alleged electoral fraud in Lesotho should first be made public to SADC heads of state, ahead of Lesotho citizens.

September 17 1998: The report following the Langa commission probe into Lesotho's elections is released and says the commission has serious concerns about apparent irregularities and discrepancies, but is unable to say conclusively that the elections should be declared invalid

September 20 1998: Lesotho's ruling Congress for Democracy refuses to attend all-party talks aimed at ending the country's political crisis, citing lack of security for its delegates.

September 22 1998: Troops from SA and Botswana cross the border into Lesotho with the intention of restoring stability there.



Ntsu Mokhehle



General Metsing Lekhanya



Colonel Elias Ramaema



Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said to be the author of the letter asking South Africa for military intervention

Foray lacks clear doctrines

ARG 23/9/98 (167)

RICHARD CORNWELL AND JAKKIE POTGIETER

The intervention in Lesotho by South African and Botswana forces raises several questions about the future posture of these governments to intervention in the internal affairs of other regional states, and the conditions under which this will be attempted.

Throughout the early stages of the larger crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Botswana had followed the line that internal political quarrels and systemic breakdowns were not amenable to military solutions, negotiation and political outcomes were what mattered if regional peace was to be assured in the longer term

This led to a serious rift between members of the Southern African Development Community, three of whose members – Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia – committed forces to the defence of the embattled Kabila regime in mid August, ostensibly under the banner of the SADC

A week later President Mandela, then chairman of SADC, repudiated this action at a summit in Pretoria, which Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe dismissed as "superfluous"

Yet September 3 provided one of the great surprises in the diplomacy surrounding the regional body's approach to the Congo crisis Mr Mandela suddenly announced at a news conference in Durban that the SADC had unanimously supported the military intervention in the Congo

"It is quite reasonable when the legitimate head of a government of a country says 'I have been invaded by a foreign force Come and help me defend my country ', for the neighbouring country to respond positively "

Mr Mandela's explanation for this potentially embarrassing about face was less than convincing "There was some confusion before But once Sam Nujoma gave me this explanation and he repeated it in the summit, we unanimously supported that initiative and expressly acknowledged President Kabila as the legitimate head of that government

"There is no difference whatsoever on this point now that explanations have been given "

Since any serious observer of the central African scene had been aware from the beginning of August that Rwandan and Ugandan troops were on Congolese soil, it seems astonishing that Mr Mandela had to await this enlightenment from President Nujoma.



A more charitable interpretation would see Mr Mandela's statement as a selfless effort to broaden the peace process, albeit in uncertain hands

So surprising was Mr Mandela's intervention that there was some speculation that South Africa was genuinely concerned that Mr Mugabe's continued commitment in the Congo could destabilise Zimbabwe

As it happened, the Durban decision paved the way for a set of regional meetings on the Congo that proved almost totally fruitless and left the initiative fully in the hands of the armies of the two opposing alliances

There still seems to be little clarity about the doctrines to be applied in addressing the problems of incipient conflict in the region, most of which have internal not external origins

The Congo crisis has both internal and external dynamics Until yesterday, the Lesotho crisis was entirely internally driven

The question then arises whether Mandela's Durban statement represented a watershed in the South African approach to all political disputes threatening regional peace

Did it signify that South Africa was at last going to adopt the regional role commensurate with its relative size and power? Or is this latest intervention merely a one off, provoked by South Africa's concerns that instability was becoming endemic in Lesotho and that the principal players seemed impervious to rational debate? Almost all the political crises and alarms that have shaken the benighted kingdom since 1994 have demonstrated the difficulty of getting the protagonists to sit down and discuss their differences with a view to finding an acceptable solution short of absolute victory for one side or the other

Matters appear to have been compounded by the way in which the findings of the Langa report into the disputed Lesotho election were handled and delivered

It would be a pity if the Lesotho intervention does signify a sea change in South Africa's approach to regional crises Hard cases make for bad law

The best we can now hope for is that this crisis will help us to realise that the polite and evasive language of diplomacy is singularly unsuited to addressing those of the region's problems created or exacerbated by personal ambition, greed and simple incompetence

This crisis has been at least four years in the making straighter talking at the outset might have allowed us to escape the current tragedy

Africa Early Warning Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Midrand

Year of living dangerously

Events leading up to yesterday's military intervention in Lesotho:

May 24-26: Ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) wins election Opposition parties allege fraud and warn of violence.
August 4: Opposition parties mount protest vigil outside King Letsie's palace.
August 5: Protesters storm parliament.
August 6-11: Soldiers patrol Maseru as hundreds of protesters continue round-the-clock vigil outside palace. Youths from blockade city to enforce mass stayaway.
August 10-13: Deputy President Thabo Mbeki brokers deal to allow electoral experts from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe to probe disputed poll
August 17: Two people shot dead and scores injured when police open fire on anti-government protesters.
September 3: One person killed, scores wounded when gunmen fire on protesters.
September 4: Policeman shot dead in fighting outside palace
September 10: Opposition parties warn of fresh unrest as po[illegible]s haggle over the release of a election fraud report.
September 11: Army chief Lieutenant-General Makhula Mosakeng resigns after he and senior commanders are taken prisoner by junior officers.
September 12-13: South African Defence Minister Joe Modise arrives in Maseru to discuss growing divisions within the Lesotho army Modise wins the release of army officers detained after a mini-mutiny by junior officers.
September 21: Foreign Minister Tom Thabane says Lesotho is teetering on brink of coup SADC says it will not tolerate overthrow of government.
September 22: About 600 South African soldiers enter Lesotho at dawn to prop up government. – Reuters

CAPE ARGUS

Lesotho conflict has d

Apartheid meddling played role

INSIDE STORY

The mountain kingdom of Lesotho has a history of often violent conflict that goes back to the last century, writes our correspondent from Johannesburg

Lesotho began as a mountain refuge for scattered clans fleeing the wars of Imfecane in the early 19th century

Under the leadership of Chief Moshoeshoe, who welded the refugees into the Basotho nation, they held hilltops against Zulu, Ndebele, Briton and Boer, until 1868 when Chief Moshoeshoe secured British protection against the Vrystaaters

His great-grandson, King Moshoeshoe II, became the country's head of state at independence

In the 1960 elections, Chief Leabua Jonathan's party was defeated

The dominant political force then was Ntsu Mokhehle's Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), which had close links with the African National Congress and Kwame Nkrumah's Pan Africanism (after 1962, claiming plots against him in the ANC, Mr Mokhehle switched allegiance to the Pan Africanist Congress)

Chief Jonathan's narrow victory in the 1965 election was thanks to South African support He found himself in conflict with the young king, who demanded a measure of power

The king was placed under house arrest and later exiled He returned from exile in The Netherlands in December 1970 after accepting a proclamation that prohibited him from taking part in politics

As the last results came in during the 1970 election, Chief Jonathan declared a state of emergency and detained opposition BCP members until 1971 He dissolved the elected parliament and replaced it with a National Assembly of appointed members The country became a one-party state

The BCP attacked police posts in 1974, but were put down

Some analysts trace the seeds of the present conflict to Chief Jonathan's 1970 coup

His actions antagonised the king and polarised the country The opposition then formed the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA)

Chief Jonathan antagonised the apartheid government, which sent then Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha on numerous visits to complain about their intelligence on African National Congress activities

Lesotho complained about the cross-border activities of the LLA, which operated out of South Africa

This impasse culminated in a "blockade" by the apartheid government in 1986, which resulted in a military coup by Metsing Lekhanya

General Lekhanya's Military Council cracked down on ANC structures within Lesotho

One of the things the military government did was to commission a new flag, hoisted for the first time on January 19 1987, the anniversary of the coup Exiles began returning in mid-1988, among them BCP leader Ntsu Mokhehle, but were warned to stay out of politics

In March 1990, after disagreements with General Lekhanya, King Moshoeshoe was stripped of his crown and forced into exile again

In his place, the military government installed his son, Prince Mohato as King Letsie III, who had to swear not to involve the crown in politics

On April 30 1991, General Lekhanya was ousted as chairman of the Military Council and replaced by Elias Pishona Ramaema

The coup was believed to have been carried out by juniors of the defence force over a pay dispute

Mr Mokhehle's BCP won Lesotho's first multiparty elections in April 1993, but in August 1994, King Letsie III deposed Mr Mokhehle's government, triggering a mass stayaway

It took the conflict resolution efforts of regional leaders to restore order and for King Letsie to reinstate Mr Mokhehle's government

The Lesotho government had to make regular progress reports to the presidents of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa

King Moshoeshoe II regained his throne in 1995, but died in a car accident in 1996 and was again succeeded by King Letsie

In 1997, after a challenge from elements in the BCP, Mr Mokhehle formed the Lesotho Congress for Democracy

When the LCD won the elections in May by a landslide, the BCP, the MaremaTlo Freedom Party and the Basotho National Party rejected the results

They accused the Independent Electoral Commission of bias and alleged the poll had been rigged Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa appointed Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa to head a probe into the election.

The Langa report, released last week, found some irregularities, but could not establish conclusively that the May election was totally rigged.



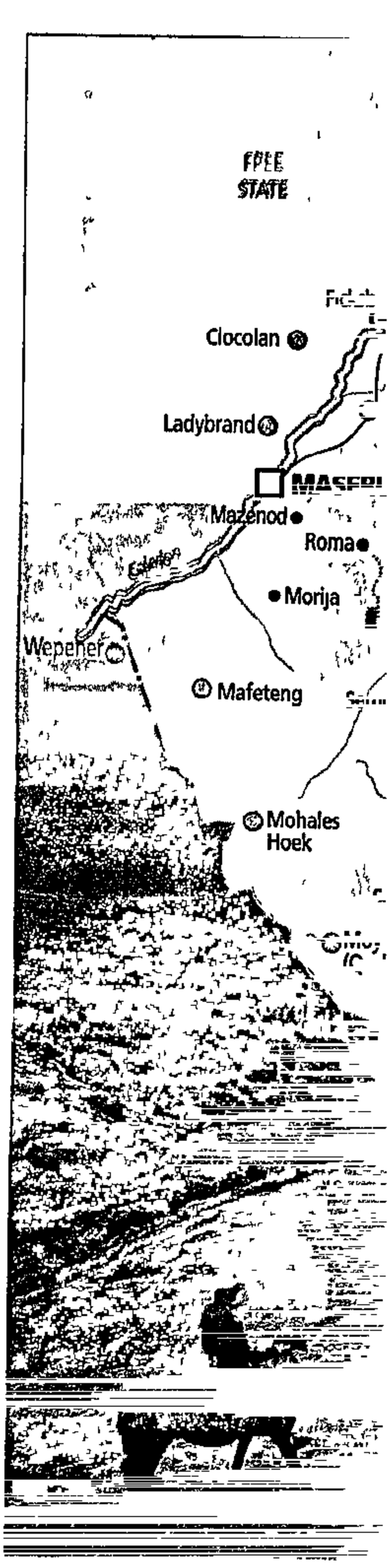
King Moshoeshoe II



Chief Leabua Jonathan

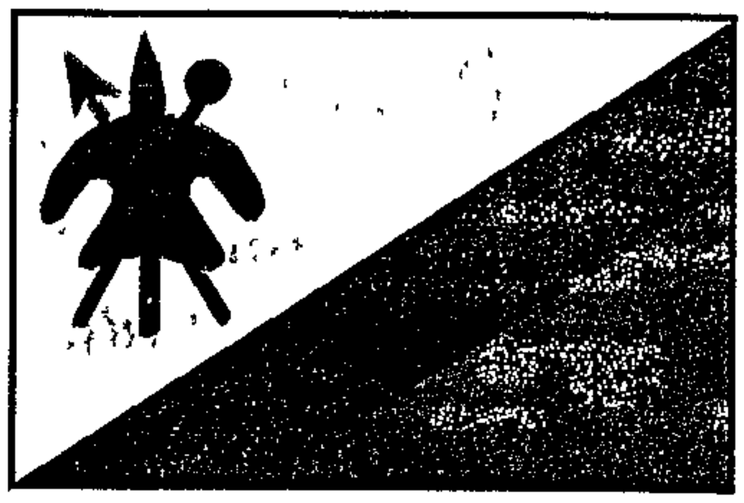


King Letsie II



has deep roots

(167) ARLT 23/9/98



The tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho has about 2 million inhabitants It is surrounded totally by South Africa Maseru, the capital, is the only urban centre.

Wool, mohair, maize and wheat sustain a poor economy. Only 16% of the land is arable, and even that is under threat of erosion

Jobs are scarce About half the active adult population works in South Africa, mainly on the mines Their earnings are an important source of income Estimates put this at around 75% of the country's gross domestic product

Lesotho mines diamonds in the mountains near Letseng-la-Terai, but production is variable

An important development is the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a R19-billion joint South Africa-Lesotho venture to build two dams in Lesotho

Water from the project travels through 35km of channels from the Katse Dam in the Lesotho Highlands to Muela Dam, from where the water is channelled 30km to the Ash River, which crosses the SA border and eventually links with the Vaal River

The project will supply water to SA households and industries and generate electricity for the kingdom over a 30-year period

Economy and resources

GDP purchasing power parity: $2,8-billion (1994 estimate)

GDP real growth rate: 13,5% (1994 estimate)

GDP per capita: $1 430 (1994 estimate)

Industries: food, beverages, textiles, handicrafts, construction, tourism

Agriculture: corn, wheat, pulses, sorghum, barley, livestock

Exports: $142-million (1994 estimate) clothing, furniture, footwear, wool

Trade partners SA 39%, EU 22%, North and South America 33% (1993)

Imports $1-billion (1994 estimate)

Currency: 1 loti (L) = 100 lisente

Basic facts

Total area: 30 350km²

Population 1 970 781 (July 1996 estimate)

Government modified constitutional monarchy

Legal system Based on English common law and Roman Dutch law

Suffrage: 21 years of age, universal

■ *Source The World Factbook (1996)*

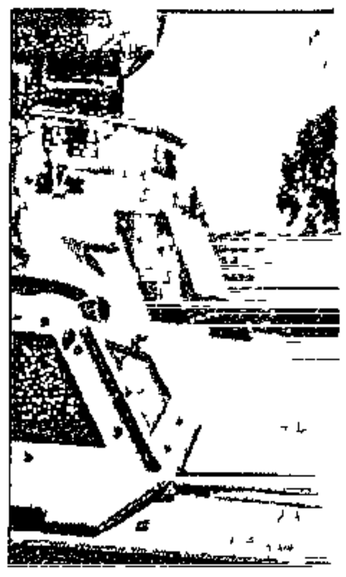


Dead in action: medic Jerome Sax, with his girlfriend Vluggie Landman

'He lived – BOTHA

Pals and family





STAFF REPORTER

Friends and family of Jerome Sax, the Cape Town man killed in action in Lesotho, said today he was a career soldier who would not have wanted to die any other way

Sergeant Sax, 24, a medic with 44 Parachute Battalion, apparently was killed in an ambush when South African troops entered the conflict-torn mountain kingdom.

Family friend Stan Maher said "I don't think he would have wanted to die any other way, being shot in a foreign country, fighting for his country, and not in a car crash or any other way

"As a medic, he was a highly trained soldier and he always wanted to be part of an élite unit He was a career soldier"

Close friend Patrick McArthy agreed "He ate slept and drank the military"

Jerome's mother, Faith, had confirmation of his death yesterday afternoon, when a military chaplain visited the family's home in Harfield Village

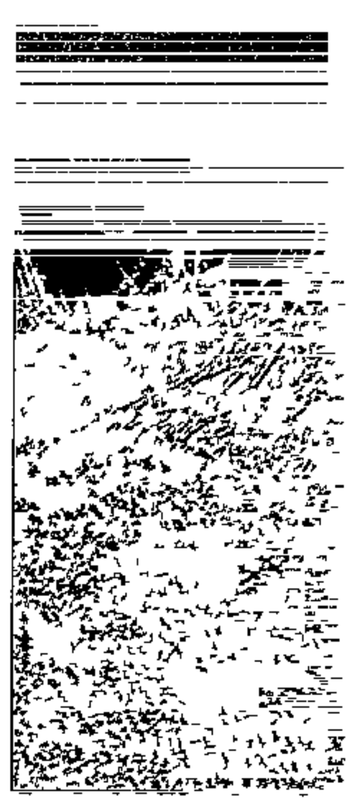
She had a call from Jerome a few days ago saying that he would be deployed, but he did not say where

When she heard about troops going into Lesotho yesterday she guessed that was where he was

Mr Maher said Mrs Sax was distressed and did directly to the media

He said she had a feared for Jerome's always wanted to b action

Close friends at the Sax home in as



First aid: a military me troops in a bid to restore

Pamphlet explained intervention

(167) ARG 23/9/98

A pamphlet distributed by the task force to Lesotho citizens said the objectives of the intervention were to prevent anarchy and, once this had been achieved, to create a stable environment for the restoration of law and order.

Under the heading, "Attention People of Lesotho", the pamphlet, distributed yesterday, said "Your friends, the Southern African Development Community, are assisting in resolving the current crisis situation in Lesotho A special military force consisting of the Botswana and South African national defence forces has been mobilised"

The pamphlet advised that military aggression would not be tolerated

It ordered rebels to hand over their weapons to the task force in order to escape prosecution

The pamphlet said the combined task force "Boleas" was a legitimate SADC force

"It is professional and apolitical and will protect all citizens of Lesotho and their belongings fairly and humanely"

But reporters in the area today said it appeared the task force had obviously failed yesterday to secure the Maseru town centre

In the chaos that ensued after the South African soldiers arrived, there was widespread looting and arson

South African chain stores, in particular, were targets





uggie Landman

'He lived – and died – for military'

Pals and family mourn city man killed in Lesotho

ARG 23/9/98 (167)



ANDREA BOTHA

STAFF REPORTER

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Mr Maher said Mrs Sax was distressed and did not want to talk directly to the media.

He said she had apparently always feared for Jerome's safety, as he had always wanted to be part of military action.

Close friends and family went to the Sax home in as soon as they heard about his death Surrounded by pictures of Jerome with his favourite cat, Mars Bar, and his girlfriend, Vluggie Landman, the family described him as a gentle and loving person.

They said he lived for the military and dressed up in khaki uniform at the age of three.

Childhood friend Holly Birkby said "He was the most beautiful guy

"He had a mischievous sense of humour and he got on with everyone "

Mr McArthy said Jerome had wanted to be the best and had "pretty much lived for the military"

Mr Maher said he felt very angry about the South African incursion into Lesotho

"It seems to me a totally pointless and amateur decision to send troops in to a situation where the generals had run away, and the military were backing the opposition . the only thing we could do was becoming the jam in the sandwich.

"It seems an extremely ill-conceived and amateur operation I don't know what they hoped to achieve

"There's an empty house here, a kid will never come back It just seems a pointless waste "

Sergeant Sax, who would have turned 25 on October 16, grew up in Cape Town, and went to Michael Oak Waldorf School in Kenilworth and the Constantia Waldorf School.

The only books on his shelf had been about the Special Air Services, the Foreign Legion, and the special forces, said Mr Maher

He felt he had "found himself" for the first time when he joined the defence force

He had won his normal Parabat wings and gone on to get silver wings for freefall and night jumps

He was a crack shot and knowledgeable about a wide range of weapons

"He was an expert, thoroughly conscientious, professional soldier He was a very crisp, clear, brave kid."

Sergeant Sax's girlfriend, Vluggie Landman, in Bloemfontein, was the first to hear the news

His sister Rachel, 27, was with her mother last night.

Jerome's father, Leigh, a fund-raiser for the Quaker Peace Centre, is visiting Switzerland, but has been told of his son's death – Additional reporting by Sapa



ASSOCIATED PRESS

First aid: a military medic attends to an injured South African soldier while under fire in Maseru yesterday after South Africa sent in troops in a bid to restore peace in the kingdom

laimed in terror

King 'bitter' at SA action

Maseru – Lesotho's King Letsie III was "greatly embittered" by the deployment of SA troops in his kingdom – after he brokered a deal between the political parties on Monday night, said sources close to the monarch.

King Letsie apparently had convinced the government and opposition of the need for a political solution and this decision was due to be communicated to the Southern African Development Community task team yesterday

He was shocked to wake up to the presence of foreign troops and the sounds of gunfire outside his palace, said the sources

"Had he been consulted, he would have been able to tell them he had brokered a deal," the sources said

His brother, Prince Seiso, said King Letsie had telephoned President Mandela in New York to confront him over the decision to send in troops – Sapa-AFP, Staff Reporter

Battle for ruins of Maseru

Troops fight looters after night of chaos

(167) ARGUS 23/9/98

Maseru – Botswana soldiers and Lesotho police battled in the streets of the gutted Lesotho capital today to control bands of looters after heavy fighting overnight.

Journalists saw dozens of armoured vehicles armed with cannon crossing from South Africa into Lesotho early today to reinforce the 600 men sent in on Tuesday

On the streets it was soldiers from Botswana who helped Lesotho police trying to stop the looting and burning that had gone on through the night

Correspondents and television crews watching from rooftops saw no sign through the night of Botswana or South African soldiers on the streets, giving looters a free hand to run riot through the town and burn the few shops still standing

A 3km row of shops was reduced to smouldering ruins after being stripped bare after the battle began yesterday South African-owned shops have been targeted

Today Lesotho police were seen firing automatic rifles at looters, while the Botswana Defence Force troops chased and arrested people fleeing with bundles of stolen goods

A director of Maseru's hospital said three more bodies were brought in overnight, pushing the possible death toll in the conflict to 33

Thick smoke covered the city as gangs of youths filtered through the streets, avoiding patrols and stealing whatever they could lay their hands on

"The situation in Lesotho has reached a high state of anarchy The government of Lesotho has been reduced to a position where it is unable to govern," said Botswana President Festus Mogae's senior permanent secretary Elijah Legwaila

With everything completely destroyed in Maseru, the looting rampage moved to villages on the outskirts of the city

At Masianokeng, 15km outside the city, new looting and destruction took place early today

Heavy gunbattles raged in central Maseru and in surrounding mountains yesterday while the mobs torched government buildings, businesses and anything associated with South Africa

By late last night, buildings were still burning

Drunken youths were at that stage in control of the city centre.

The privileged and the destitute alike descended on the capital and indulged in an orgy of looting

They came down from the hills in four-wheel-drive vehicles and vans, to loot whatever they could lay their hands on as dark smoke from burning buildings covered the skyline.

Strong anti-South Africa sentiments were expressed and drivers of SA-registered cars were singled out for harassment

"Does South Africa want to annex us? We will never give in to that! We don't want to be ruled by South Africa," said Maremaltlou Freedom Party leader Vincent Malebo.

On the "occupation" of the royal palace, he said: "What kind of respect is this that Mandela wants to show to our king?" – Reuters , Foreign Service

Maseru

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ARGT 23/9/98

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On the "occupation" of the royal palace, he said "What kind of respect is this that Mandela wants to show to our king?" – Reuters , Foreign Service



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Casualties of 'peace': dead South African soldiers in the back of a truck in Maseru yesterday

600 seek refuge in Ladybrand

Ladybrand – About 600 supporters of Lesotho's ruling party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, spent last night in a community hall in Ladybrand after fleeing across the Caledon River into the Free State.

The refugees – mostly elderly people, women and children – were picked up by members of 1 SA Infantry battalion from Bloemfontein last night.

A young woman from a village 5km outside Maseru said she was part of a group of 15 women and children who had forded the river and walked several kilometres before meeting up with other fleeing LCD supporters

The woman said she had fled her village after neighbours told her LCD supporters would be killed during the night.

Other refugees said opposition supporters had threatened to chop off their arms as a symbol of clipping the wings of the LCD flying bird emblem.

Many sat huddled around radio sets, anxiously awaiting an update on the situation in their country.

Meanwhile, South African reporters who crossed into Maseru this morning reported heavy-calibre gunfire in the east of the city. – Sapa

(167)

Road to intervention

CT 23/9/98

THE following is a chronology of events leading up to South Africa's military intervention yesterday

May 24-26: The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy wins a stunning victory in elections, but opposition parties allege electoral fraud and warn of violence if King Letsie fails to reject the results

May 28: Ruling party nominates Pakalitha Mosisili to succeed ailing 79-year-old Ntsu Mokhehle as prime minister A new cabinet is sworn in on June 4

August 5: About 1 000 protesters storm parliament as Mosisili addresses nation to calm tensions.

August 10-13: SA's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki brokers a deal among parties to allow electoral experts from SA, Botswana, and Zimbabwe to probe the poll

August 17: Two people are shot dead and scores injured when police open fire on protesters

September 3: One person is shot dead and scores are wounded when gunmen open fire on protesters

September 10: Opposition parties warn of new unrest as politicians haggle over release of a report by a regional inquiry probing possible election fraud

September 21: Foreign Minister Tom Thabane says his country is teetering on the brink of a coup. The Southern African Development Community says it will not tolerate the overthrow of the government.

September 22: About 600 South African soldiers enter Lesotho at dawn to prop up Mosisili's government amid reports of an army mutiny — Reuter

'Everything South African is burning'

(167) ET 23/9/98

THERE was chaos in Lesotho yesterday as looting mobs went on the rampage and anti-South African sentiment reached a peak, reports **SIMON ZWANE** of the Independent Foreign Service

MASERU Lesotho citizens and the country's army yesterday vented their anger at what they described as a South African invasion of their kingdom

Heavy gun battles raged in the city centre and in the surrounding mountains while mobs torched government buildings, South African businesses and anything else associated with South Africa

Twelve hours after the Southern African Development Community (SADC) troops from South Africa had entered the kingdom yesterday to restore political order, at least 30 people lay dead.

South African National Defence Force Captain Johan Nel 27, of Krugersdorp, and Sergeant Jerome Sax, 25, of Cape Town were among the five killed in post-apartheid South Africa's first foreign military foray

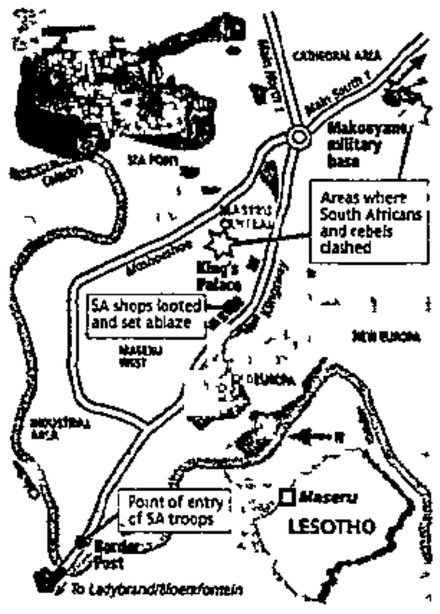
Nine other South Africans were injured and flown to hospitals in Bloemfontein and Lady Grey

It was estimated that up to 16 rebel Lesotho soldiers had died, with a number of others wounded by gunshot The other casualties were civilians.

Chinese and Indian business owners and foreign tourists took the little they could salvage and fled the country — some with their children — as their businesses were torched and plundered.

A convoy of more than 100 vehicles carrying foreign refugees waited to pass through the Lesotho border post into South Africa shortly after dusk yesterday as two bodies covered in grey blankets were unloaded from a Defence Force ratel personnel carrier by South African military officials

The refugees were stranded at the border for most of the day without visas Some had just received clearances to pass through the posts when the ratel arrived. Refugees and journalists watched and waited while military personnel unloaded the bodies.



INSIDE

THE BATTLE IN LESOTHO

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Miscalculation in Lesotho — PAGE 19

At the Makonyane army base on the outskirts of Maseru a heavy gun battle ensued as Lesotho soldiers fiercely resisted the SA soldiers

From the villages and smaller towns the rich and the poor descended on the capital like starving vultures and engaged in what is believed to be the country's worst plundering orgy

People came down from the hills — some running, others in four-wheel-drive vehicles and vans — to loot whatever they could lay their hands on as dark clouds of smoke from burning government buildings and torched shops billowed into the sky above the capital

Late into the night, buildings were still burning while angry, drunken mobs continued to roam the city

The buildings were torched by fleeing youths who had been forced out of the king's palace by the troops, who broke up a six week protest sit in demanding the resignation of the government

The previous evening unruly and drunken youths had engaged in criminal activity, hijacking cars in full view of local army and police officials, who looked on without raising a finger

By midday the streets were teeming with young children, women and men carrying an assortment of stolen property, including beds, furniture, music systems, food and liquor

A drunken woman staggering next to a burning shopping complex was robbed of her loot by youngsters who arrived too late to get anything valuable

The looting orgy spread to other areas outside the city, with residents attacking all businesses owned by outsiders. By late afternoon businesses owned by locals were also being targeted

Drunken youths, in stolen government and private vehicles with registration numbers removed, drove recklessly through the streets while others commandeered motorists to take their loot to their homes.

As the shops ran out of their wares, the looters turned on each other Street fights broke out as young boys fought each other for the spoils

The youngsters also turned on tourists and foreigners trying to escape the chaos, with some shouting anti-South African slogans They barricaded the main road to the Ladybrand border gate, forcing everyone in a foreign-registered car to give a bribe before passing through

● Sapa reports that Botswana Defence Force troops were deployed in Lesotho yesterday to conduct a joint military action with units of the SA National Defence Force. The action was confirmed by Elijah Legwaila, senior permanent secretary in the office of Botswana President Festus Mogae



CASUALTY The body of an unidentified South African soldier, who was shot dead yesterday in fighting with forces loyal to the Lesotho opposition lies in an armoured vehicle yesterday He was part of a peacekeeping force sent to Maseru PICTURE: AP



Going up in flames. Lesotho police stand guard as firefighters damp down the ruins of a burned building during riots and looting in Maseru yesterday

REUTERS

Enter Big Brother SA – to a baptism of blood and fire

Sea change for government

(167) ARG 23/9/98

The military intervention in to Lesotho by 600 South African troops in the name of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) yesterday was a fearful milestone for the new South Africa, on the first day that the democratic Government has deployed combat troops on foreign soil, it lost nine South African lives



PETER FABRICIUS

GROUP FOREIGN EDITOR

The decision to send troops into Lesotho appears to mark a sea change by the Government which until yesterday had doggedly and mostly unsuccessfully pursued the path of peaceful negotiations.

Now, after failing to persuade the quarrelling political parties in Lesotho to sit down and talk, it has wielded the big stick.

And, in doing so, it has changed forever its relationship with Lesotho and the region.

You could call it a loss of innocence, but one way or another it announced the arrival of a very different South Africa, Big Brother is bashful no longer

The effect has been a huge loss of popularity in Lesotho where opposition parties are comparing Mandela's Government to the destabilising old apartheid regime

But something had to be done about Lesotho where politicians of both sides have been behaving selfishly and irresponsibly for years, creating a dark hole of continuing instability at the heart of South Africa and threatening vital interests such as the gigantic Highlands water project.

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) must take some blame for fiddling the May 23 legislative election results to help secure a landslide victory for itself.

But the opposition has been, if anything, worse. It basically rejected the Langa Commission's report into alleged vote-rigging because it did not – could not – report what the opposition wanted – that the rigging would have changed the overall outcome of the election.

The opposition has shown every sign of wishing to avoid being put to the test of a fair ballot, trying instead to acquire power by what amounted to a creeping coup – engineering a mutiny of sympathetic junior officers against their LCD-appointed commanders, and instigating their supporters to hijack government vehicles and to prevent state officials from doing their jobs

It was the most irresponsible behaviour; destabilising the country and inviting intervention.

King Letsie III is now bleating that South Africa insulted the Lesotho constitution by intervening at the invitation of the LCD government and not him.

But he had already abrogated his constitutional rights by meddling in politics, on the side of the opposition.

The opposition clearly whipped up suspicion about the motives for the intervention which must be held accountable for much of the fierce resistance that the SADC force is encountering.

The aim of the mission does genuinely seem to be to create the conditions for real negotiations to resolve the impasse over the disputed elections and not to prop up the LCD government, as the opposition contends

The SADC, though, had helped create doubt about its motives by its incoherent and inconsistent actions in the past.

The Lesothan rebels no doubt had an eye on the recent intervention in the Congo by three SADC member countries which has merely served to prop up a bad leader

This was seen as the model for the Lesotho operation, especially because the SADC – including its chairman, President Mandela – retrospectively approved the Congo intervention at last week's SADC summit.

That made the SADC look like a club of fat-cat leaders whose first priority was to preserve their own jobs.

And the heavy and protracted fighting in Lesotho also suggests that South Africa has not heeded the military wisdom that if you use force, use it massively

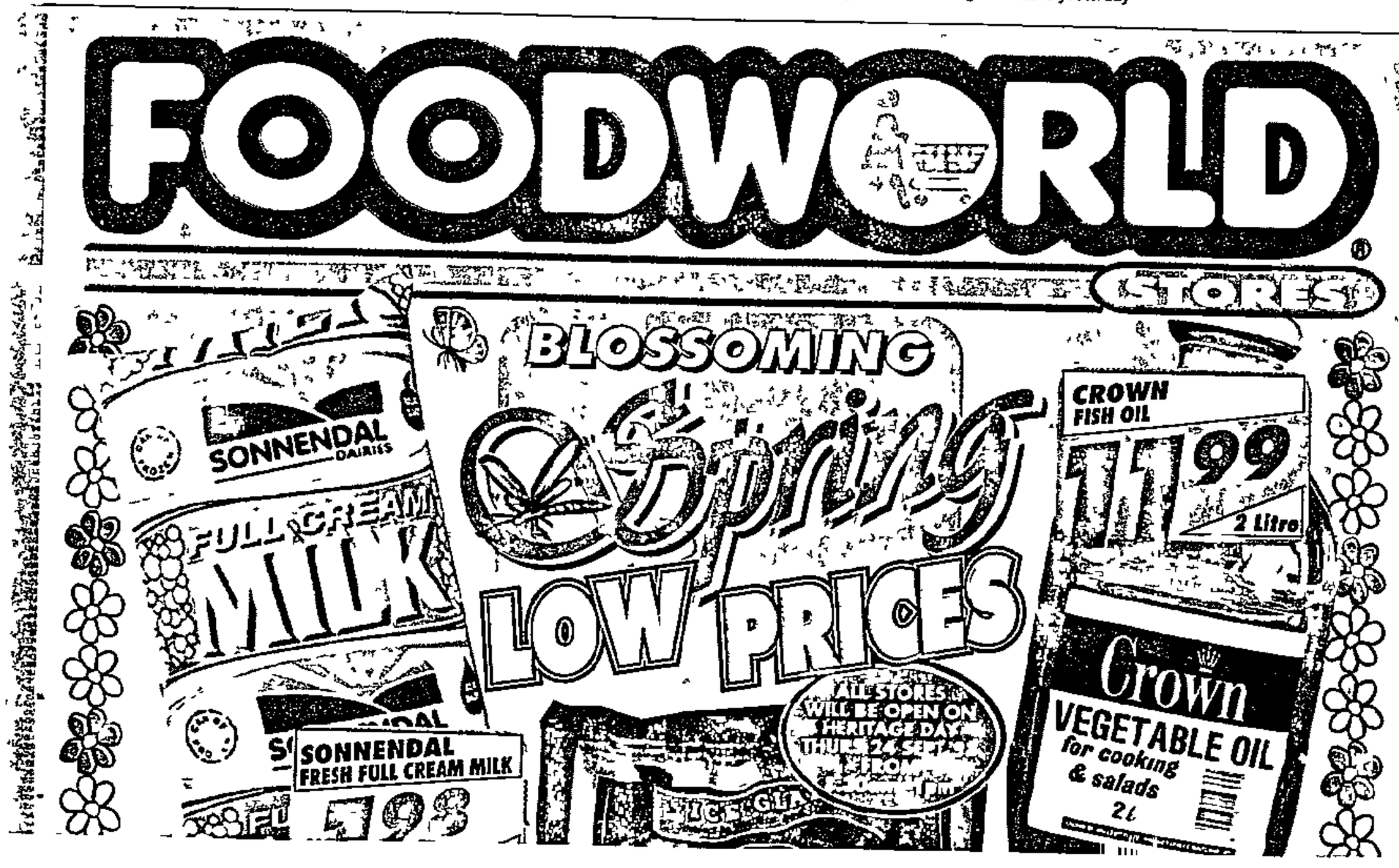
That could have minimised our casualties and prevented the rioting which has destroyed much of Maseru and severely undermined our claim to have gone there to restore order

Militarily, the operation was bungled because of poor intelligence about the likely level of resistance inexperience and lack of co-ordination with the Botswana forces, a day late

South Africa must move now to subdue the rebel forces quickly and then demonstrate its impartiality by putting pressure on both sides to hold new elections under neutral referees, although that may now be impossible after the bad start.

It must also impose a coherent intervention policy on the SADC

South Africa has taken a while to learn that being Mr Nice Guy cuts very little ice in this part of the world The Nice Guy image could not last forever But on Bloody Tuesday, it learnt very painfully that being Big Brother did not relieve us of the need for skill and finesse



'WE'LL FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE'

More troops rushed in as SA toll rises to nine

ARG 23/9/98

(167)

POLITICAL STAFF, REUTER AND SAPA

Troop reinforcements were rushed to Lesotho today as renewed fighting erupted and the South African death toll rose to nine

The deaths of four more soldiers during the night has prompted a drastic review of tactics, and a South African military spokesman vowed today to "fight fire with fire'

The spokesman added. "Where the peace forces started out by being circumspect in clashes, they will now shoot to kill."

The number of wounded rose to 17 About 40 dissident Lesotho soldiers had been killed in clashes the SA National Defence Force said in a statement.

Journalists saw dozens of armoured vehicles armed with cannon crossing from South Africa into Lesotho early today

Although most of the early reinforcements were from Botswana, a senior Government source said significant ' South African reinforcements would also be deployed.

The extra troops were sent in as the Southern African Development Comm unity task force continued to meet fierce resistance

Botswana soldiers and Lesotho police battled today to control bands of looters in the gutted ruins of Maseru after heavy fighting overnight.

On the streets it was soldiers from Botswana who helped Lesotho police trying to stop the looting and burning

Correspondents and television crews watching from rooftops saw no sign through the night of Botswana or SANDF soldiers on the streets, giving looters a free hand.





Set up visit: Constand Viljoen and Tony Leon

Early today renewed fighting also erupted again around the Makonyane military base outside Maseru and heavy mortar and rifle fire could be heard.

The base contains the main artillery armoury of the Lesotho Defence Force

But Lesotho opposition coalition spokeswoman Mamelo Morrison arrived in Cape Town today and said the Makonyane barracks, the only one that had resisted South African control, had fallen this morning.

Speaking to journalists after a brief meet ing with National Party leader Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Mrs Morrison said it was the only base that had refused to "succumb to South African control"

She was here to urge opposition parties to impress upon the Government that South Africa's role in Lesotho was "unnecessary"

Her visit was organised by Democratic Party leader Tony Leon and Freedom Front head Constand Viljoen

Meanwhile the de fence force said today that heavy artillery was being used by the rebel soldiers resisting the SADC force

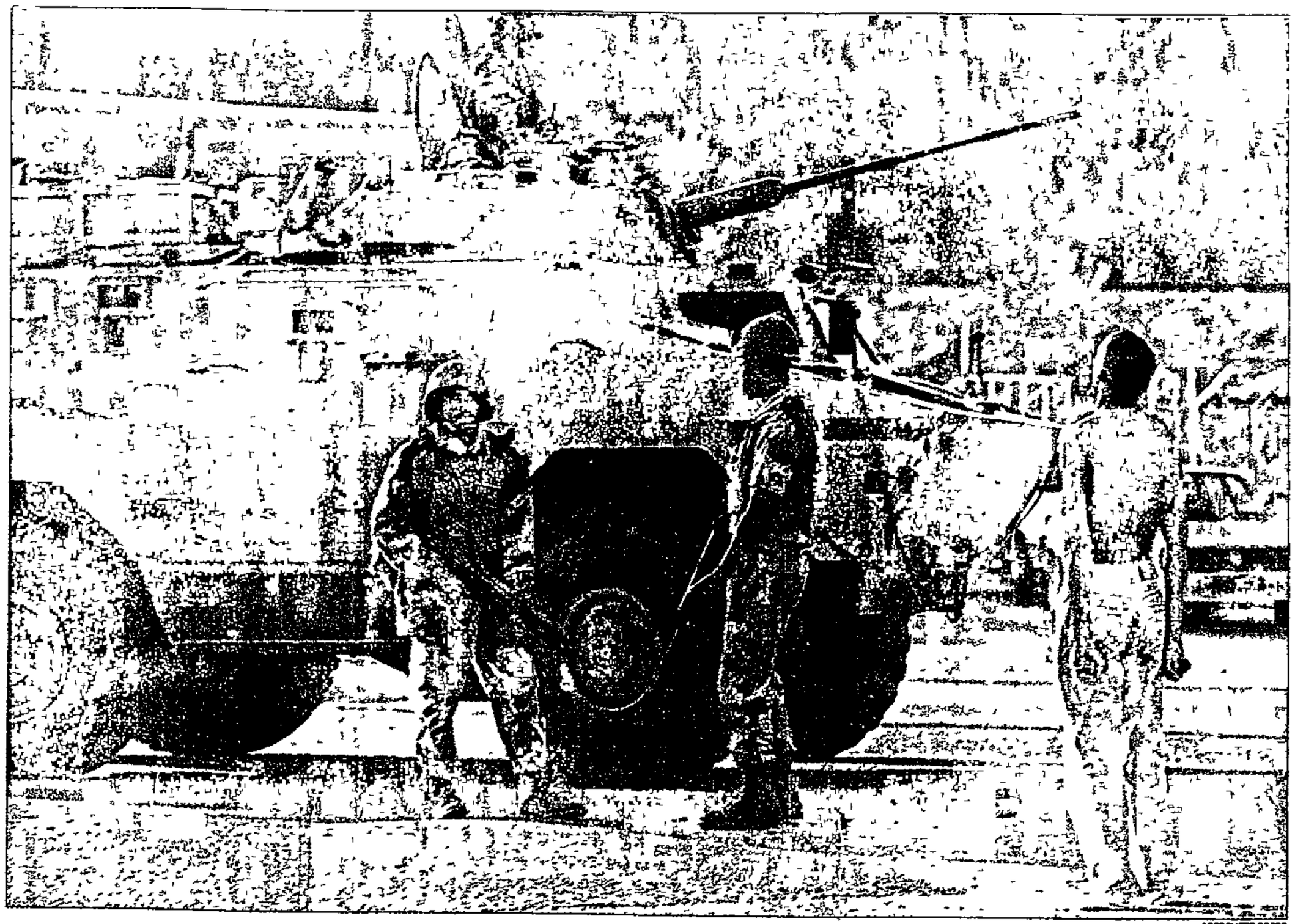
'As the toll mounts so we are taking off the gloves and will meet fire with fire," SANDF spokesman Laverne Machine said in Pretoria today

"We went in yesterday with a soft approach - and until late yesterday after noon that approach was the correct one But now the gloves are off '

Lieut-Colonel Machine said the combined task force had sufficient armour to subdue the rebel LDF soldiers.

But residents of Maseru this morning woke up to a city destroyed After a night of

To page 3



ASSOCIATED PRESS

We shall not be moved a Basotho man stands in the path of a South African armoured personnel carrier at the Ladybrand border post. Thousands of Lesotho citizens were outraged at the military incursion

P.T.O.

Troops rushed in as SA toll rises to nine

(167) ARG 23/9/98

From page 1

plundering and burning, the city centre was in ruins and residents were staring hunger in the face as all shops, banks and petrol stations are closed or burnt down

People needing food are compelled to travel to Ladybrand in South Africa for supplies

Nationals wanting to flee are hampered by a lack of public transport, and many foreign business people have already left

Botswana Defence Force troops, who moved into Maseru last night, had by this morning secured the gutted city centre. South African soldiers were still battling for control of the Makonyane military base

Soldiers who have taken to the mountains were still firing at the peacekeeping troops

Among the dead South African soldiers were Captain Johan Nel, 27, of Krugersdorp and Sergeant Jerome Sax, 25, of Cape Town – first casualties in post-apartheid South Africa's first foreign military foray

Injured South African soldiers were airlifted to Bloemfontein's 3 Military Hospital and Universitas Hospital. Other names have not yet been released as next of kin still have to be informed

At least 16 rebel soldiers were estimated to have been killed. The other fatalities were civilians

Chinese and Indian business people took their children and the little they could salvage and fled as businesses were set alight and plundered

Foreign tourists also fled Lesotho

Without visas, many of the business refugees spent hours at the border at an emergency home affairs facility before being given temporary shelter in Ladybrand

CAPE ARGUS ISSUES

SA's military intervention 'a mistake'

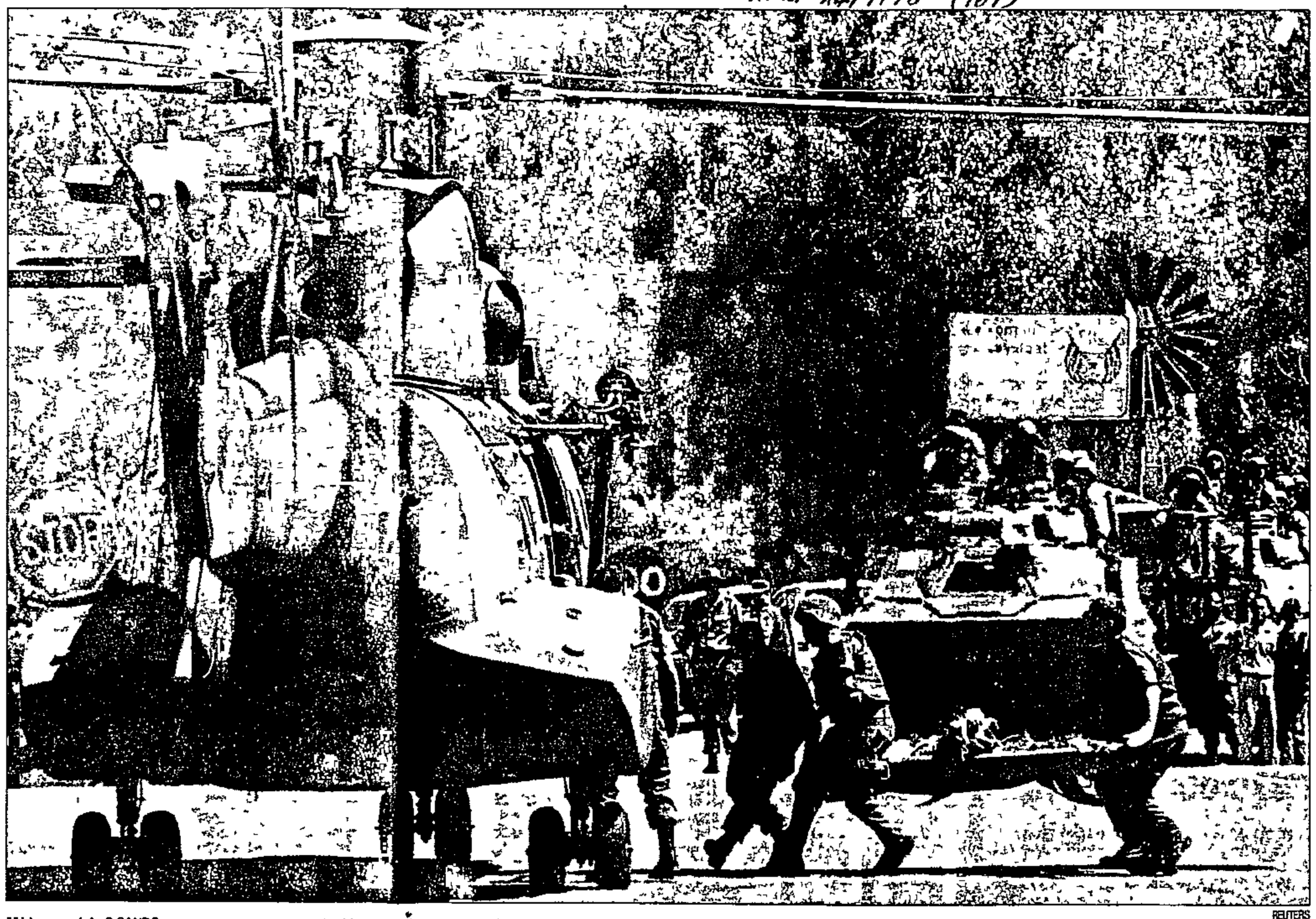
ARG 24/9/98 (167)

Lesotho will blame us for next 20 years – expert

INSIDE STORY



Questions as to whether South Africa's intervention in Lesotho was genuinely a strategic imperative, or merely an ill-advised adventure in political interference, have paled into insignificance against a reckoning of the costs of an expedition shot through with military and diplomatic error, say analysts Special Writer **MICHAEL MORRIS** reports



Military mistake? SANDF servicemen carry an injured soldier to a helicopter on the frontier yesterday after heavy shelling at Makonyane barracks. Analysts say a diplomatic solution to the crisis would have been better

REUTERS

The crackling of small arms fire provided a deceptively innocuous leitmotif in the initial radio reports from Maseru on Tuesday morning.

The sudden bold initiative – nominally at the behest of the Southern African Development Community, but essentially a South African foray – signalled a decisive shift in regional politics festering political dissent, and a creeping coup in Lesotho would not be tolerated

Armed intervention would the reasoning went forcefully create space for a desired negotiated solution to a mounting crisis.

But when Colonel Robbie Hartslief's 600-strong battalion rolled into the mountain kingdom to pursue its avowed ambition of "restoring order" or "keeping the peace", the neighbourly intent was confounded by a contradiction between tactical and strategic objectives

The force was not powerful enough to bring Lesotho's dissenters to their senses, but was more than inflammatory enough to enrage the populace and exacerbate an all but intractable political stand-off.

For a time, arson, looting and mayhem spread unchecked and, within 24 hours, the former British protectorate's economy was left in tatters

What now?

To Brigadier-General Bill Sass – a former South African Defence Force infantry officer and now military commentator for the Institute for Security Studies – there are only two off, the question is, who is going to help this economically poor country get back on its feet again, and how long will it take?

"For the next 20 years, Lesotho will blame South Africa for this"

He adds "One really feels that more could have been achieved by diplomacy, before sending in the troops

"And, from a tactical perspective, an urban, civilian setting is among the worst situations to be in – you don't know who you are meant to be shooting at, and you don t know where your enemy might be. It's very difficult, tactically"

Politically, the apparent unwillingness of President Mandela or his deputy Thabo Mbeki to cut short their foreign travels and attend the crisis is a telling deficiency

Armies, says Helmoed Romer Heitman, southern African correspondent for the authoritative Jane's Defence Weekly, are "blunt instruments" that, if they are to be used with effect, must be powerfully deployed.

"If you are going into the peacekeeping business, you must go in heavy One battalion is too small a force You want people to be overawed and refrain from shooting at you Once shooting starts, things begin to unravel."

Mr Romer-Heitman believes the fundamental misjudgment was probably an assumption that the bulk of

ern African Studies

"I think (the intervention) is a mistake, and the most inept handling of a very complex situation"

Not only is it "at variance" with South Africa s position on ar ned

Department of Foreign Affairs

"They have severely damaged very careful work by other departments – trade and industry, transport labour and water, to mention a few – to estab

'I have always wondered

infantry officer and now military commentator for the Institute for Security Studies – there are only two serious questions, and both "give cause for alarm"

"The first is, how do we get ourselves out of this entanglement? The second more pressing one, is how is the shattered Lesotho economy going to recover?"

There is not much scope for a quick withdrawal, he argues, because the intervention itself has heightened the conflict and necessitated a forceful presence

"We cannot just pull out, because that will leave a vacuum This is not going to blow over quickly and there does not seem to be certainty about what it is we hope to achieve there.

"So for South Africa and the SADC the first long-term problem will be finding a way to withdraw with honour, and with an acceptable achievement in place," he says.

"The economic challenge is more difficult. With all the buildings having been burned, businesses destroyed and investors frightened

fundamental misjudgment was probably an assumption that the bulk of the populace would support South Africa's intervention because of the majority support for the elected government. But, once the shooting started, anger flared.

What of the military capacity, the aptitude of the troops and their commanders?

"Without doubt," he says, "the casualties are extraordinarily heavy for a force this size under these circumstances, but it does not mean the troops are badly trained, or their officers inept. It could just be bad luck.

"It's very easy to nit pick, and there's no doubt (Colonel) Robbie Hartslief has plenty of practical experience

"The key thing is that his force should have been bigger – three or four battalions at least. If I'd been in his shoes, I would have preferred not to go in at all."

One of the fiercest critics of the exercise so far is Dot Keet, senior research fellow at the University of the Western Cape's Centre for South-

Not only is it "at variance" with South Africa's position on armed intervention in Congo, but it is "clearly inconsistent" with the country's handling of complex economic relations with neighbouring countries.

"The inept handling of this situation by the military and foreign affairs will impact on more fundamental economic negotiations

"The paradox is that it is South Africa's very military might that prevents it from playing a role in direct peace-keeping because it could not afford to use its might.

"So, we have an absurdly anomalous situation where the continent's most powerful country has muscled in on the smallest, poorest country and is effectively prevented from asserting its will.

"A situation that was complex and unstable, but not violent, has now become seriously violent, and South Africa will have to pay for that damage," says Ms Keet.

"This testifies to a serious lack of understanding of the politics of southern Africa in the military and the

ments – trade and industry, transport, labour and water, to mention a few – to establish agreed programmes and methods of working with neighbours.

"There is a great deal of distrust in southern Africa and this will deepen the suspicion."

The prospect of any good coming from the military intervention is also doubted by Richard Cornwell of the Institute for Security Studies

He comments "There has to be a political settlement but the chances of achieving that have been thrown into doubt by South Africa's intervention Instead of dousing the flames, we have fuelled them.

"I am not convinced that all political and diplomatic avenues had been exhausted, and one of the chief difficulties now is how South Africa can withdraw with any confidence in the situation remaining stable

"The Lesotho defence force has been shattered and the police probably lack capacity."

"What was the contingency plan?" he wonders "The whole thing seems clouded in uncertainty"

Mbeki's reform vision must start at home

TYRONE SEALE



London – A single news bulletin on British television vividly illustrated the way South Africa is spreading itself about the international arena.

In one item of the Monday broadcast, a smiling President Mandela rose to give sex-shamed President Clinton a standing ovation at the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly in New York Another showed Deputy President Thabo Mbeki seated close to Queen Elizabeth II as she officially closed the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur

South Africa matters Or, at very least, likes to think it does.

Which explains why on Tuesday, another British television bulletin featured South African soldiers rounding up supporters of the political opposition in Lesotho, where a Southern African Development Community inquiry into the May 23 election has patently failed to allay suspicions that the governing party profited from a rigged poll.

Developments in Lesotho may have been at the back of the deputy president's mind in his plea to the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban three weeks ago

He robustly endorsed the growing clarion call, particularly among governments in the global south, for the transformation of multilateral institutions such as the UN and the World Bank to promote prosperity and development for all.

He noted that consensus on this wish was not unanimous "Clearly, any among us who is preoccupied with denying his or her people their democratic and human rights, who is fixated on waging war against others, who is too busy looting the public coffers or who thinks that he or she must bow in supplication for charity to those whose wealth sets them aside as the mighty, will not have the time to participate in meeting this historic challenge."

While the dust kicked up by South African tanks in Maseru settles and the SA National Defence Force prepares flags to drape over the coffins of soldiers killed in the mountain kingdom the Mbeki prophecy has assumed a chilling realism.

While the dust kicked up by our tanks in Maseru settles, his prophecy assumes a chilling realism

His troops crossed the border partly in defence of a regime with an established anti-democratic track record, the opposition in Lesotho is claiming that South Africa is waging war on the majority there, the looting in the streets of Maseru will continue; and the South African intervention demonstrates the correlation between this country's might and its wealth.

Of course, this is not the analysis Mr Mbeki had in mind when he implored the NAM to challenge the established world order, but then politics has a way of superimposing reality on rhetoric when you least expect it.

Intervention in Lesotho as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, begs questions about the intrinsic legitimacy and accountability of the SADC Is it one of those multilateral institutions the deputy president would like to see reformed?

In spite of gains achieved in economic co-operation, the SADC is still characterised by a potentially damaging blend of economic disparities and political divergence – not the stuff of which you'd expect the regional moral police to be made

Clashes of personality and ideology among SADC figureheads and necessarily subjective appraisals of the urgency of beckoning crises have inevitably led to some going it alone, as Zimbabwe did in the Congo As crisis management prevails, democratic decision-making retreats, and hard-earned solidarity is sacrificed.

The SADC is not the first strategic alliance to wrestle with these problems The European Union has elected cosmopolitan democracy as a way to pool aspects of individual countries' sovereignty and to set up effective courts of law

Voters in the EU's constituent states are given the right to elect national MPs and Euro MPs, the latter being European specialists based in Brussels.

Anthony Giddens, director of the London School of Economics and Political Science, sees the EU as an effective response to globalisation, the seemingly runaway process of transnational financial economic and political co-operation which, Mr Mbeki and others believe is bypassing the world's poorest countries

Mr Giddens admits the EU has its problems but says that in its economic role it is pioneering forms of governance that do not fit any traditional role He goes as far as suggesting that the European Parliament could be a model for a parliamentary assembly of the kind that has been suggested for the UN

It has been proposed in the case of the UN that parliaments of member states would first send representatives who would develop proposals for a directly elected assembly

For South Africa, supporting such reforms on the global political stage implies that it should advocate similar changes at SADC level.

Allowing the people of the region a say in what their governments do within regional forums does not mean every urgent execution of foreign policy has to be subjected to a referendum or marathon debate

As in all other instances of governance guidelines from the sidelines have their use in infusing leadership initiatives with popular opinion and spreading accountability across more than a roomful of talking heads – Independent Foreign Service

what it would like to be shot. It hurts' – reporter

SAM KILEY

Maseru – Reaching under his black and blue blanket worn as a cape the Basotho teenager pulled out an automatic rifle, released the safety catch and levelled his weapon at me.

Seven years of negotiating checkpoints in African war zones teaches you a lot about human nature In some cases you can bully, bluster or beg your way past gunmen This time there was no mistaking the calm deadly intent on the young man's face

After winding through numerous roadblocks manned by ever more aggressive Basotho enraged by the South African invasion of their country, I had slowed to a halt at what was less a barricade and more a military position I put my arms in the air out of the car and shouted that we were British journalists

The words had little effect other than to provoke several of the armed men to wave us closer forward. It was clearly a trap To advance would have been to commit suicide to reverse would have invited them to open fire

We sat and stared at the young men who stared back One yelled in Afrikaans "get lost others continued to smile and beckon

That was when I looked to my left and watched someone try to kill me He cocked his weapon Flicked off the safety catch and the windscreen exploded in my face

I have always wondered what it would be like to be shot. It hurts It is like being hit with a sledgehammer

When the bullet struck the windscreen it shattered into fragments, which ricocheted into my right shoulder peppering me with pieces of lead.

The force of the blast threw me against my passenger, Anton La Guardia of The Daily Telegraph, and we both ended up on the floor of the car We remained there head down, covered in glass and blood spilling on to my trousers as I flung the car into a U turn and charged into a ditch, which protected us from a hail of small arms fire

As I gripped the bloody steering wheel with the hand of my injured arm and worked the gears like a Formula One racing driver, skidding round road blocks of burning cars across treacherous stretches of rock and dirt, Anton tore off his scarlet T shirt, rolled it into a ball and pressed into my shoulder wounds.

The worst effects of a bullet are when they tear into a major blood vessel, hit a bone, or leave a gaping exit wound In a mad pantomime of desperation, Anton groped around my back and the rear of my shoulder probing for a hole

Using the tiny amount of medical knowledge I have picked up over the years, I asked him to press as hard as he could into the hole at the front. My right eye was beginning to blur and I feared I would pass out from loss of blood. Later I discovered the blurring was caused by fragments of the charred door frame lodged in my eyelid Pieces of grey plastic and windscreen glass had embedded themselves in my face and chest and looked like an unappetising pizza.

The feelings of relief that we had escaped and concern for my wound, quickly gave way to anger

I feel no animosity towards the man who shot me From the colour of my skin and the licence plate on my car, he obviously thought I was a South African and part of the clumsy invasion force which in the space of two days has reduced the city to rubble and ashes.

The extent of the incompetence of the South African invasion was revealed by the location of the Basotho rebel position where I was shot. It was a good 4km behind the South African and Botswanan front line, any attempt to reinforce the Southern African troops meant running a gauntlet through hostile territory

The South Africans were hugely outnumbered, though not outgunned, and had little control of the strategic situation It will take many more troops from President Mandela's army to bring any semblance of order to Maseru and greater political finesse than his Government has shown to put an end to the violence.

Searching for medical help, I had time to wonder at the futility of a mission aimed at restoring "order" to this tiny mountain kingdom, which has instead brought anarchy

What is most extraordinary about being shot is how many people can look you in the face and tell you how lucky you are

The South African army medic who patched me up on the border was clearly a little disappointed that I had not lost an eye, damaged a vital organ, ruptured an artery or even broken a bone I had the same response from the doctor across the border in South Africa. Even my father, who long ago gave up worrying about my scrapes, expressed surprise that it had not happened before

Grudgingly, I have to admit they are probably right. If the gunman had aimed a few inches to the right I would have taken a direct shot in the head If I had been more seriously hurt and unable to drive the car we would certainly have been killed by the mob

For that I am grateful.

But the next time South Africa decides to invade one of its neighbours, I am determined to get somebody else to do the driving – The Times London



REUTERS

Peacekeepers Botswana Defence Force soldiers patrol the streets of Maseru

Ruined Lesotho faces the long hard climb out of hell

ARG 24/9/98 (167)

Destruction set to spawn jobless army

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT AND SAPA

Johannesburg – Lesotho's economy will take years to recover from the devastation inflicted by rioters and looters who razed Maseru's city centre and destroyed factories this week.

And analysts warned the explosion of Basotho anger towards South Africa triggered by the intervention would also damage recovery

Economists and analysts said the cost of stolen stock, damaged property and lost business ran to hundreds of million of rands and warned that South Africa could expect an influx of job-seekers from the kingdom over the next few few months

A spokesman for the World Bank said the organisation would send a team to the country to assess the economic damage

He said it was unlikely that the Bank would withdraw financial support for the Lesotho Highland Water Project at this stage

Analysts said unemployment would skyrocket and could take years to readjust.

Azar Jammine of Econometrix said "From what I have heard and read, there is serious damage, and Maseru probably makes up half the



Economy up in flames: looting cost hundreds of millions in lost stock and damage

Lesotho economy "

Dr Jammine said unemployment would jump, but reconstruction would also create some jobs.

Lesotho was responsible for only 0,6% of South Africa's gross domestic product, so the region as a whole would not suffer much.

The animosity directed towards South Africa, however, was likely to deter South African business from returning soon.

South African banks have largely managed to escape the mayhem with a few broken windows. But the costs will mount once the losses on loans to wrecked businesses are added up, said the head of one big South African bank.

Economist Dawie Roodt of Equisec said. "You have to remember that the effects will be three-fold. First foreign investors won't be interested now, secondly a lot of capital stock has been destroyed and thirdly factories now won't do much importing and exporting."

Mr Roodt said if a peace deal was found soon, rebuilding could start in months, but it would take a long time to rebuild investor confidence

Labour analyst Gavin Brown said the Maseru situation was similar to what had happened in Bophuthatswana when Lucas Mangope fell, and that region had still not fully recovered.

For the average Maseru resident, life will be tougher, with more than half the city's shops either destroyed or looted.

"No wages have been paid and this will be hard in the short term. It could take anything from six months to a year to re-establish the centre of Maseru," Mr Brown said.

John Biccard, a retail analyst at HSBC, said Lesotho did not have its own big retailers. South African companies stock virtually all the fresh food, produce furniture and clothing sold in the country

"The actual loss of property and stock is insured, but the real thing is after that it takes a lot for consumer confidence to come back to the area, and even then there's an anti-South Africa feeling," Mr Biccard said.



TRYS DULLART

Hell in the city: the view from the balcony of the Lesotho Sun as looters ran riot in the streets of Maseru, setting shops and offices alight

Thousands join flight to safety in SA

FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – Long convoys and snaking queues formed on the road out of the capital as thousands of supporters of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy fled opposition wrath

They joined hundreds of Chinese and Indian traders who fled on Tuesday after rampaging youths had burnt their business and beaten them up Thousands more Maseru residents, fearing food shortages, fled to neighbouring towns and rural areas.

At the border gate yesterday, queues snaked for kilometres, while other refugees simply crossed the Caledon River to Free State farms.

LCD members as well as destitute Indian and Chinese traders were sheltered in a community hall at Manyat seng, in Ladybrand.

Joyce Matela, an LCD supporter, said she fled her home in Kgubetswana on Tuesday night when it came under fire from armed youths aligned to the opposition alliance.

"We ran across the Caledon River and we were helped by South African farmers to get here," she said.

By early yesterday morning, close to a thousand people, including Sri Lankans, Chinese, Filipinos and Russians, were reported to have arrived in Ladybrand, where officials were standing by to assist them.

The Department of Home Affairs insists only foreigners are fleeing. But a Ladybrand official said there were hundreds of Basotho refugees

Blunders of the raid on Lesotho

Military planners – misled by sloppy intelligence and a false sense of superiority – come under attack

(167)

Star 24/9/98

By Norman Chandler, Rich Mkhondo and Sapa

Sloppy intelligence-gathering and a vast underestimation of the determination of well-armed rebel soldiers have been pinpointed as reasons for the militarily flawed foray into Lesotho this week by a South African Botswana joint task force.

Last night, after two days of looting and mayhem that left eight South African military personnel dead and 17 injured, and which killed at least 5 Basotho rebels, the kingdom's police force declared a curfew from 6 in the evening until 6 in the morning.

While the Southern African Development Community stood by the armed action, military experts canvassed were critical of the military operation.

What had been planned as an easy operation to restore order after an alleged coup resulted in the destruction of Maseru's central business district by looters and arsonists. It also sparked a bloodbath when the task force soldiers clashed with heavily armed rebel soldiers.

It took the joint forces more than 48 hours to seize all the army bases and take control of the Katse Dam.

Military experts described the intervention as a badly planned, clumsy and over-hasty exercise.

Peter MacIntosh, editor of the *Armed Forces Journal*, said. "The intelligence gatherers should have provided more information to them, and there is no excuse for it because data about the city and country has been on file since the 1980s raids into Lesotho."

But Defence Minister Joe Modise defended the performance of his men in their first action since the transition to democracy in 1994 "We were working with information both from military intelligence and national intelligence. We were aware of the fact that resistance was being prepared.

"But commonsense should have shown them that resistance was futile (because of) the very fact that the forces that were coming in were overwhelming in terms of the equipment and firepower," he told a news conference in Cape Town.

"The situation could have been much worse had we not instructed the forces that were going in there to restrain themselves," Modise added.

President Nelson Mandela, speaking at the end of his US visit, said "In Lesotho we had a situation which amounted to a virtual coup, where soldiers without any rank decided to dismiss all officers, where the opposition seized motor vehicles belonging to the government; where they closed offices; where they shot and killed people."

He said acting president Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi had handled the situation well and that the soldiers who were killed did not die in combat, but while they were trying to explain their mission to the Basotho

"What actually happened is that they were in military vehicles, exposed and explaining to the public that they were not in Lesotho to fight, but to ensure that the chaos and anarchy that has happened is stopped. They were shot in that process, not in an exchange of fire with the soldiers.

"But of course, once that happened, they had to protect themselves and unfortunately they killed 58 Lesotho soldiers."

Jakkie Potgieter, military analyst and researcher for the Institute for Security Studies, said the South Africans had seriously mishandled the intervention.

The proper strategy would have been to mass troops on the border, and to threaten and intimidate members of the Lesotho Defence Force who had joined the opposition assault on the authority of the government.

"The operation was premature They messed it up because they treated this as a storm in a teacup They didn't anticipate the resistance they met," he said.

Helmut Roemer Heitman, another South African military analyst, said "My personal view is that they should have gone in with a much bigger force. Basically, you've got to awe the opposition into submission."

Heitman and Potgieter said the South African army could probably have enforced order within hours if they had been able to go in shooting.

James Higgs, the Institute of International Affairs' director of studies, also thought the task force had been unprepared. "I don't think they asked themselves what would happen the day after they invaded."

The SANDF yesterday corrected an earlier statement, saying eight and not nine SA soldiers had been killed.

There were fears that the rebels, who were retreating into the mountains as the task force advanced, would resort to guerrilla tactics and banditry.

SANDF Lieutenant-Colonel Laverne Machuné, spokesperson for the SANDF's joint operations directorate, which is coordinating task-force operations on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, said. "We were not prepared for the intensity of the resistance.

"The combined task force approach was to concentrate on neutralising the militant and hostile Lesotho Defence Force dissidents, to avoid any clash with civilians, to minimise damage to property and to use minimum force."

The high casualty rate has led to a decision to use more force, she said.

More reports, pictures Page 3, 6 and 8

WALTER DHLADHLA /



Prepared . a businessman stands guard in the Maseru business district. Looting continued yesterday, following a day of mayhem and arson on Tuesday

Letsie's palace a symbol of Basotho heritage

By Norman Chandler
Defence Correspondent

The big fear in Lesotho today is that the kingdom will celebrate its 32nd year of independence on October 4 under an occupying force trying to restore constitutional rule

The royal palace, in the heart of Maseru, is the traditional venue for the annual celebrations held since 1966

It, too, was occupied on Tuesday by South African forces of the joint Southern African Development Community task force. They forced their way into the grounds as part of a major push into Maseru and to disperse anti government supporters who had been squatting outside the gates for weeks.

The elegant palace is still occupied by King Letsie III, the country's constitutional monarch, who has remained behind closed doors as fighting between the South African and Botswana task force and rebel soldiers of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force continues to claim lives.

The king has so far not granted interviews to the media. But his brother, Prince Seeiso, told The Star by telephone yesterday that the palace grounds and the building itself were no longer under threat.

"We are safe. The situation here is quiet" he said

The palace has been used continuously as a royal home for several decades, and has housed major state events such as independence in 1966

Grand gardens surround the building while the rooms inside give an insight into the heritage of the Basotho nation, which came under the protection of the British Crown in 1869 after Moshoeshoe sought protection from the Boers.

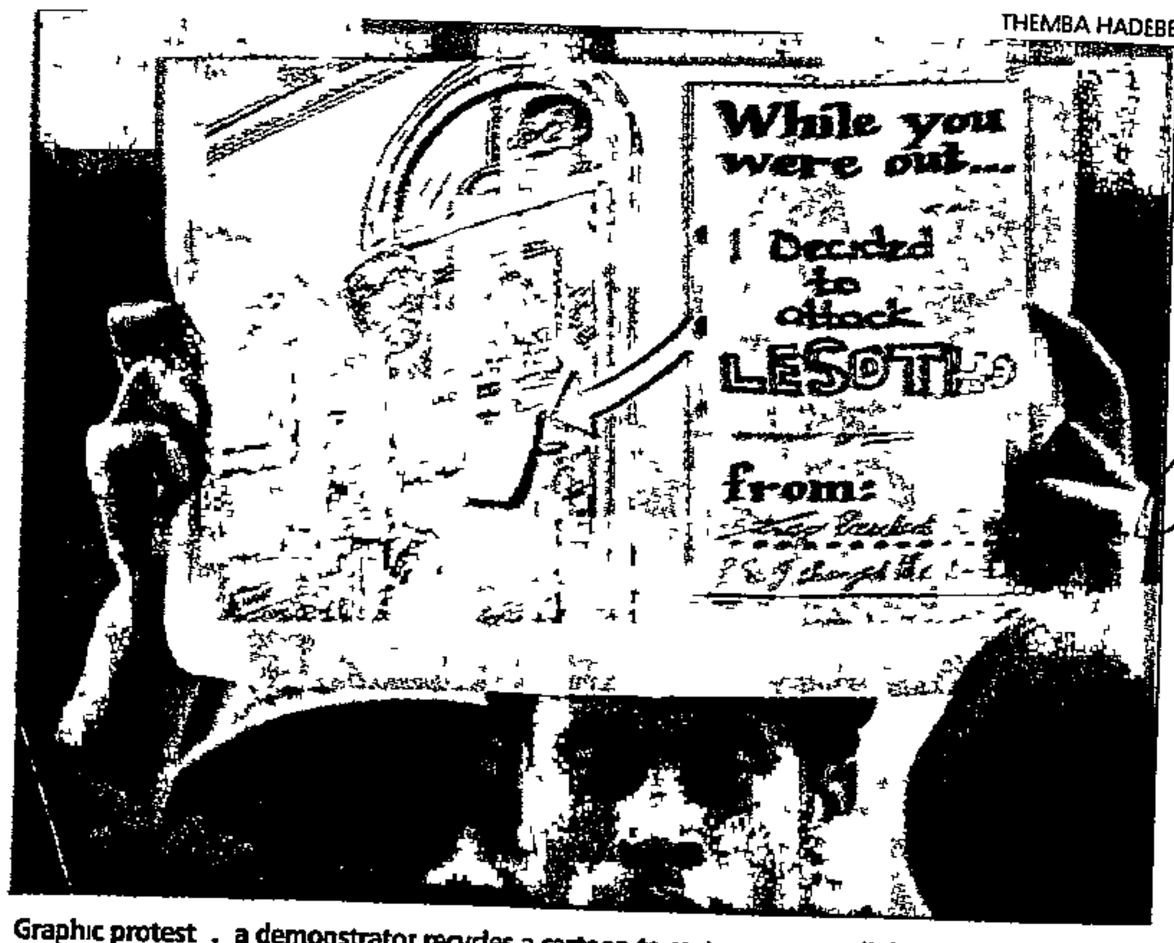
Today, 129 years later, there is still distrust of the Boers because of the alleged atrocities committed against the Basotho

THYS DULLAART



Evacuation a wounded Botswana soldier, par the Southe African Developme Community peacemaki force sent i Lesotho, is carried to a helicopter c the border yesterday

THEMBA HADEBE



Graphic protest . a demonstrator recycles a cartoon to cast an amusing light on Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi's role in the Lesotho conflict in the absence of President Mandela.

Star 24/9/98

Buthelezi takes most flak at protest in Johannesburg

(167)

By Cecilia Russell

The protest hardly made an impact on Johannesburg's busy streets, but the few Basotho who had gathered outside Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga's office felt betrayed. And angry.

"This is very sad," Concerned Basotho Community of South Africa spokesperson Kacosi Ramakhula said of the SADC intervention in Lesotho

The messages on the hastily made banners mirrored their sentiments "In 1982 we died with you, in 1998 you butchered us," read one, referring to the apartheid government's attack on ANC camps in Lesotho

Another referred to the swift decision made to invade the mountain kingdom. "While you were out, I decided to attack Lesotho"

Acting president Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi was the target of some of the most vitriolic criticism. Other protesters simply proclaimed their loyalty to king and country "Respect our king."

Ramakhula said the SADC intervention was designed to make Lesotho South Africa's "puppet" "There has been life lost and the economy has been damaged We hold South Africa accountable," he said.

Cabinet endorses decision to send troops

Star 24/9/98

Opposition parties call for truce and mediation

By Kerry Cullinan and Jovial Rantao
Star Parliamentary Bureau

As the uproar over South Africa's military intervention in Lesotho continued yesterday, the Cabinet met and endorsed as "principled and correct" the decision to send troops into the kingdom.

Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi congratulated the troops on the firm manner in which they had conducted themselves.

But the opposition parties, backed by their Lesotho opposition counterparts, criticised the action

Buthelezi confirmed that he had informed King Letsie III about the military intervention only when the troops were already in Lesotho

"Of course the king said he wished he knew before the time," said Buthelezi.

"But it was an open secret that the opposition was camped in the grounds of the palace."

The Cabinet said it regretted the loss of life and expressed condolences to the families of the SANDF soldiers who had died in action.

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Democratic Party and the Freedom Front condemned the deployment of troops in Lesotho.

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He proposed that new elections be held forthwith under international supervision

DP leader Tony Leon called for an immediate ceasefire.

He said a negotiation process must be established between the various Lesotho parties and must be facilitated by a neutral third party

Political refugees join trader in exodus from gutted city

By Tefo Mothibeli, Simon Zwane and Melanie-Ann Feris
Star Foreign Service

Long convoys formed on the road leading out of Maseru yesterday as thousands of supporters of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, who are now being attacked by youths aligned to the opposition alliance, fled the country.

They joined the hundreds of Chinese and Indian traders who fled on Tuesday after rampaging youths burnt their businesses and beat them up.

Thousands more Maseru residents, fearing food shortages in the gutted city, headed for neighbouring towns and rural areas. Other refugees simply crossed the Caledon River onto Free State farms.

Lesotho Congress for Democracy members as well as destitute Indian and Chinese traders

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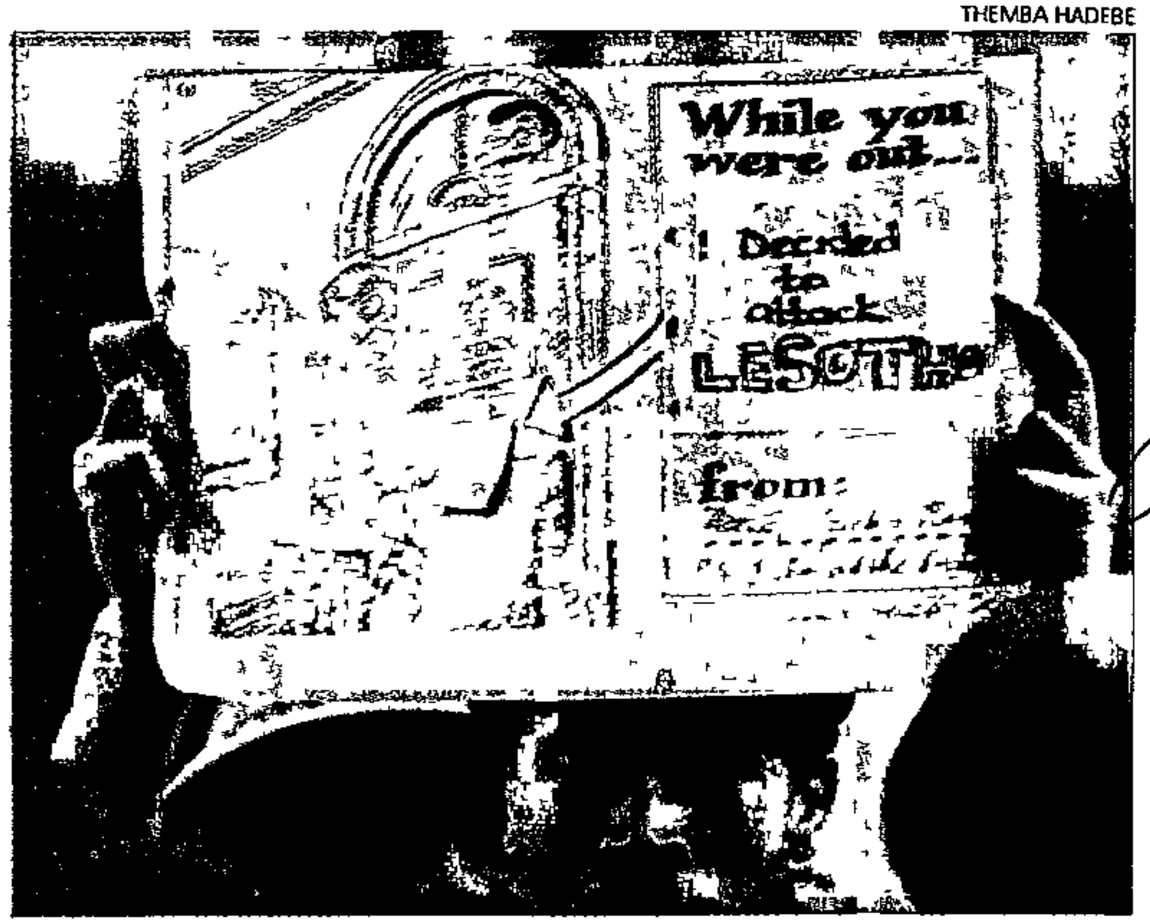
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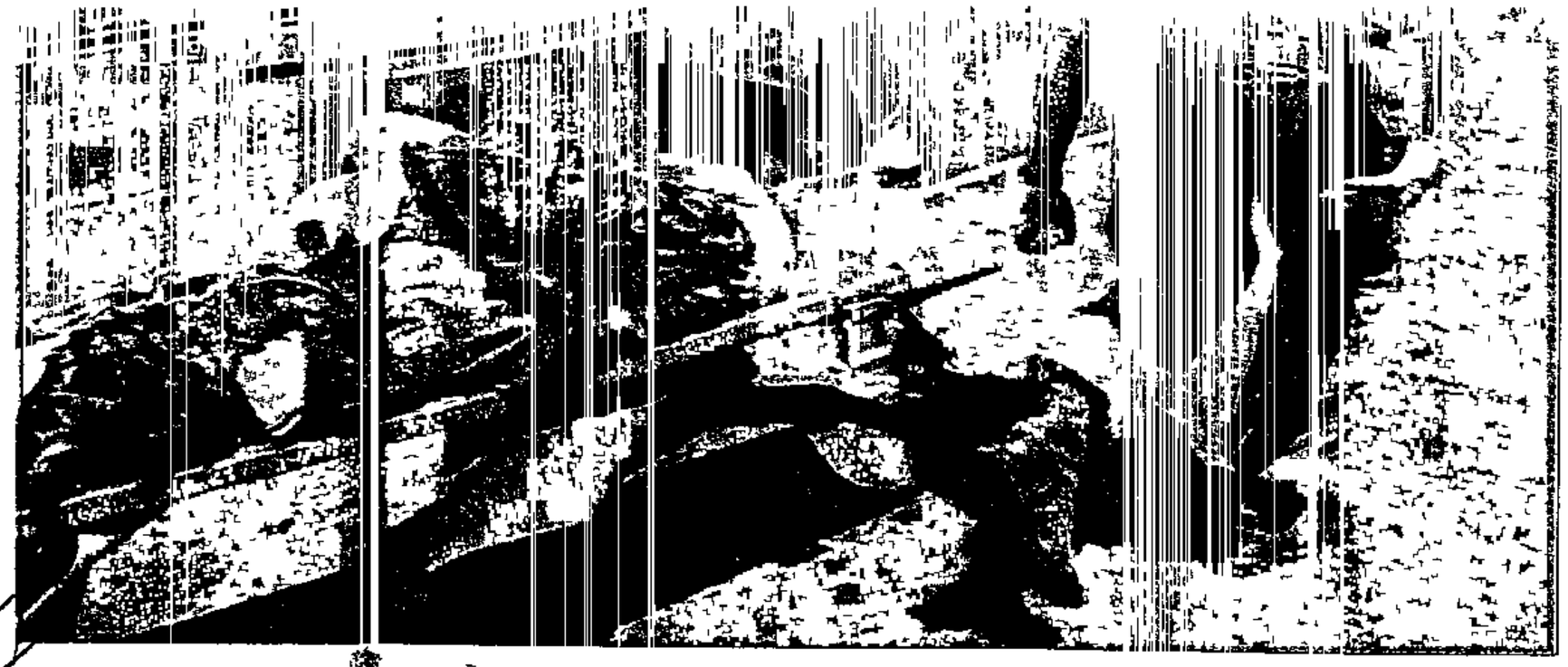
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Lesotho Congress for Democracy members as well as destitute Indian and Chinese traders were sheltered in a community hall at Manyatseng, Ladybrand.

By early yesterday morning close to a thousand refugees and foreigners, including Sri Lankans, Chinese, Filipinos and Russians, were reported to have arrived in Ladybrand.

The Department of Home Affairs insists that no Lesotho residents were fleeing the country and only foreigners were leaving, but a Ladybrand town official said hundreds of refugees from Lesotho were being housed

"These people are arriving here with only one or two blankets or a few extra garments, but that is all," he said.

Residents in the town, as well as churches, have been trying to accommodate all the refugees. Indications were that a lot more refugees were on the way

More than 500 refugees were also reported to have entered Wepener, about 90km from Ladybrand.

The Red Cross and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees are assisting.

Keith Gower, director-general of Red Cross South Africa, said the biggest need over the next few days would be food

"We cannot just arrive with a truck of food. If people are really desperate they will mob the truck, so everything has to be co-ordinated," he said

Foreign embassies were yesterday evacuating staff but only the Irish Embassy had removed all its personnel

Buthelezi takes most flak at protest in Johannesburg

Star 24/9/98 (167)

By Cecilia Russell

The protest hardly made an impact on Johannesburg's busy streets, but the few Basotho who had gathered outside Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga's office felt betrayed. And angry.

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Ramakhula said the SADC intervention was designed to make Lesotho South Africa's "puppet" "There has been life lost and the economy has been damaged. We hold South Africa accountable," he said.

Mandela comes under fire for making Clinton his priority

Maseru – President Nelson Mandela abdicated his duties as SADC chairperson when he decided to go to the United States to lend support to beleaguered President Bill Clinton, Basotholand Congress Party leader Molapo Qhubela said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters in Lesotho, Qhubela said Mandela was supposed to visit there after the Southern African Development Community summit in Mauritius ended.

"Instead he chose to go to the US to help someone who is beleaguered by sex scandals, clearly abdicating his international responsibilities," he said.

Qhubela added that Tuesday's "invasion" of Lesotho by the SA National Defence Force was not welcomed by the people of Lesotho

"This is particularly regrettable because South African citizens came flocking to this country when they were running away from the apartheid bullets of Sophiatown, and we welcomed them."

He accused Mandela of continuing where former president P W Botha had left off his policy of destabilising neighbouring countries, and compared the events to those of December 9 1982, when 42 ANC members and 12 Basotho were killed in a cross border raid.

Qhubela said that if Mandela thought the incident was over, he was mistaken. "He is honestly deceiving himself, and as soon as they leave we are going back to square one. I am not going to disclose what we are going to do." – Sapa

Hospital in crisis as foreign doctors flee country

The Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Maseru has been plunged into crisis because foreign doctors have fled the country and the overworked remaining staff face dwindling medical supplies amid growing demands for help

Medical superintendent Dr Piet McPherson told The Star last night he was urgently trying to round up staff to relieve those staffers who had been working nonstop for the past 48 hours

There are fewer than 10 doctors having to deal with more than 400 patients – Staff Reporter



Mayhem will leave kingdom's frail economy in tatters

(167) Star 24/9/98

By Ryan Cresswell and Sapa

The Lesotho economy will take years to recover from the devastation that has left Maseru's central business district razed

Economists and analysts yesterday put the cost of stolen stock, damaged property and lost business at hundreds of million of rands and warned that South Africa could expect an influx of job seekers from the kingdom over the next few few months.

According to analysts, the Lesotho economy has lost untold millions They said unemployment would skyrocket and could take years to normalise

Dr Azar Jammine of Econometrix said "From what I have heard and read, there is serious damage, and Maseru probably makes up half of the Lesotho economy."

Jammine said unemployment in the area would increase but some local people would be employed in reconstruction

He said Lesotho was responsible for only 0,6% of South Africa's gross domestic product, so the region as a whole would not suffer

The animosity directed towards South Africa, however, was likely to deter South African businesses from returning soon

John Biccard, a retail analyst at HSBC, said Lesotho did

Investors won't be interested

not have its own major retailers. South African companies were responsible for virtually all the fresh food, produce, furniture and clothing sold in the kingdom

"The actual loss of property and stock is insured, but it takes a lot for consumer confidence to return," Biccard said

South African banks have largely managed to escape the mayhem with a few broken windows But the costs will mount once the losses on loans to destroyed businesses are added up, said the head of one major South African bank

Economist Dawie Roodt of Equisec said. "The effects will be threefold Firstly foreign investors won't be interested now, secondly a lot of capital stock has been destroyed, and thirdly factories won't do much importing and exporting "

Roodt said if a domestic solution was found soon, rebuilding could start within months, but it would take a long time to rebuild investor confidence

For the average Maseru resident, life will be tougher, with more than half the city's shops either destroyed or looted

"No wages have been paid and this will be hard in the short term It could take anything from six months to a year to re-establish the centre of Maseru," said Gavin Brown, a labour analyst

Brown also said jobless Basotho would now come into South Africa in search of work, adding to SA's unemployment problem

A World Bank official said the organisation would send a team to Lesotho to assess the damage

He said it was unlikely that the world body would withdraw financial support for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project at this stage

Job seekers will flood into SA

Nearly half of Lesotho's male labour force work in SA, with about 65 000 employed in the country's mines Much of Lesotho's economy depends on remittances from mineworkers.

Llewellyn Kriel of the South African Chamber of Mines said yesterday there had been no reports of problems at the mines.

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▶ More reports, pictures Pages 3, 6 and 8

WALTER DHLADHLA / AFP



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An anti-government protester lies on a hospital bed after being injured by a gas bottle explosion in Maseru yesterday. Nine South African soldiers have been killed in clashes with Lesotho Defence Force soldiers since South African troops entered Lesotho on Tuesday. PIC AFP

King appeals for calm

Sowetan 24/9/98 (167)

By Themba Molefe and Pamela Dube

MASERU – Lesotho's monarch has pleaded for all involved in the Lesotho conflict to rise above political interests as the number of deaths rose to 49 yesterday, while at least 2 000 nationals have fled the chaotic kingdom

South Africa said yesterday 49 fighters on both sides had died in the first 24 hours of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention in Lesotho and vowed to fight "fire with fire" in the campaign against mutinous soldiers in Lesotho

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) said nine South African soldiers had been killed and 17 wounded by the early hours of yesterday

"The casualties of dissident Lesotho Defence Force militants are approximately 40," the SANDF said

The statement was issued as the operation came in for harsh criticism South Africa, in particular, was blamed for "blundering"

Criticism centres on the apparent lack of preparation and reliable intelligence

Defence Minister Mr Joe Modise told a media conference in Parliament yesterday that the Government had gathered information through military and national intelligence units

"We were aware that resistance was being prepared but we did not expect the resistance to be of that order Proper preparations were made to meet that situation," he said

Modise said the SANDF did not have information that the Lesotho Defence Force had 53 trucks loaded with weapons

"We did not pick up the information that the mutineers were armed to that extent"

Addressing the same conference, Home Affairs Minister Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who was acting president when the order to move on Lesotho was made, said the Cabinet had endorsed the move

Buthelezi insisted that he had spoken to King Letsie III on several occasions but admitted that he had only informed him on the morning of the intervention

Speaking to *Sowetan* in Maseru yesterday, Prince Seeiso, younger brother of the king and heir apparent to throne, said Lesotho required an explanation for South Africa's actions

"The monarchy agrees that the Basotho feel very hostile towards South Africa and Botswana's military presence This, however, does not mean his majesty condones any acts of violence," he said

Everyone, including the opposition alliance and the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, should rise above party political interests to stop the carnage, he added

Meanwhile, the air was thick with smoke in Maseru as buildings continued to burn

A dusk-to-dawn curfew was expected to be declared late yesterday

The SADC forces said yesterday they had been able to subdue resistance at the Makonyane barracks where fierce fighting had raged since Tuesday

Major hotels also closed yesterday with guests being evacuated or leaving the country altogether

Food shortages were beginning to be felt and locals travelled to Ladybrand, 10km across the South African border, to stock up

Unconfirmed reports said that looting had spread to other areas of Lesotho such as Quacha's Nek and Teyateyaneng

By late yesterday afternoon government appeared to have ground to a halt and the whereabouts of prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili could not be established

● **See pages 2, 5 and 9.**

Lesotho action: jury is still out (167)

Sowetan 24/9/98

By Buchizya Mseteka

SOUTH Africa has used gunboat diplomacy to try to end political unrest in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho – a move some analysts say signalled a regional resolve to deal firmly with Africa s endless political crises

Others questioned the efficacy of the military operation, conducted in the name of the regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) in bringing about a lasting political solution to Lesotho s problems

The SADC is already embroiled in a much bigger conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo where Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe sent troops tanks and planes to prop up the government of embattled president Laurent Kabila

South Africa's intervention in Lesotho with 600 soldiers has drawn criticism and is a major turnabout for the Government of President Nelson Mandela, which has steadfastly refused to provide military aid in the Congo

Soldiers killed

Three South African soldiers were killed shortly after the troops crossed into Lesotho, the first to be killed on active service since the democratic elections of 1994

'One reason for South Africa's intervention in Lesotho may be because it failed in its diplomatic efforts in the Congo," Cape Town-based political scientist Peter Vale said

"They are also doing this in the name of SADC, so maybe we are seeing a resolve by the SADC and the region not to see sitting governments overthrown by military means," he added

Mandela tried in vain last year to negotiate Kabila's takeover from veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in the former Zaire

Mandela has so far been unable to bring democracy to Swaziland or political calm to Lesotho, two small neighbouring monarchies that South Africa dominates economically

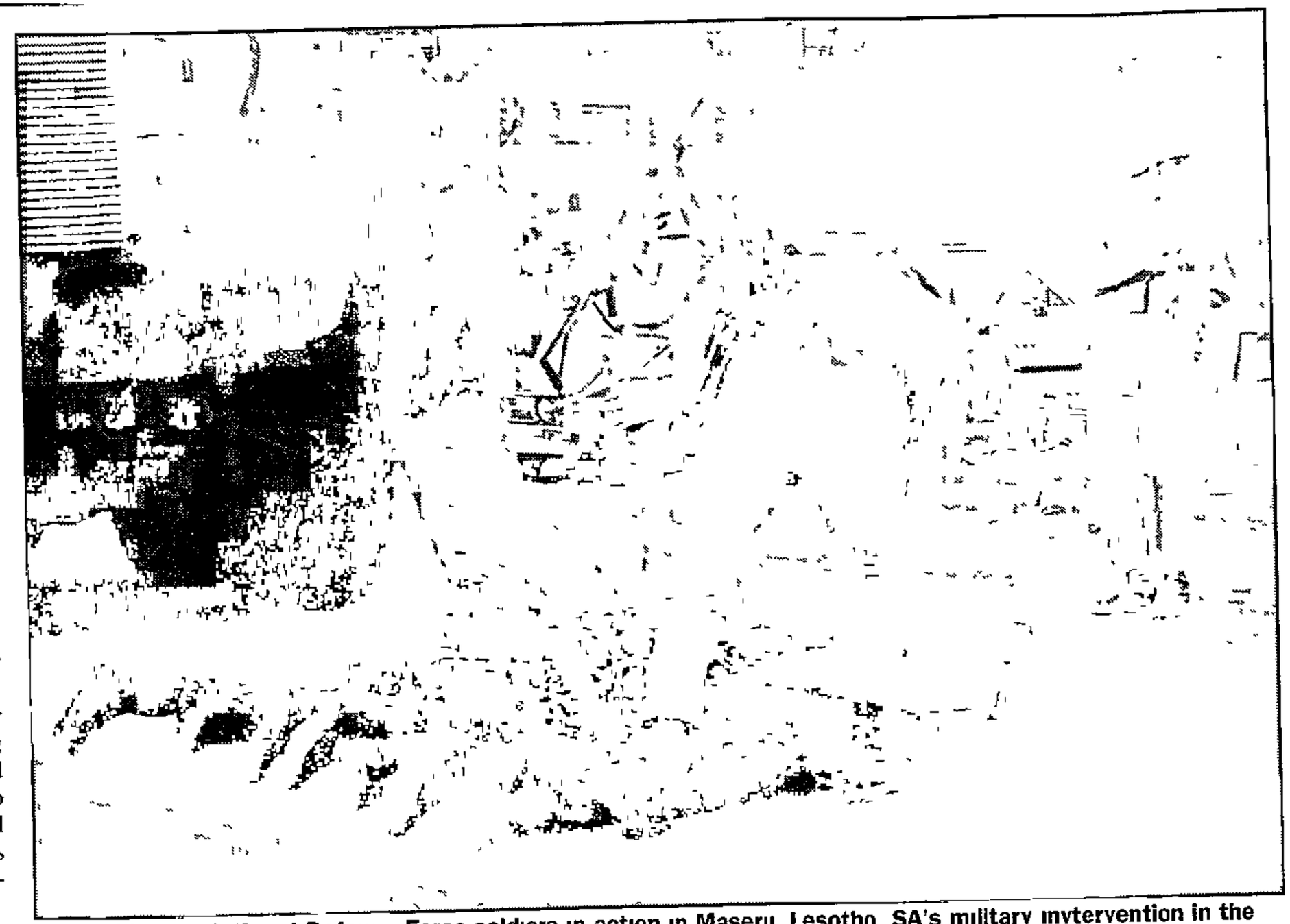
Diplomats said the clear lack of coordination in the two SADC operations indicated a rift within the body formed to enhance economic cooperation in the region

"This up to now looks like a lone South African operation to end unrest in Lesotho We see no political unity in the SADC group just as we saw none during the run-up to the Congo operation," said an African diplomat

Troops expected from Botswana failed to arrive on time and South African Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who ordered the Lesotho operation in his capacity as acting president, said although he had consulted regional leaders, he had failed to reach Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe

Opposition leaders in South Africa said Mugabe had cause to rebuff Buthelezi

"Does this invasion today, whether it is organised by SADC, ourselves, or whoever, not discredit our own position in respect of the Congo where we took a very specific response when Mugabe did the very same thing in that context" Democratic Party leader Tony Leon asked in Parliament on the day the troops went into Lesotho



South African National Defence Force soldiers in action in Maseru, Lesotho SA's military intervention in the small neighbouring country has been criticised by opposition leaders at home, especially after its refusal to lend similar support to President Laurent Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo PIC PAT SEBOKO

Political settlement

Other analysts said in the cases of the Congo and Lesotho SADC leaders and governments were propping up weak governments in order to force them to negotiate a political settlement to their problems

In the Congo, Kabila – accused of corruption, incompetence and nepotism by the rebels – has so far refused to face them for talks opting instead for an outright military victory

Experts at the Johannesburg Institute for Security Studies say a similar policy of using an intervention to force political negotiations could well backfire in Lesotho

'Whether intervention will facilitate or hinder a political solution remains to be seen A more resolute and even-handed political and diplomatic initiative would possibly have made the military option unnecessary,' the institute's Richard Cornwell said

Diplomats say a key test for Pretoria s military intervention would be whether peace talks between the Lesotho government and opposition, announced by Buthelezi, go ahead

'The jury is out on the South African intervention The key test will be the talks If they take place then the South Africans will successfully argue that the stick has yielded results," a Southern African diplomat said – *Reuters*

Letsie's palace a symbol of Basotho heritage



By Norman Chandler
Defence Correspondent

The big fear in Lesotho today is that the kingdom will celebrate its 32nd year of independence on October 4 under an occupy ing force trying to restore con stitutional rule

The royal palace, in the heart of Maseru, is the traditional venue for the annual cel ebrations held since 1966

It, too, was occupied on Tuesday by South African forces of the joint Southern African Development Community task force They forced their way into the grounds as part of a major push into Maseru and to disperse anti government supporters who had been squatting outside the gates for weeks

The elegant palace is still occupied by King Letsie III, the country s constitutional mo narch, who has remained behind closed doors as fighting between the South African and Botswana task force and rebel soldiers of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force continues to claim lives

The king has so far not granted interviews to the media But his brother, Prince Seeiso, told The Star by telephone yesterday that the palace grounds and the building itself were no longer under threat

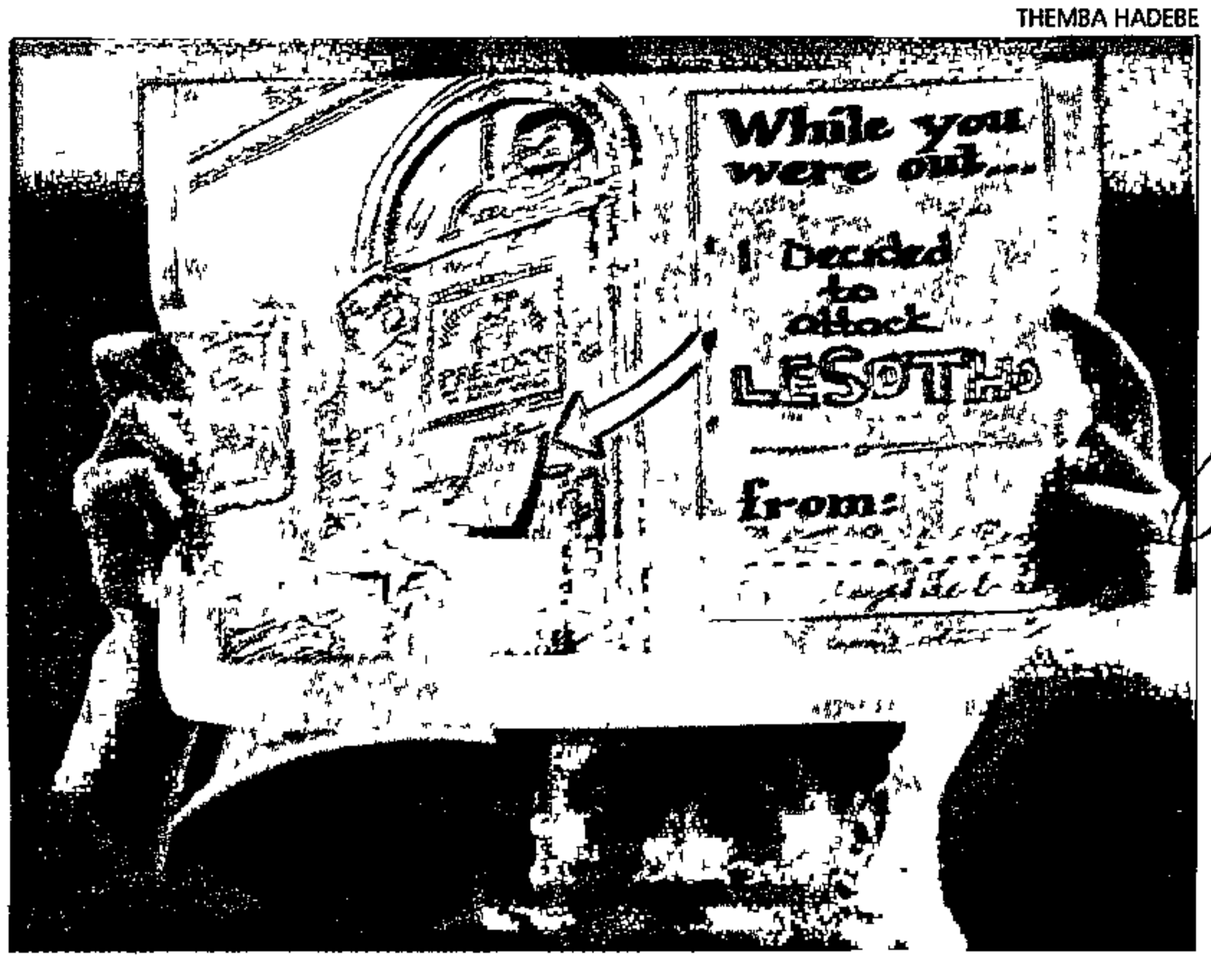
'We are safe. The situation here is quiet," he said

The palace has been used continuously as a royal home for several decades, and has housed major state events such as independence in 1966

Grand gardens surround the building while the rooms inside give an insight into the heritage of the Basotho nation, which came under the protec tion of the British Crown in 1869 after Moshoeshoe sought protection from the Boers

Today, 129 years later, there is still distrust of the Boers because of the alleged atrocities committed against the Basotho

THEMBA HADEBE



Graphic protest ... a demonstrator recycles a cartoon to cast an amusing light on Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi's role in the Lesotho conflict in the absence of President Mandela

Cabinet endorses decision to send t

Star 24/9/98

Opposition parties call for truce and mediation

By Kerry Cullinan and Jovial Rantao
Star Parliamentary Bureau

As the uproar over South Africa's military intervention in Lesotho con tinued yesterday, the Cabinet met and endorsed as "principled and correct" the decision to send troops into the kingdom

Acting President Mango suthu Buthelezi congratulated the troops on the firm manner in which they had conducted themselves.

But the opposition parties, backed by their Lesotho opposition counterparts, criticised the action

Justifying the action, Buthelezi said Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili was legally entitled to request foreign intervention, and that he was not obliged to consult the king on this

Buthelezi confirmed that he had informed King Letsie III about the military intervention only when the troops were already in Lesotho

"Of course the king said he wished he knew before the time,' said Buthelezi

"But it was an open secret that the opposition was camped in the grounds of the palace."

The Cabinet said it regretted the loss of life and expressed condolences to the families of the SANDF soldiers who had died in action

But opposition parties have called for a ceasefire in Lesotho, the confinement of the Southern African Development Community troops to barracks, and the appointment of former president F W de Klerk and former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere as mediators in the crisis

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Buthelezi takes most flak at protest in Johannesburg

Star 24/9/98

By Cecilia Russell (167)

The protest hardly made an im pact on Johannesburg's busy streets, but the few Basotho who had gathered outside Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga's office felt betrayed And angry

"This is very sad," Concerned Basotho Community of South Africa spokesperson Kacosi Ramakhula said of the SADC intervention in Lesotho.

The messages on the hastily made banners mirrored their sentiments "In 1982 we died with you, in 1998 you butchered us," read one, referring to the apartheid government s attack on ANC camps in Lesotho

Another referred to the swift decision made to invade the mountain kingdom "While you were out, I decided to attack Lesotho "

Acting president Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi was the target of some of the most vitriolic criticism Other protesters simply proclaimed their loyalty to king and country "Respect our king."

Ramakhula said the SADC intervention was designed to make Lesotho South Africa's "puppet" "There has been life lost and the economy has been damaged We hold South Africa accountable," he said.

Mandela comes under fire for making Clinton his priority

Maseru – President Nelson Mandela abdicated his duties as SADC chairperson when he decided to go to the United States to lend support to beleaguered President Bill Clinton, Basotholand Congress Party leader Molapo Qhubela said yesterday

Speaking to reporters in Lesotho, Qhubela said Mandela was supposed to visit there after the Southern African Development Community summit in Mauritius ended

"Instead he chose to go to the US to help someone who is beleaguered by sex scandals, clearly abdicating his international responsibilities," he said

Qhubela added that Tuesday's "invasion" of Lesotho by the SA National Defence Force was not welcomed by the people of Lesotho

"This is particularly regrettable because South African citizens came flocking to this country when they were running away from the apartheid bullets of Sophiatown, and we welcomed them "

He accused Mandela of continuing where former president P W Botha had left off his policy of destabilising neighbouring countries, and compared the events to those of December 9 1982, when 42 ANC members and 12 Basotho were killed in a cross border raid

Qhubela said that if Mandela thought the incident was over, he was mistaken "He is honestly deceiving himself, and as soon as they leave we are going back to square one I am not going to disclose what we are going to do." – Sapa

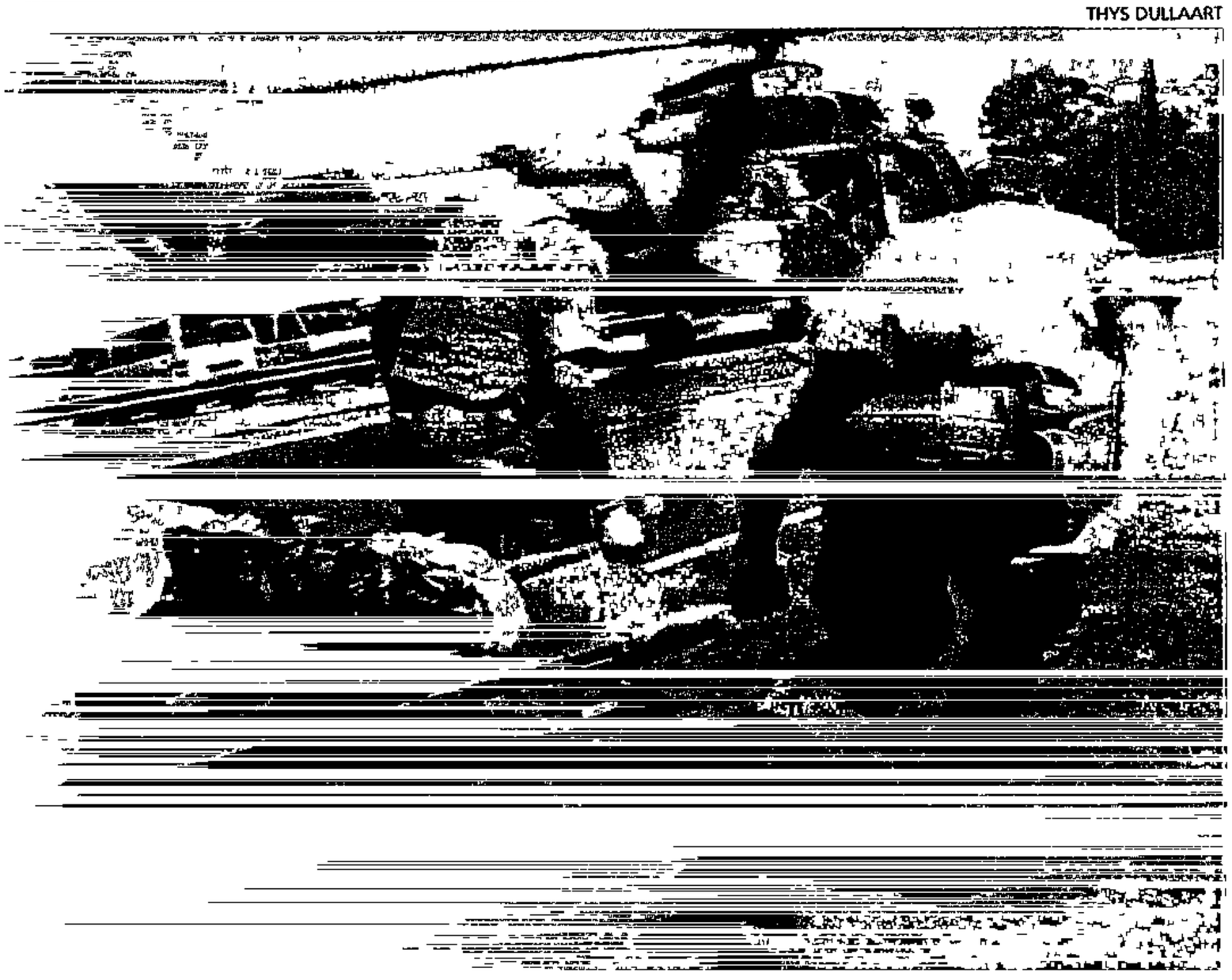
Hospital in crisis as foreign doctors flee country

The Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Maseru has been plunged into crisis because foreign doctors have fled the country and the overworked remaining staff face dwindling medical supplies amid growing demands for help

Medical superintendent Dr Piet McPherson told The Star last night urgently trying to round up staff those staffers who had been stop for the past 48 hours

There are fewer than 10 to deal with more than 400 Staff Reporter

THYS DULLAART



Evacuation a wounded Botswana soldier, part of the Southern African Development Community peacemaking force sent into Lesotho, is carried to a helicopter on the border yesterday

inet endorses

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Star 24/9/98

parties call for truce and mediation

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The National Party, the Democratic Party and the Freedom Front condemned the deployment of troops in Lesotho

NP leader Marthinus van Schalkwyk said the joint South African Botswana forces had not brought stability to the region

He proposed that new elections be held forthwith under international supervision

DP leader Tony Leon called for an immediate ceasefire

He said a negotiation process must be established between the various Lesotho parties and must be facilitated by a neutral third party.

Freedom Front leader General Constand Viljoen said there should be an immediate truce in Lesotho, and troops should withdraw to SA or be confined to barracks in Lesotho "Essentially, the problems of Lesotho can only be resolved by the Basotho people."

Political refugees join traders in exodus from gutted city

By Tefo Mothibeli, Simon Zwane and Melanie-Ann Feris
Star Foreign Service

Long convoys formed on the road leading out of Maseru yesterday as thousands of supporters of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, who are now being attacked by youths aligned to the opposition alliance, fled the country

They joined the hundreds of Chinese and Indian traders who fled on Tuesday after rampaging youths burnt their businesses and beat them up.

Thousands more Maseru residents, fearing food shortages in the gutted city, headed for neighbouring towns and rural areas. Other refugees simply crossed the Caledon River onto Free State farms.

Lesotho Congress for Democracy members as well as destitute Indian and Chinese traders were sheltered in a community hall at Manyatseng, Ladybrand

By early yesterday morning close to a thousand refugees and foreigners, including Sri Lankans, Chinese, Filipinos and Russians, were reported to have arrived in Ladybrand.

The Department of Home Affairs insists that no Lesotho residents were fleeing the country and only foreigners were leaving, but a Ladybrand town official said hundreds of refugees from Lesotho were being housed.

"These people are arriving here with only one or two blankets or a few extra garments, but that is all," he said

Residents in the town, as well as churches, have been trying to accommodate all the refugees. Indications were that a lot more refugees were on the way

More than 500 refugees were also reported to have entered Wepener, about 90km from Ladybrand

The Red Cross and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees are assisting.

Keith Gower, director general of Red Cross South Africa, said the biggest need over the next few days would be food

"We cannot just arrive with a truck of food If people are really desperate they will mob the truck, so everything has to be co-ordinated," he said

Foreign embassies were yesterday evacuating staff but only the Irish Embassy had removed all its personnel

crisis as foreign doctors flee country

II Hospital in
into crisis be-
have fled the coun
ned remaining staff
supplies amid
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resident Dr Piet

McPherson told The Star last night he was urgently trying to round up staff to relieve those staffers who had been working non stop for the past 48 hours.

There are fewer than 10 doctors having to deal with more than 400 patients – Staff Reporter



assistants

Mayhem will leave kingdom's frail economy in tatters

Star 24/9/98 (167)

By Ryan Cresswell and Sapa

The Lesotho economy will take years to recover from the devastation that has left Maseru's central business district razed.

Economists and analysts yesterday put the cost of stolen stock, damaged property and lost business at hundreds of million of rands and warned that South Africa could expect an influx of job seekers from the kingdom over the next few few months.

According to analysts, the Lesotho economy has lost untold millions They said unemployment would skyrocket and could take years to normalise.

Dr Azar Jammine of Econometrix said: "From what I have heard and read, there is serious damage, and Maseru probably makes up half of the Lesotho economy."

Jammine said unemployment in the area would increase but some local people would be employed in reconstruction

He said Lesotho was responsible for only 0,6% of South Africa's gross domestic product, so the region as a whole would not suffer

The animosity directed towards South Africa, however, was likely to deter South African businesses from returning soon.

John Biccard, a retail analyst at HSBC, said Lesotho did not have its own major retailers. South African companies were responsible for virtually all the fresh food, produce, furniture and clothing sold in the kingdom

Investors won't be interested

"The actual loss of property and stock is insured, but it takes a lot for consumer confidence to return," Biccard said

South African banks have largely managed to escape the mayhem with a few broken windows. But the costs will mount once the losses on loans to destroyed businesses are added up, said the head of one major South African bank.

Economist Dawie Roodt of Equisec said. "The effects will be threefold. Firstly foreign investors won't be interested now, secondly a lot of capital stock has been destroyed, and thirdly factories won't do much importing and exporting."

Roodt said if a domestic solution was found soon, rebuilding could start within months, but it would take a long time to rebuild investor confidence.

For the average Maseru resident, life will be tougher, with more than half the city's shops either destroyed or looted.

"No wages have been paid and this will be hard in the short term. It could take anything from six months to a year to re-establish the centre of Maseru," said Gavin Brown, a labour analyst.

Brown also said jobless Basotho would now come into South Africa in search of work, adding to SA's unemployment problem.

A World Bank official said the organisation would send a team to Lesotho to assess the damage.

He said it was unlikely that the world body would withdraw financial support for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project at this stage.

Job seekers will flood into SA

Nearly half of Lesotho's male labour force work in SA, with about 65 000 employed in the country's mines. Much of Lesotho's economy depends on remittances from mineworkers.

Llewellyn Kriel of the South African Chamber of Mines said yesterday there had been no reports of problems at the mines.

Blunders of the raid on Lesotho

(167) Star 24/9/98

Military planners – misled by sloppy intelligence and a false sense of superiority – come under attack

By Norman Chandler, Rich Mkhondo and Sapa

Sloppy intelligence-gathering and a vast underestimation of the determination of well-armed rebel soldiers have been pinpointed as reasons for the militarily flawed foray into Lesotho this week by a South African Botswana joint task force.

Last night, after two days of looting and mayhem that left eight South African military personnel dead and 17 injured, and which killed at least 58 Basotho rebels, the kingdom's police force declared a curfew from 6 in the evening until 6 in the morning

While the Southern African Development Community stood by the armed action, military experts canvassed were critical of the military operation.

What had been planned as an easy operation to restore order after an alleged coup resulted in the destruction of Maseru's central business district by looters and arsonists. It also sparked a bloodbath when the task-force soldiers clashed with heavily armed rebel soldiers.

It took the joint forces more than 48 hours to seize all the army bases and take control of the Katse Dam.

Military experts described the intervention as a badly planned, clumsy and over-hasty exercise.

Peter MacIntosh, editor of the *Armed Forces Journal*, said. "The intelligence gatherers should have provided more information to them, and there is no excuse for it because data about the city and country has been on file since the 1980s raids into Lesotho."

But Defence Minister Joe Modise defended the performance of his men in their first action since the transition to democracy in 1994 "We were working with information both from military intelligence and national intelligence. We were aware of the fact that resistance was being prepared.

"But commonsense should have shown them that resistance was futile (because of) the very fact that the forces that were coming in were overwhelming in terms of the equipment and firepower," he told a news conference in Cape Town.

"The situation could have been much worse had we not instructed the forces that were going in there to restrain themselves," Modise added.

President Nelson Mandela, speaking at the end of his US visit, said. "In Lesotho we had a situation which amounted to a virtual coup, where soldiers without any rank decided to dismiss all officers, where the opposition seized motor vehicles belonging to the government; where they closed offices, where they shot and killed people."

He said acting president Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi had handled the situation well and that the soldiers who were killed did not die in combat, but while they were trying to explain their mission to the Basotho.

"What actually happened is that they were in military vehicles, exposed and explaining to the public that they were not in Lesotho to fight, but to ensure that the chaos and anarchy that has happened is stopped. They were shot in that process, not in an exchange of fire with the soldiers.

"But of course, once that happened, they had to protect themselves and unfortunately they killed 58 Lesotho soldiers."

Jakkie Potgieter, military analyst and researcher for the Institute for Security Studies, said the South Africans had seriously mishandled the intervention.

The proper strategy would have been to mass troops on the border, and to threaten and intimidate members of the Lesotho Defence Force who had joined the opposition assault on the authority of the government.

"The operation was premature. They messed it up because they treated this as a storm in a teacup. They didn't anticipate the resistance they met," he said.

Helmut Roemer Heitman, another South African military analyst, said. "My personal view is that they should have gone in with a much bigger force. Basically, you've got to awe the opposition into submission."

Heitman and Potgieter said the South African army could probably have enforced order within hours if they had been able to go in shooting.

James Higgs, the Institute of International Affairs' director of studies, also thought the task force had been unprepared. "I don't think they asked themselves what would happen the day after they invaded."

The SANDF yesterday corrected an earlier statement, saying eight and not nine SA soldiers had been killed.

There were fears that the rebels, who were retreating into the mountains as the task force advanced, would resort to guerrilla tactics and banditry.

SANDF Lieutenant-Colonel Laverne Machiné, spokesperson for the SANDF's joint operations directorate, which is co-ordinating task-force operations on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, said. "We were not prepared for the intensity of the resistance.

"The combined task force's approach was to concentrate on neutralising the militant and hostile Lesotho Defence Force dissidents, to avoid any clashes with civilians, to minimise damage to property and to use minimum force."

The high casualty rate had led to a decision to use more force, she said.

▶ More reports, pictures 12

WALTER DHLADHLA / AFP



Prepared .. a businessman stands guard in the Maseru business district. Looting continued yesterday, following a day of mayhem and arson on Tuesday



HANNES THIART

Imraan Mohammed.
'Astounded'



Justin Hindle.
'Our duty to help'



Deldré Kallis.
'Too depressing'



Mervin Menigo
'They had to go'



Lazarus Lunguza:
'Acted prematurely'



Louis Solgweve:
'It's bad'

'Our sons are dying, what the hell ar

CHANTEL ERFORT
STAFF REPORTER

"What the hell are we doing there?"

This was the overwhelming response from people in Cape Town in a snap opinion survey on South Africa s incursion into Lesotho

But there were some people who had managed not to hear about the Lesotho debacle at all

Imraan Mohammed of Port Eliza beth was astounded to hear our troops were fighting in Lesotho

"Why do we need to help? What's wrong with their troops? Besides, we've got enough violence in our own country South Africa's intentions are probably good, but what about the families of those soldiers (being sent to Lesotho)?"

Winston van Wyk of Mitchell's Plain said "Has that war got any thing to do with us? Where do we fit into Lesotho? South Africans are get ting killed and it's not our war We shouldn't be there There's enough crime here for them to deal with anyway"

Monique Treu of Mitchell's Plain was in two minds

"It shouldn't have happened They should just come back But then again, it's their job That's why they become soldiers, but it's still sad that innocent people are getting killed."

Some people also thought that South Africa had acted prematurely by sending troops into Lesotho

Louis Solgweve of Khayelitsha said. "South Africa went into the situation too early They weren't sup posed to be involved. It was Lesotho's domestic problem It's bad for our country that SA soldiers have died And we already have a problem with crime in our own country"

Lazarus Lunguza of Milnerton agreed. "They had no reason to go there I strongly believe that they acted too early They shouldn't have engaged in an armed solution"

Justin Hindle, a University of Cape Town student from Pinelands, felt that it was South Africa's duty to help its neighbours

"If there are problems ously our duty, as their to help them.

"If we're in a position to we should."

Harry Chikane of [illegible] prepared to put his faith ernment's ability to make decisions

"Whatever the [illegible] decides, I will believe with."

Mervin Menigo of[illegible]

Ruined Lesotho faces the long hard climb out of hell

ARG 24/9/98 (167)

Destruction set to spawn jobless army

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT AND SAPA

Johannesburg – Lesotho's economy will take years to recover from the devastation inflicted by rioters and looters who razed Maseru's city centre and destroyed factories this week

And analysts warned the explo sion of Basotho anger towards South Africa triggered by the intervention would also damage recovery

Economists and analysts said the cost of stolen stock damaged proper ty and lost business ran to hundreds of million of rands and warned that South Africa could expect an influx of job seekers from the kingdom over the next few few months

A spokesman for the World Bank said the organisation would send a team to the country to assess the economic damage

He said it was unlikely that the Bank would withdraw financial sup port for the Lesotho Highland Water Project at this stage

Analysts said unemployment would skyrocket and could take years to readjust

Azar Jammine of Econometrix said "From what I have heard and read, there is serious damage, and Maseru probably makes up half the Lesotho economy"



Economy up in flames looting cost hundreds of millions in lost stock and damage

Dr Jammine said unemployment would jump, but reconstruction would also create some jobs

Lesotho was responsible for only 0 6% of South Africa's gross domestic product, so the region as a whole would not suffer much

The animosity directed towards South Africa, however, was likely to deter South African business from returning soon

John Biccard, a retail analyst at HSBC, said Lesotho did not have its own big retailers South African com panies stock virtually all the fresh food, produce, furniture and clothing sold in the country

"The actual loss of property and stock is insured, but the real thing is after that it takes a lot for consumer confidence to come back to the area, and even then there's an anti-South Africa feeling," Mr Biccard said

South African banks have largely managed to escape the mayhem with a few broken windows But the costs will mount once the losses on loans to wrecked businesses are added up, said the head of one big South African bank

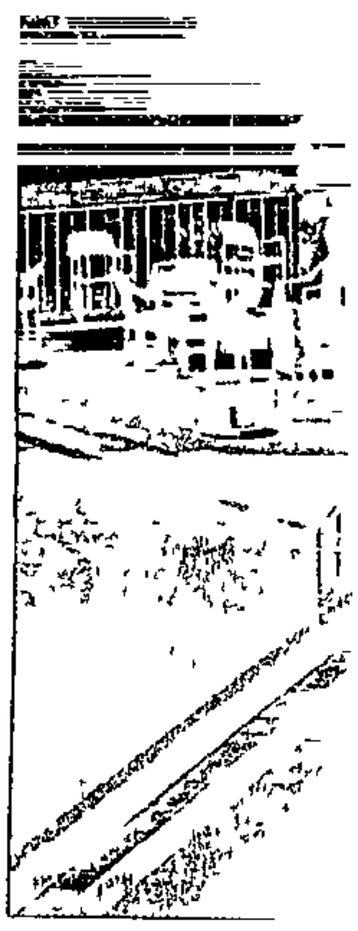
Economist Dawie Roodt of Equisec said You have to remember that the effects will be three-fold. First foreign investors won t be interested now, secondly a lot of capital stock has been destroyed and thirdly factories now won t do much importing and exporting"

Mr Roodt said if a peace deal was found soon, rebuilding could start in months, but it would take a long time to rebuild investor confidence

Labour analyst Gavin Brown said the Maseru situation was similar to what had happened in Bophutha tswana when Lucas Mangope fell, and that region had still not fully recovered

For the average Maseru resident, life will be tougher, with more than half the city's shops either destroyed or looted

"No wages have been paid and this will be hard in the short term It could take anything from six months to a year to re establish the centre of Maseru," Mr Brown said



Hell in the city the view from streets of Maseru, setting shops



Lazarus Lunguza:
'Acted prematurely'



Louis Solgweve:
'It's bad'



Monique Treu:
'Sad'



Winston van Wyk:
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ustin Hindle, a University of Town student from Pinelands, that it was South Africa's duty to help its neighbours

"If there are problems, it's obvi ously our duty, as their neighbours, to help them.

"If we're in a position to help them, we should."

Harry Chikane of Pretoria was prepared to put his faith in the government's ability to make the correct decisions

"Whatever the government decides, I will believe and go along with "

Mervin Menigo of Heathfield said. "They had to go into Lesotho It was a South African Development Community decision "

When asked what he thought about the men who had died he said "It's really sad, but 600 troops were sent in There will be casualties "

Deidré Kallis of Heathfield had not heard about the situation in Lesotho because she "stopped reading the newspapers years ago"

"It's too depressing I don't even watch the news, but a friend of mine who is in the Air Force did go to Maseru I don't know if he's involved "

Gerald Edwards from Marina Da Gama, phoned the Cape Argus to voice his opinion.

"What the hell are we doing in Lesotho? South Africa can't play global cop for the whole of Africa We don't even have a proper global policy This is a political problem that can't be solved by military action. It's sad that our sons must die in this political struggle My heart bleeds for everyone who has died there "

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South African banks have largely to escape the mayhem with broken windows But the costs mount once the losses on loans to cked businesses are added up, the head of one big South African

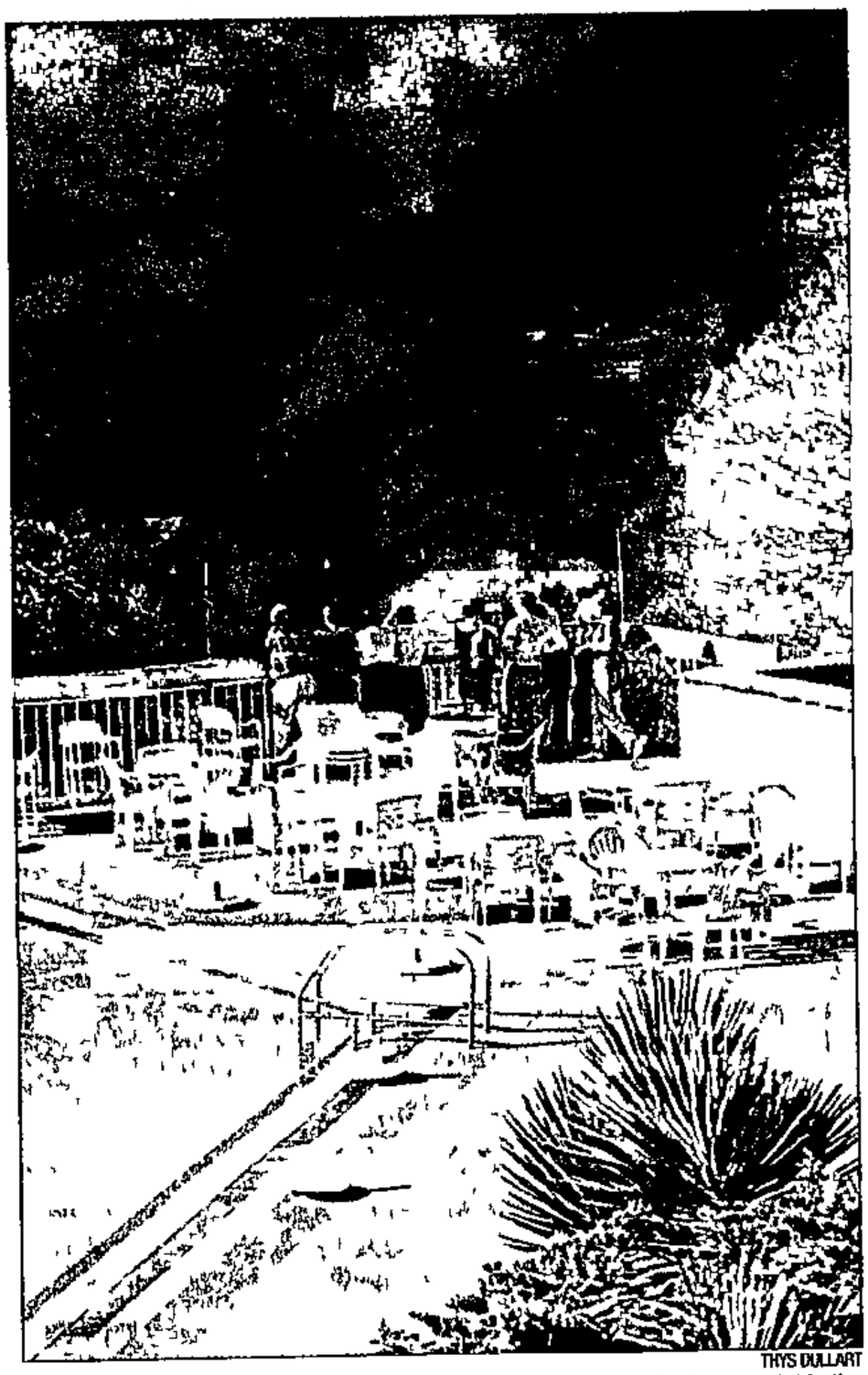
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THYS DULLART

Hell in the city the view from the balcony of the Lesotho Sun as looters ran riot in the streets of Maseru, setting shops and offices alight

Thousands join flight to safety in SA

FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – Long convoys and snaking queues formed on the road out of the capital as thousands of supporters of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy fled opposition wrath

They joined hundreds of Chinese and Indian traders who fled on Tuesday after rampaging youths had burnt their business and beaten them up Thousands more Maseru residents, fearing food shortages, fled to neighbouring towns and rural areas

At the border gate yesterday, queues snaked for kilometres, while other refugees simply crossed the Caledon River to Free State farms

LCD members as well as destitute Indian and Chinese traders were sheltered in a community hall at Manyatseng, in Ladybrand

Joyce Matela, an LCD supporter, said she fled her home in Kgubetswana on Tuesday night when it came under fire from armed youths aligned to the opposition alliance

"We ran across the Caledon River and we were helped by South African farmers to get here, she said

By early yesterday morning, close to a thousand people, including Sri Lankans, Chinese, Filipinos and Russians, were reported to have arrived in Ladybrand, where officials were standing by to assist them

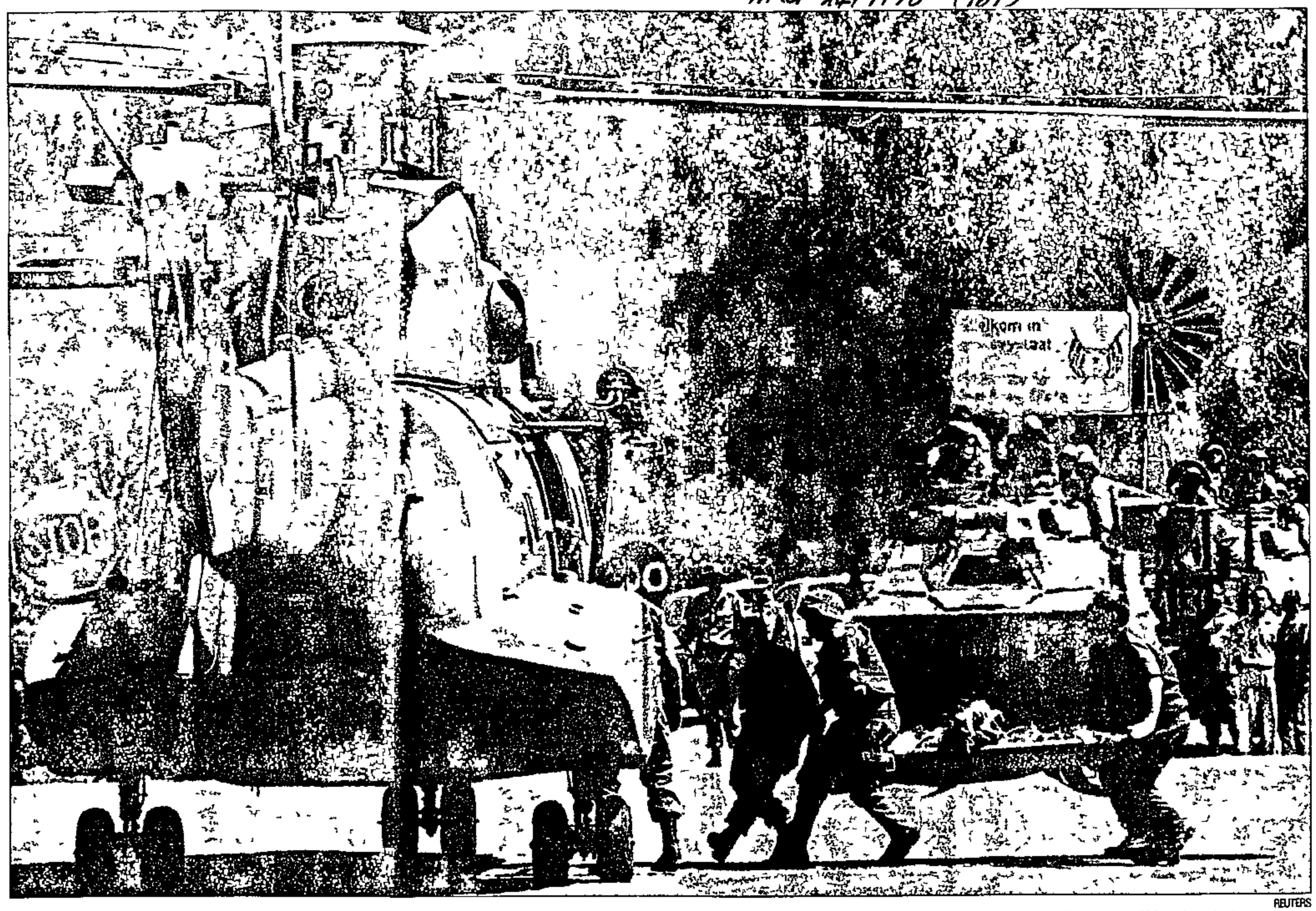
The Department of Home Affairs insists only foreigners are fleeing But a Ladybrand official said there were hundreds of Basotho refugees

CAPE ARGUS ISSUES

SA's military intervention 'a mistake'

ARG 24/9/98 (167)

Lesotho will blame us for next 20 years – expert



Military mistake? SANDF servicemen carry an injured soldier to a helicopter on the frontier yesterday after heavy shelling at Makonyane barracks. Analysts say a diplomatic solution to the crisis would have been better

REUTERS

INSIDE STORY



Questions as to whether South Africa's intervention in Lesotho was genuinely a strategic imperative, or merely an ill-advised adventure in political interference, have paled into insignificance against a reckoning of the costs of an expedition shot through with military and diplomatic error, say analysts Special Writer **MICHAEL MORRIS** reports

The crackling of small-arms fire provided a deceptively innocuous leitmotif in the initial radio reports from Maseru on Tuesday morning

The sudden bold initiative – nominally at the behest of the Southern African Development Community but essentially a South African foray – signalled a decisive shift in regional politics festering political dissent and a creeping coup in Lesotho would not be tolerated.

Armed intervention would, the reasoning went, forcefully create space for a desired negotiated solution to a mounting crisis

But when Colonel Robbie Hartslief's 600-strong battalion rolled into the mountain kingdom to pursue its avowed ambition of "restoring order" or "keeping the peace" the neighbourly intent was confounded by a contradiction between tactical and strategic objectives

The force was not powerful enough to bring Lesotho's dissenters to their senses, but was more than inflammatory enough to enrage the populace and exacerbate an all but intractable political stand-off.

For a time arson looting and mayhem spread unchecked and, within 24 hours, the former British protectorate's economy was left in tatters

What now?

To Brigadier-General Bill Sass – a former South African Defence Force

off the question is, who is going to help this economically poor country get back on its feet again, and how long will it take?

"For the next 20 years Lesotho will blame South Africa for this"

He adds "One really feels that more could have been achieved by diplomacy, before sending in the troops

"And, from a tactical perspective, an urban, civilian setting is among the worst situations to be in – you don't know who you are meant to be shooting at, and you don't know where your enemy might be. It's very difficult, tactically"

Politically, the apparent unwillingness of President Mandela or his deputy Thabo Mbeki to cut short their foreign travels and attend the crisis is a telling deficiency

Armies, says Helmoed Romer-Heitman, southern African correspondent for the authoritative Jane's Defence Weekly, are "blunt instruments" that, if they are to be used with effect, must be powerfully deployed.

"If you are going into the peacekeeping business, you must go in heavy One battalion is too small a force You want people to be overawed and refrain from shooting at you Once shooting starts, things begin to unravel."

Mr Romer Heitman believes the

ern African Studies

"I think (the intervention) is a mistake and the most inept handling of a very complex situation"

Department of Foreign Affairs

"They have severely damaged very careful work by other departments – trade and industry, trans

'I have always wondered

To Brigadier-General Bill Sass – a former South African Defence Force infantry officer and now military commentator for the Institute for Security Studies – there are only two serious questions, and both "give cause for alarm"

"The first is, how do we get our selves out of this entanglement? The second, more pressing one, is how is the shattered Lesotho economy going to recover?"

There is not much scope for a quick withdrawal, he argues, because the intervention itself has heightened the conflict and necessitated a forceful presence

"We cannot just pull out, because that will leave a vacuum This is not going to blow over quickly, and there does not seem to be certainty about what it is we hope to achieve there

"So, for South Africa and the SADC, the first long-term problem will be finding a way to withdraw with honour and with an acceptable achievement in place," he says

"The economic challenge is more difficult With all the buildings having been burned, businesses destroyed and investors frightened begin to unravel."

Mr Romer Heitman believes the fundamental misjudgment was probably an assumption that the bulk of the populace would support South Africa's intervention because of the majority support for the elected government. But, once the shooting started, anger flared.

What of the military capacity, the aptitude of the troops and their commanders?

"Without doubt," he says "the casualties are extraordinarily heavy for a force this size under these circumstances, but it does not mean the troops are badly trained, or their officers inept. It could just be bad luck.

"It's very easy to nit-pick, and there's no doubt (Colonel) Robbie Hartslief has plenty of practical experience.

"The key thing is that his force should have been bigger – three or four battalions at least. If I'd been in his shoes, I would have preferred not to go in at all."

One of the fiercest critics of the exercise so far is Dot Keet senior research fellow at the University of the Western Cape's Centre for South

[illegible] intervention) is a mistake, and the most inept handling of a very complex situation."

Not only is it "at variance" with South Africa's position on armed intervention in Congo, but it is "clearly inconsistent" with the country's handling of complex economic relations with neighbouring countries

"The inept handling of this situation by the military and foreign affairs will impact on more fundamental economic negotiations.

"The paradox is that it is South Africa's very military might that prevents it from playing a role in direct peace-keeping because it could not afford to use its might.

"So, we have an absurdly anomalous situation where the continent's most powerful country has muscled in on the smallest, poorest country and is effectively prevented from asserting its will.

"A situation that was complex and unstable, but not violent has now become seriously violent, and South Africa will have to pay for that damage," says Ms Keet.

"This testifies to a serious lack of understanding of the politics of southern Africa in the military and the

They have severely damaged very careful work by other departments – trade and industry, transport, labour and water, to mention a few – to establish agreed programmes and methods of working with neighbours

"There is a great deal of distrust in southern Africa and this will deepen the suspicion.

The prospect of any good coming from the military intervention is also doubted by Richard Cornwell of the Institute for Security Studies

He comments "There has to be a political settlement but the chances of achieving that have been thrown into doubt by South Africa's intervention Instead of dousing the flames, we have fuelled them.

"I am not convinced that all political and diplomatic avenues had been exhausted and one of the chief difficulties now is how South Africa can withdraw with any confidence in the situation remaining stable.

"The Lesotho defence force has been shattered, and the police probably lack capacity

"What was the contingency plan?" he wonders 'The whole thing seems clouded in uncertainty "

Mbeki's reform vision must start at home

TYRONE SEALE



London – A single news bulletin on British television vividly illustrated the way South Africa is spreading itself about the international arena.

In one item of the Monday broadcast, a smiling President Mandela rose to give sex shamed President Clinton a standing ovation at the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly in New York Another showed Deputy President Thabo Mbeki seated close to Queen Elizabeth II as she officially closed the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur

South Africa matters Or, at very least, likes to think it does

Which explains why on Tuesday, another British television bulletin featured South African soldiers rounding up supporters of the political opposition in Lesotho, where a Southern African Development Community inquiry into the May 23 election has patently failed to allay suspicions that the governing party profited from a rigged poll.

Developments in Lesotho may have been at the back of the deputy president's mind in his plea to the Non Aligned Movement summit in Durban three weeks ago

He robustly endorsed the growing clarion call, particularly among governments in the global south, for the transformation of multilateral institutions such as the UN and the World Bank to promote prosperity and development for all.

He noted that consensus on this wish was not unanimous "Clearly, any among us who is preoccupied with denying his or her people their democratic and human rights, who is fixated on waging war against others, who is too busy looting the public coffers or who thinks that he or she must bow in supplication for charity to those whose wealth sets them aside as the mighty, will not have the time to participate in meeting this historic challenge."

While the dust kicked up by South African tanks in Maseru settles and the SA National Defence Force prepares flags to drape over the coffins of soldiers killed in the mountain kingdom, the Mbeki prophecy has assumed a chilling realism.

While the dust kicked up by our tanks in Maseru settles, his prophecy assumes a chilling realism

His troops crossed the border partly in defence of a regime with an established anti-democratic track record, the opposition in Lesotho is claiming that South Africa is waging war on the majority there, the looting in the streets of Maseru will continue, and the South African intervention demonstrates the correlation between this country's might and its wealth.

Of course, this is not the analysis Mr Mbeki had in mind when he implored the NAM to challenge the established world order, but then politics has a way of superimposing reality on rhetoric when you least expect it.

Intervention in Lesotho, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, begs questions about the intrinsic legitimacy and accountability of the SADC Is it one of those multilateral institutions the deputy president would like to see reformed?

In spite of gains achieved in economic co-operation, the SADC is still characterised by a potentially damaging blend of economic disparities and political divergence – not the stuff of which you'd expect the regional moral police to be made

Clashes of personality and ideology among SADC figureheads and necessarily subjective appraisals of the urgency of beckoning crises have inevitably led to some going it alone, as Zimbabwe did in the Congo As crisis management prevails, democratic decision making retreats, and hard-earned solidarity is sacrificed

The SADC is not the first strategic alliance to wrestle with these problems The European Union has elected cosmopolitan democracy as a way to pool aspects of individual countries' sovereignty and to set up effective courts of law

Voters in the EU's constituent states are given the right to elect national MPs and Euro MPs the latter being European specialists based in Brussels

Anthony Giddens, director of the London School of Economics and Political Science sees the EU as an effective response to globalisation, the seemingly runaway process of transnational financial economic and political co-operation which Mr Mbeki and others believe, is bypassing the world's poorest countries

Mr Giddens admits the EU has its problems, but says that in its economic role it is pioneering forms of governance that do not fit any traditional role He goes as far as suggesting that the European Parliament could be a model for a parliamentary assembly of the kind that has been suggested for the UN

It has been proposed in the case of the UN that parliaments of member states would first send representatives who would develop proposals for a directly elected assembly

For South Africa, supporting such reforms on the global political stage implies that it should advocate similar changes at SADC level.

Allowing the people of the region a say in what their governments do within regional forums does not mean every urgent execution of foreign policy has to be subjected to a referendum or marathon debate

As in all other instances of governance, guidelines from the sidelines have their use in infusing leadership initiatives with popular opinion and spreading accountability across more than a roomful of talking heads – Independent Foreign Service

I have always wondered what it would like to be shot. It hurts' – reporter

SAM KILEY

Maseru – Reaching under his black and blue blanket, worn as a cape the Basotho teenager pulled out an automatic rifle, released the safety catch and levelled his weapon at me

Seven years of negotiating checkpoints in African war zones teaches you a lot about human nature In some cases you can bully, bluster or beg your way past gunmen This time there was no mistaking the calm, deadly intent on the young man's face

After winding through numerous roadblocks manned by ever more aggressive Basotho enraged by the South African invasion of their country, I had slowed to a halt at what was less a barricade and more a military position I put my arms in the air out of the car and shouted that we were British journalists

The words had little effect other than to provoke several of the armed men to wave us closer forward. It was clearly a trap To advance would have been to commit suicide, to reverse would have invited them to open fire

We sat and stared at the young men who stared back One yelled in Afrikaans "get lost , others continued to smile and beckon.

That was when I looked to my left and watched someone try to kill me He cocked his weapon. Flicked off the safety catch and the windscreen exploded in my face

I have always wondered what it would be like to be shot It hurts It is like being hit with a sledgehammer

When the bullet struck the windscreen, it shattered into fragments, which ricocheted into my right shoulder peppering me with pieces of lead.

The force of the blast threw me against my passenger, Anton La Guardia of The Daily Telegraph and we both ended up on the floor of the car We remained there head down, covered in glass and blood spilling on to my trousers as I flung the car into a U turn and charged into a ditch which protected us from a hail of small arms fire

As I gripped the bloody steering wheel with the hand of my injured arm and worked the gears like a Formula One racing driver skidding round road blocks of burning cars across treacherous stretches of rock and dirt. Anton tore off his scarlet T shirt, rolled it into a ball and pressed into my shoulder wounds.

The worst effects of a bullet are when they tear into a major blood vessel, hit a bone, or leave a gaping exit wound In a mad pantomime of desperation, Anton groped around my back and the rear of my shoulder probing for a hole

Using the tiny amount of medical knowledge I have picked up over the years, I asked him to press as hard as he could into the hole at the front. My right eye was beginning to blur and I feared I would pass out from loss of blood. Later I discovered the blurring was caused by fragments of the charred door frame lodged in my eyelid Pieces of grey plastic and windscreen glass had embedded themselves in my face and chest and looked like an unappetising pizza.

The feelings of relief that we had escaped and concern for my wound, quickly gave way to anger

I feel no animosity towards the man who shot me From the colour of my skin and the licence plate on my car, he obviously thought I was a South African and part of the clumsy invasion force which in the space of two days has reduced the city to rubble and ashes.

The extent of the incompetence of the South African invasion was revealed by the location of the Basotho rebel position where I was shot. It was a good 4km behind the South African and Botswanan front line, any attempt to reinforce the Southern African troops meant running a gauntlet through hostile territory

The South Africans were hugely outnumbered, though not outgunned, and had little control of the strategic situation It will take many more troops from President Mandela's army to bring any semblance of order to Maseru and greater political finesse than his Government has shown to put an end to the violence

Searching for medical help, I had time to wonder at the futility of a mission aimed at restoring "order" to this tiny mountain kingdom, which has instead brought anarchy

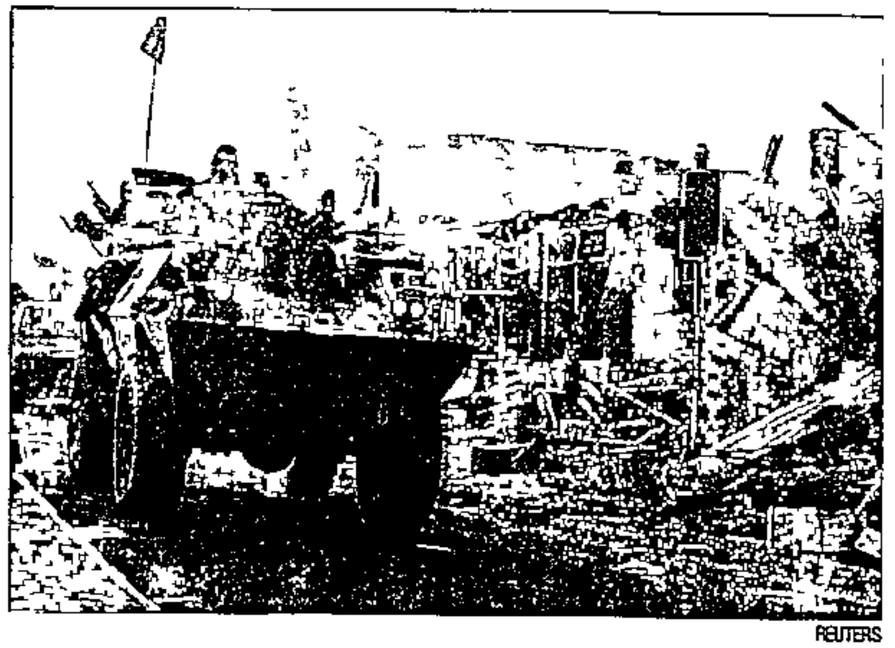
What is most extraordinary about being shot is how many people can look you in the face and tell you how lucky you are

The South African army medic who patched me up on the border was clearly a little disappointed that I had not lost an eye, damaged a vital organ, ruptured an artery or even broken a bone I had the same response from the doctor across the border in South Africa Even my father, who long ago gave up worrying about my scrapes, expressed surprise that it had not happened before

Grudgingly, I have to admit they are probably right If the gunman had aimed a few inches to the right I would have taken a direct shot in the head If I had been more seriously hurt and unable to drive the car we would certainly have been killed by the mob

For that I am grateful.

But the next time South Africa decides to invade one of its neighbours, I am determined to get somebody else to do the driving – The Times London



REUTERS

Peacekeepers. Botswana Defence Force soldiers patrol the streets of Maseru

Lesotho incursion tarnishes SA's peacemaker image

Brawls and the deployment of troops for the first time since the first democratic election brought the curtain down on this sitting of Parliament, writes political correspondent Wyndham Hartley

BD 25/9/98 (167)

THERE was a real sense of absolute disbelief People were wandering the corridors of Parliament slightly bemused at the thought that SA troops had been deployed in Lesotho by Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi

What a terrible irony that he was driving the bus with President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki out of the country Another irony is that when he was first made acting president there were privately expressed fears that he could use the power to stage a coup but this did not happen and instead the Inkatha Freedom Party leader has become the man who took the rainbow nation to war

The Democratic Party's (DP) leader Tony Leon and his Freedom Front counterpart Constand Viljoen approached the speaker with a request for a debate on the invasion first thing on Tuesday morning The rationale was that the president is required by the constitution to inform Parliament and the nation of the deployment of the defence force, particularly in a foreign country, and to ask for its sanction This resulted in the speaker scheduling an extraordinary debate where Buthelezi made his explanation to the National Assembly

The response from opposition parties was immediate condemnation They said that it was "aggression", "an invasion" and "unconstitutional".

Buthelezi described this as "mean" politics with the opposition parties using a Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiative in Lesotho for party political gain He said repeated requests from the Lesotho government had led to the intervention What had effectively happened was a coup with the legal government ousted by opposition demonstrators, he said.

There is doubt about that, however, and the Lesotho opposition defends its protests against the election result as justifiable civil disobedience

It is an interesting point that the "invasion" is called unconstitutional by some for the simple reason that there was neither sufficient cause nor persuasive international obligation for this course of action. Buthelezi should not carry the can alone — he may have pushed the button, but he did that after careful consultation with Mandela and Mbeki

It has been an unmitigated disaster Shops owned by South Africans in Maseru have been burned down. SA soldiers and Lesotho soldiers and civilians are dead Eyewitnesses say the Maseru into which the dawn invasion marched was peaceful The terrible violence, looting and arson was a response to the military intervention of SA and not the cause of the invasion, they insist

The point was made that it went directly against everything which SA has stood for in the recent past In the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo for instance the attitude was to talk and the whole issue of military intervention was rejected.

A negotiated settlement with all the role players was the issue. Why was Lesotho different? Why did it warrant military intervention and not the Congo?

One hopes that it is not simply a case of trying to out-Mugabe Mugabe. Some analysts say that the situation in Lesotho was that SA would have got egg on its face no matter which way it had jumped.

For example if it had continued to talk to all the protagonists — both government and opposition — in search of a negotiated settlement and there had been a coup with the opposition grouping grabbing power the SA government would have looked silly and been damned Just as they are now being damned for propping up the elected government in Lesotho with military force.

The real problems began with the botched release of the Langa report. Judge Pius Langa and his team, we will recall, were sent to Lesotho to investigate electoral fraud in Lesotho's May general election.

The opposition parties insist that the results, which awarded all but one seat to the Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party, were achieved illegally

One day the director-general in Thabo Mbeki's office, Frank Chikane, was saying that they were flying to Lesotho to hand over the report Then, next thing he was saying that the report had to go to the SADC leaders first

When it was finally unveiled in Lesotho there were blank pages and sections which did not correspond with the index. The Lesotho opposition said it was doctored.



BUTHELEZI

While some will argue that this simply gave the opposition time to grab power it must be seen that this delay fanned the flames. Basothos said that the delay was to tamper with the document and water it down so that the government could stay in place.

It is clear that the long delay in releasing the Langa report and its noncommittal findings were explosive in the Lesotho context.

At best the situation was underestimated and at worst there was a criminal neglect by SA foreign affairs and intelligence authorities of the developing situation in Lesotho

The tatters of our foreign policy were on display in the national assembly this week.

For a president to admit the defeat of a negotiated option and go for a military one is a really sad day for the "new" SA.

While it was all too frequent in apartheid SA, one hoped that our foreign policy interventions would avoid military action for a little longer than four years.

To make matters worse, the operation was clearly badly planned and managed thus ensuring that our collective face not only has egg on it but also has a bloody nose.

The miracle of the rainbow nation and its negotiated settlement is gone and the image of the peacemaker has been considerably tarnished. The DP was wrong when it said the Employment Equity Bill was the death of the rainbow nation — that happened when SA invaded Lesotho

Lesotho raid reminiscent of darker days in SA's history

(167) ARG 25/9/98

WILLEM STEENKAMP

For many Capetonians the news of the Lesotho intervention has meant a return to darker days of doleful news paper headlines and heart-rending photographs of dead and wounded South African soldiers – even more shocking now, perhaps, because the country is not at war

Other old soldiers will know what I am talking about when I say that I was gripped by a sort of helpless rage at seeing our lads being carried away killed and wounded, my mind filled with images of other battles and other dead – and much sympathy for the loved ones of people like Corporal Jerome Sax, killed while tending his wounded comrades

By way of some small consolation, they should know that fighting soldiers have always had a boundless admiration for the "ops medics" and their disregard for personal danger while doing their duty

Inevitably it has all led to one angry question Why? How can it be (as one border veteran forcibly put it to me) that "a country like South Africa can get its arse kicked by the smallest army south of the Sahara? In the old days it would have been a piece of cake"

Well, maybe so But the issue must not be seen – and definitely not at this stage – in terms of who booted whose backside (the mutineers after all, are reported to have lost at least 16 dead)

The fact is that Lesotho in 1998 is not the border or Angola in the 1980s, and that makes a world of difference

For one thing, South Africa is not at war with Lesotho and the Lesotho Defence Force is not the enemy

Then again, South Africa and Botswana did not invade Lesotho but sent in an intervention force to fulfil strictly limited goals at the behest of the Southern African Development Countries

Those two facts colour everything that has happened so far, and will doubtless colour everything still to come If ever there was a case of comparisons being invidious, this is one

'How can it be that South Africa can get its arse kicked by the smallest army south of the Sahara?'

The Lesotho intervention cannot be compared with "external operations" into Angola in the border-war days

■ First, the political imperative is different.

Most border war external operations had specific short term aims, usually amounting to a carefully orchestrated air and land attack on certain forces or bases in Angola, followed by an orderly withdrawal.

Sometimes it did not work out this way and they dragged on or changed shape and duration due to evolving circumstances – but not often, and not by design.

In this case the issue was much more diffuse The combined force was tasked to occupy a variety of installations and buildings, ranging from King Letsie I's palace to the Maseru border post, to deny them to the Lesotho mutineers, who would then, presumably, begin to collapse

The situation would then be stabilised somehow Probably the best way to describe such a mission is "open-ended"

■ Second, the intervention troops were obviously very restricted in their operational procedures, thanks to the political imperative

There was no question of "softening up" the enemy with artillery and mortar bombardment, or cannon and missile strafing by ground-attack aircraft – in fact there was not even an enemy as such.

As a result the intervention force found itself in any soldier's worst nightmare restricted basically to fighting with small arms only, under rules of engagement which did not apply to the other side

■ Thirdly, the intervention force was very small, given the size of the task – reportedly 600 South Africans and a contingent from the Botswana Defence Force

It must not be forgotten that any force with a Lesotho-type tasking has two main jobs firstly to take certain areas or installations and then to hold them for an unspecified period.

During the old externals an operation of this magnitude probably would have involved two full mechanised battle group – either leap-frogging their way from target to target, or launching a simultaneous two pronged attack with another element held in reserve.

Any such deployment was obviously impossible in this case, not only because of the bad impression it would create internationally but possibly also because the South African Army is currently at its smallest since the 1960s

■ Fourth, the terrain was a factor.

The fighting in Angola usually took place over a large, sparsely populated and featureless area with plenty of room to manoeuvre.

In this case the intervention force had to go into a tight little country with most of the targets fairly close to one another in the most densely populated area.

■ Fifth, there is the question of time and timings

Apart from "hot pursuit" operations, most border-era externals were preceded by weeks and sometimes months of extremely detailed planning, much of it based on an extremely sophisticated intelligence-gathering process, ranging from electronic interception to "eyeball" activities.

They would then be launched at the most opportune moment.

It hardly seems likely, given the speed with which the Lesotho crisis escalated, that this sort of meticulous process was possible, although there can be little doubt that the military intelligence was able to provide considerable material from its normal operations

An exacerbating factor in this case would have been the constantly evolving situation inside Lesotho as the country drifted closer to anarchy

■ Sixth, the nature of the opposition was also different.

In Angola the raiders benefited from definite ethnic aspects of the civil war there

In this case they were dealing with an ethnically homogeneous tribal nation with a history of fierce resistance to all invaders.

'Lesotho in 1998 is not the border or Angola in the 1980s – and that makes a world of difference'

Historically the BaSotho have always been tough customers when aroused, it is not generally remembered now that during the mid-19th Century, only a few decades after being welded together from disparate elements by Moshoeshoe I, they were among the few Southern African tribes who fought the Boers to a standstill – not once but twice.

Less than two decades later, during the so-called "Gun War" of 1879, it took a British force of more than 2000, armed with artillery and the latest rifles, eight months to subdue Chief Moorosi of the Phuthi clan, whose army consisted of no more than 300 poorly armed warriors.

■ Seventh, Lesotho is a nation in arms. The BaSotho have a long reputation of arms possession, and in addition large quantities of military weapons have been looted and distributed among the population.

A nation of horsemen, they have a long tradition of mobile warfare.

Inevitably there have been insinuations that things might have gone better if more white troops had been deployed. This is just not so

Both black and white soldiers perform well if they have good leaders, good training, good weapons and tight discipline.

That has been proved over and over again in the past few centuries, right up to and including the border war, which in its latter stages was waged mainly by locally enlisted Namibians.

Naturally there are certain questions which could be asked – but the answers should be weighed before there is any rush to judgement.

One could debate the wisdom (and indeed the legality) of the intervention, as various opposition parties are already doing.

One could speculate about the decision to use force instead of economic pressure, considering that in 1986 the mere imposition of normal border controls toppled Chief Leabua Jonathan within a few days – was it perhaps because of a perception of extreme urgency?

One could ask why the SANDF assembled an ad hoc force instead of deploying one of its standing battalions – could it have been due to the pressure of time, or the deployment elsewhere of our budget-crippled combat personnel assets?

One could analyse the tactics glimpsed in the photographs and TV footage, and ask why some troops were not wearing their helmets (one can be sure any failures in combat discipline and drills are already being mercilessly dissected by the SA Army itself)

But that sort of discussion can come later In the meantime there is one interim lesson that emerges very clearly from the Lesotho affair, namely that "peace-support operations" can be very hazardous affairs.

It is very likely that in the future we will necessarily be involved in such enterprises elsewhere in Africa.

It is therefore up to us as a nation to ensure that when we are, our soldiers are numerous, well-equipped and well trained enough to carry out their mission without unnecessary loss of life

The right answer to the question "was it worth it?" must always be an unambiguous "yes"

■ *Willem Steenkamp is a well-known military consultant and commentator who has many years experience as a Citizen Force officer in the South African Defence Force – during which time he has seen action.*

A city ruined by bungled intervention

The bungled military intervention in Lesotho has had a huge cost in lives, economic progress and peaceful relations, writes Kevin O'Grady



Shops and buildings smoulder in Maseru

Picture: AFP

BURNING and smouldering buildings indiscriminate and unchecked arson and looting At least 66 people killed A once-thriving city practically destroyed

These were the costs of this week's SA-led "peacekeeping" mission to Lesotho following almost two months of protests by opposition parties against the results of the mountain kingdom's May elections.

During those seven weeks, the opposition loudly proclaims, only five people were killed and "not a single window was broken"

Anyone present in Maseru this week would have found it difficult to argue with that point of view The situation was rich in irony, however well-intentioned and legally correct Tuesday's dawn incursion by 600 SA National Defence Force (SANDF) troops may have been.

Its legal correctness is under dispute, as is the motive behind what is variously described as an "invasion", "incursion" or "intervention", depending upon to whom one speaks

On Wednesday, SA's Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi was running circles of legalese around protests from Lesotho opposition parties that the country's constitution required King Letsie III to be informed of any military intervention

Lesotho's constitution did require the king to be informed, Buthelezi agreed, but it did not stipulate when he should be informed. King Letsie III was told as soon as SA troops set foot on Lesotho soil, Buthelezi said.

Assuming for the moment that this was the correct position, and that SA and other Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states acted strictly in terms of the 1994 SADC agreement relating to Lesotho, there are still indications that SA bungled its first post-apartheid deployment of troops on foreign soil in several respects

The first is that it is becoming increasingly apparent that the SANDF severely underestimated its task against the mutinous Lesotho Defence Force, whose sole *raison d'être* is the possibility of a land invasion from its immediate, and only, neighbour

This worrying lack of intelligence has been confirmed by Defence Minister Joe Modise, who said SA's intelligence services failed to detect in advance the presence of 53 trucks loaded with ammunition and weapons that enabled mutineers holed up in the Makonyane barracks on the outskirts of Maseru to keep SA troops at bay for two full days

The SA forces were also dangerously understrength, more than likely because of poor intelligence about the level of resistance anticipated, and entered the country prepared for a best-case rather than a worst-case scenario

So instead of securing the capital and preserving peace and stability, as was the mission's intention, SANDF troops became tied up in a protracted battle with mutineers, giving opposition supporters the opportunity to plunder, loot and burn the city centre

Central Maseru on Tuesday and Wednesday was mayhem and, for hours at a time, there was not a soldier in sight Practically every building along Maseru's main street, King's Way, was burning. Plumes of thick black smoke could be seen from as far as Ladybrand, almost 20km away

Along the entire route to Makonyane on the eastern side of the city, the picture was the same — smashed windows, buildings ablaze and bands of looters making off with fridges, washing machines, furniture and clothes and food by the bagful.

Burning barricades were scattered across the city, manned by groups of young men who, depending on their mood, either charged "toll fees" to let vehicles proceed or harassed, manhandled, threatened and robbed those who attempted to pass through.

The SA government's argument that SADC troops were not allowed to act against civilians, in terms of the agreement that led to their intervention, holds little water If the SANDF had entered the country with, say, 5 000 troops instead of a paltry 600, the city could have been flooded with patrols, obviating the need to lift a finger against civilians who ran riot in the soldiers' absence and possibly saving Maseru from destruction.

Apart from the apparently botched military operation, there is also something disconcerting about the sequence of events before and after the SANDF's dawn "peacekeeping" incursion.

The day before the incursion, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi addressed a news briefing in Pretoria with the high commissioners to SA and Lesotho from three other (SADC) states

Playing down, while at the same time acknowledging, the possibility of military intervention in Lesotho, Mufamadi said the SADC was concerned at the deteriorating security situation there. He scolded the Lesotho government and opposition parties for squabbling over a meeting venue and said the SADC's first priority was to avoid having to send troops in. Just 16 hours later, 600 SA troops rolled across Maseru Bridge and into the capital, with 200 of their Botswana Defence Force colleagues on the way from Gaborone.

At about 10am, five hours after SA soldiers entered Maseru, a statement was issued by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office welcoming intervention the previous night by Letsie which had finally brought agreement that Lesotho's opposing political parties would meet to discuss the findings of the Langa commission's investigation into alleged election irregularities

Twelve hours before the incursion, the SA and Lesotho governments and Lesotho opposition parties all denied a coup had taken place, yet the incursion was later justified on the grounds that there had been one The situation in Lesotho changed little after the denials were made

These observations lend some weight to claims by SA and Lesotho opposition parties that all avenues for negotiation were not exhausted before troops were sent into Lesotho If Lesotho's opposition had taken power by force, as the SA and Lesotho governments claim, why was the opposition adamant that talks should continue, and why the announcement of an agreement on negotiations brokered by Letsie the night before the incursion?

There is also mounting evidence to suggest that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) government, whose interests the SADC intervened to protect, no longer enjoys the support of many of those who elected it.

If, as the Langa commission says, no more than 2,5% of Basotho voters cast their ballots in favour of the opposition, why were the streets of Maseru flooded with opposition supporters this week and where were the LCD supporters who, one imagines, would have welcomed the SADC troops with open arms? Two days after the incursion, fewer than 1 000 Basotho were reported to have fled the country and the Maseru Bridge border post was congested by foreigners, not citizens

The extreme anti-SA sentiment following the raid — South Africans removed their car registration plates to minimise the chances of identification and attack, but even this was no guarantee — was also clearly not expected by SA's government. If it had been, SA would have begun the evacuation of its citizens before, not after, the incursion.

Now that relative calm has returned to Maseru and its surrounds, decisions must be made and questions answered about what to do next.

How long can SADC troops be expected to remain there in order to prevent a further popular uprising? Should new elections be held under impeccable international supervision to determine once and for all who should hold the reins of power?

Answers to these will be thrashed out in the coming days, but two questions are now being asked to which there can be no easy response Regardless of the motive and legal correctness of the SADC action, was it worth the cost in human lives and to the economies of two countries?

And, while Basotho of different political persuasions have fought for control of the tiny mountain kingdom with a 909km-long border, who would now want the daunting task of rebuilding a city that has been all but destroyed in a two-day orgy of violence and of restoring the trust between the citizens of two countries which, geography dictates, must get on together?



HANDS FULL OF ARMS. A South African soldier at a military barracks in Maseru carries weapons captured from Lesotho rebels
PICTURE. AP



MARCHING ORDERS. South African soldiers escort a group of captured Basotho at the Lesotho army base close to the capital Maseru It is believed the group included looters and rebel fighters
PICTURE. AP

Tensions ease as SADC takes control

AS THE dust begins to settle in Maseru, SADC leaders are united on the need for military intervention while continuing efforts to negotiate a political solution to the conflict.

THE mood in Lesotho eased last night as fighting between Lesotho rebel troops and those of the Southern African Development Community all but ceased People in Maseru were walking freely on the streets without the accompanying sound of gunshots

Lesotho army chief Makhule Mosakeng resumed command of the Lesotho Defence Force yesterday afternoon after he was earlier forced at gunpoint to step aside.

Lesotho's Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said on the country's state controlled radio that Mosakeng and the more than 60 senior officers who fled to South Africa during the mutiny, which began on September 11, would resume their positions immediately

Mosakeng and the other ousted officers returned to the LDF headquarters and began talks with the intervention force leaders and officials from South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office and the international Committee of the Red Cross

From last night, the LDF, the police and SADC troops began to enforce the dusk-to-dawn curfew announced on Wednesday All people found on the streets between 6pm and 6am would be arrested.

Meanwhile, recriminations started flying in Maseru, with Mosisili saying opposition political parties had conspired to assassinate him Opposition politicians dismissed his claim as "trash"

Mosisili said intelligence reports had revealed a plot to kill him, Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope, Foreign Minister Tom Thabane and other senior government officials

Responding, opposition alliance spokesperson Vincent Malebo said the opposition knew nothing about such a claim "I don't have time for trash like that He has nightmares and deserves it."

The SADC forces have suggested that the Lesotho government declare a state of emergency to allow law and order to be restored.

The commander of the SADC operation, Colonel Robbie Hartslief, said a state of emergency was necessary to enable the intervention soldiers to dislodge large amounts of weaponry that had been handed to civilians by dissident soldiers.

"What concerns me is the armed youths They have military weapons and they got those from the barracks."

Tracing the weapons, which Hartslief believes were distributed after the dissidents seized the keys to two official caches, is one of the biggest headaches for the intervention forces, which entered Lesotho on Tuesday

Mbeki was yesterday tight-lipped about the government's plans for Lesotho, while President Nelson Mandela insisted that SA troops would remain in place.

Talking to reporters at the start of a two-day state visit to Canada, Mandela said the South African military presence in Lesotho was part of a SADC force "We cannot take any unilateral action about our troops there"

He also insisted that South African and other regional governments had "tried peaceful means" to resolve the Lesotho troubles, but these had failed and "only then did we use force"

Government sources said Mbeki, who arrived back from Malaysia yesterday, was to be briefed by acting-president Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the National Intelligence Agency, the SANDF and Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi Mufamadi was said to be organising a media conference to take place at Ladybrand today

Top government officials including Defence Minister Joe Modise, chief of the SANDF Siphiwe Nyanda and Lesotho and Botswana government officials and military officers are expected to attend.

Mbeki's spokesperson Ronnie Mamoepa said the Lesotho government had agreed to the meeting aimed at restoring peace and stability, but there had been no response from Lesotho opposition parties.

Other SADC members were also expected Zimbabwean President Robert Mubage, who has clashed recently with Mandela, said yesterday that he fully supported SA's military intervention in Lesotho

"Any military attack to undermine a sovereign government is viewed by all of us in SADC as rebellious and therefore as a matter of great concern, requiring immediate redress," Mugabe said. —Staff Writers, Sapa

King prevented from addressing nation

MASERU The Lesotho government yesterday prevented King Letsie III from giving an address to the nation on Radio Lesotho in which he expressed his condolences to his people.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Mnyani Mphafi told local radio reporters everything that went on air, including the king's message, had to be approved by the government, in particular by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili

Mphafi returned the statement to the king, who then sought Mosisili's intervention. But he too refused to allow the king a voice on the radio

In the prepared address, which a Sapa journalist read, King Letsie's message was conciliatory, appealing to the nation to be calm, take stock of what had happened and put aside their differences to normalise the situation

The king expressed his condolences to bereaved families and business people who suffered massive losses.

Opposition parties reacted angrily to the Lesotho government censoring the king —Sapa

MAIL & GUARDIAN
September 25 to October 1 1998

As mutinous Lesotho troops take to the hills in preparation for a drawn-out struggle, we

The two versions of the Langa

M+G 25/9-1/10/98 (167)

William Boot

The Southern African Development Community's mishandling of the Langa commission of inquiry and its inability to publicly admit that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) had fraudulently stolen the May 23 elections are at the heart of Lesotho's descent into turmoil

The suspicion that the Langa report was doctored before it was released is more than just opposition paranoia Only weeks ago, passages and details from the interim report of the commission leaked from the locked rooms where it was being compiled

Among other observations the interim report cited "gross irregularities" in the way Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had handled not only the compilation of the voters' roll, but also the electoral process itself

In fulfilment of the commission's brief to find a way forward for crisis ridden Lesotho the interim report called for the elections to be annulled and fresh elections to be held under international supervision

Later, before Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's aborted trip to Lesotho, where he was to release the final version of the commission's report to political role players, sources very close to the process confirmed the following that the contents of the report were "highly explosive", that there could be difficulties in maintaining order in the light of expected anger against the LCD government which recorded a landslide "victory in the disputed elections, and that the major problem facing the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) troika of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe would be to manage proposed new elections in Lesotho

In the event, Mbeki did not make the report public on that occasion — though at a subsequent briefing Minister of Defence Joe Modise confirmed that he had had every intention of doing so, until his troika partners intervened to have it referred to the SADC's Mauritius summit for strategic consideration.

Nor was the increasingly controversial document published at the summit itself — apparently, despite the supposed need for a summit level stand on the Lesotho issue, not to mention the extreme volatility of the situation inside the country (with a military insurrection in progress) time constraints prevented its discussion

Not only that as SADC chair, President Nelson Mandela reversed the earlier argument and declared that the summit was in fact not the appropriate forum for the publication of the report, but that it should be taken up directly with the principals inside Lesotho

With questions growing out of questions, more days elapsed Lesotho slid deeper and deeper into crisis with junior officers in the military deposing their seniors, and while stopping short of declaring a coup effectively preventing the LCD government from operating

And still the report, dated September 9 in its final form, was not made public until September 17

Why? The report which finally saw the light of day is in many respects dramatically different to the interim one, and cops out on every score Far from containing potentially explosive revelations of election fraud and gross irregularities, and far from looking to the management of new elections, it makes vague reference to the need for streamlining the electoral process and deepening democracy

It admits that there could have been irregularities in the elections, but fails to find that the will of the people was not reflected It is profoundly unsatisfactory

Furthermore, it ignores the evidence of what actually appears on the page For instance, the commission notes that when it came to examine the sealed white bags in which election materials are required by law to be stored as safe record of elections, they found that 95% of the bags had been unsealed, and in some cases, attempts had been made to reseal them

To most observers, this would probably constitute *prima facie* evidence of irregularities The commission however apparently accepted

SANDF's chaotic invasion

M+G 25/9-1/10/98 (167)

Sechaba ka'Nkosi



Miscalculated Troops from South Africa and Botswana are desperately trying to stamp their authority on Maseru, while the Lesotho rebels have taken to the hills. PHOTOGRAPHS: NADINE HUTTON

Mutinous Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) soldiers sympathetic to opposition parties are removing arms from military bases in preparation for a prolonged war against the allied forces of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The soldiers have retreated strategically to the mountains where they have been able to deny the fall of their Makoanyane army headquarters to the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) despite a heavy artillery and mortar onslaught from the two armies

As SANDF and BDF troops desperately tried to stamp their authority on the mountain kingdom, LDF troops, forced out of their barracks during this week s skirmishes, were reportedly regrouping to continue their battle against what they perceive as a foreign invasion

Some of their weapons from the barracks are believed to have filtered into the capital Maseru and surrounding villages to assist civilian armed resistance against the SADC troops

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili held an emergency Cabinet meeting at his official residence in Maseru to discuss the deteriorating situation in the country and the mutiny of his armed forces

Civilians are openly brandishing rifles in the streets, despite the heavy contingent of armed SADC troops An LDF lieutenant who refused to disclose his name told the *Mail & Guardian* that most of his colleagues have prepared themselves for a guerrilla operation should all their bases fall to SADC

The lieutenant said if the SADC forces thought they could exhaust the LDF's ammunition supplies they were in for a big surprise "To us there is no other option but to fight on If we retreat we may be arrested or even killed The fact that some of them [SADC forces] have been killed shows that we are also serious about our mission " he said

Added another LDF officer "We know we may not be as powerful as the two [Botswana and South Africa] armies but we are confident we can hold on for a very long time We believe the SADC miscalculated our capabilities. '

Soon after the SADC intervention, named Operation Boleas began, the miscalculations were evident The SANDF sent in about 600 soldiers to engage at least 2 000 members of what was known as a rebellious LDF contingent, which boasted strong support from armed civilians

The SANDF also had no clue of the routes to most of its targets. The army is reported to have driven to the Lesotho Sun hotel, in the opposite direction of its intended target of King Letsie III s royal palace The SANDF had to rely on journalists to tell it how many palace gates there were SANDF commanders had said there was one palace entrance, instead of three

Finally, the BDF took almost to 48 hours to join its South African counterparts in the operation, suggesting a lack of co-ordination between the command structures of the armies

By the time the SANDF had managed to identify its targets, the LDF was already briefed about the SANDF's presence and capabilities, and had prepared itself for an onslaught

LDF members boast they knew about the impending attack as early as last week As a result, the SANDF was caught unawares — also about the extent of the resistance the LDF and civilians could put up

So far, nine SANDF members have been killed — a figure disputed by the LDF as conservative — and many more were wounded

Realising the situation was getting out of control, SANDF commanders were forced to bring in reinforcements to root the rebel Basotho soldiers and armed civilians out of Maseru

On Wednesday, LDF members consistently fired on SANDF patrols in a display of power and determination. The frustrated SANDF fired warning shots that were quickly returned A few hours later, the SANDF began assaulting citizens who were looting the city centre

Said an injured SANDF sergeant: "It is true that the situation here is much tougher than we thought it would be It is complicated We have suffered casualties, but at least we are beginning to gain control of the area "

Sensing that the Lesotho soldiers were firmly behind them opposition leaders openly dared the SANDF and BDF to continue their mission at their own peril

Molapo Qhobela of the Basotholand Congress Party said the allied forces were betrayed by the battle-shy ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party (LCD) who had lost touch with what was happening in the country

"He [President Nelson Mandela] is honestly deceiving himself As soon as the SANDF leaves, we go back to square one I am not going to disclose what we are going to do " Qhobela said.

Local residents also responded to calls by the opposition to chase off SADC soldiers, burning down most of Maseru's central business district and looting whatever remained of the city

Angry youths also sparked what started off as anti South African sentiment to an open assault on all foreigners — with Indians who control most business in Lesotho, and journalists being prime targets

The youths hijacked cars on the city streets and stripped their victims of valuables before ordering them out of the country One of them, Romora Mokoena, articulately claimed that the attacks were meant to show the Basotho anger with the SADC initiative

He contended that while the Basotho are peaceful people, an attack by the SANDF on the royal palace was considered an assault on the whole nation ' Whoever ordered this invasion should have had the decency at least to consult our king prior to this We are not a rebellious nation, we are decent, he said

Calls for restraint from the newly formed youth organisation, the Social Democratic Party, were largely ignored by its claimed constituency Party president Masitise Seleso described the conflict as "a manifestation of Lesotho s political intolerance since independence

He says while he and the youth did not support the SADC initiative, none of the local parties — including the LCD — can claim innocence in the ongoing conflict. "We are seeing the germination of the seeds of decay inherent in our political system We are witnesses today of cold and calculated brutality and bestiality, a desperate attempt of a generation to stay in power "

re-examine the report that caused all the trouble

report

the Lesotho IEC s explanation that certain documents needed to be accessed" for audit ing purposes Similarly, the commissioners take grave note of peculiarities in dates of birth as recorded in the voters roll as compiled by the Lesotho IEC

These were uncovered by South African based forensic auditors OF&A and show what the auditors bluntly describe as a scientifi cally impossible concentration of births on particular days

But when they come to assess the implica tions they merely note that their own auditors were not able to access the relevant materials, and furthermore that the Lesotho IEC said that political parties were kept fully informed of every aspect of the registration process

To pause here for a moment the lack of access to the voters roll afforded to opposition parties was the subject of a Supreme Court action where judgment was delivered in favour of the opposition by the same token, the failure of the Lesotho IEC to make records available would on the face of it appear enough cause to question the freeness and fairness of the elections in terms of the commission brief — which explicitly includes an investigation of the role of the Lesotho IEC in the election process

Uncontested allegations that in flagrant violation of the Lesotho IEC's mandating legislation logistics for the election were handled by the Lesotho Defence Force's Tactical Intelligence Bureau, are met with the rather limp and unsubstantiated claim that Lesotho IEC officials were also always present.

Never mind that the intelligence bureau is frequently accused of acting as a secret police for the LCD government, that its signatories were the chief of the defence force, the LCD prime minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tom Thabane

Never mind that in the run up to the elec tion frequent allegations were levelled against the intelligence bureau of making incon venient opponents of the government, in cluding an academic demographer who was the first to question the compiling of the voters' roll, disappear

Examples of such seemingly incompre hensible naivety are legion in the pages of the report as it was finally released

But what is important in this context is not the total weight of the evidence, but the con clusion the commissioners chose to reach that despite the fact that by their own admission they were not in any position to judge conclusively, they decided that the will of the people had in fact been reflected in the elec tion results

How could they legitimately reach such a conclusion on the basis of a situation where they themselves note that key documentation was "in such a state that no reliable con clusions could be drawn from it' ?

As the report itself notes, documentation (which, if properly handled, would have guar anteed the fairness of the elections) left the commission in a position where it was unable to decide either "that the elections were rigged, or that fraud is excluded"

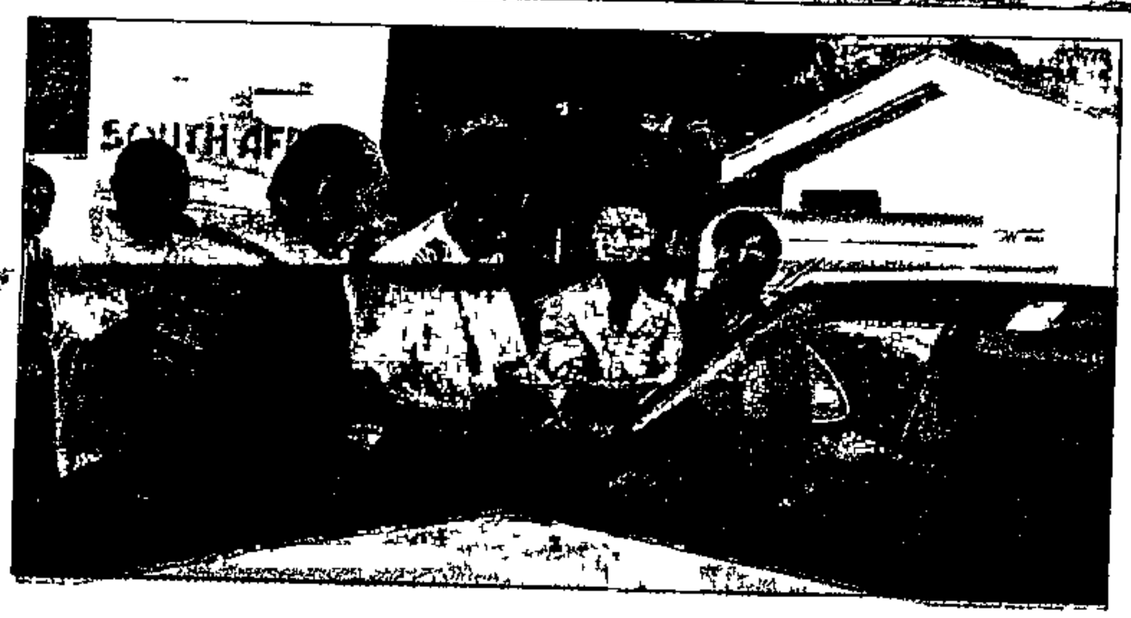
Nor does the commission's solution to the problem convince it takes the actual ballot papers as sole record – despite opposition arguments that these could reflect inflated voter numbers, that there was substantial evidence of spare ballot papers in existence, and so on

The commission itself notes in this regard the difficulty created by evidence of tamper ing with the ballot boxes and temper bags and the "incorrect filing of electoral matter"

The questions raised here will be asked more and more as the turmoil in Lesotho continues as it almost certainly will

And so will questions like why South Africa chose in such a dubious situation, to commit not only its troops, but also its international reputation, to propping up a government that it could not clear of electoral fraud





Get it while you can SADC soldiers (above) frogmarch past shops left empty by bands of looters Ex-patriots are leaving Lesotho in droves (left) after angry youths started assaulting all foreigners in Maseru

South Africa's foreign disasters

MTG 25/9-1/10/98 (300 PT)

Alex Duval Smith

The smouldering remains of Lesotho, a kingdom raped of its constitutional integrity after South Africa's heavy-handed military intervention, lie as visible proof of the post-apartheid government's disastrous foreign policy

Political analysts believe that it is chiefly South Africa's failure, since elections in 1994, to invent a credible role for itself in Africa which has led to a series of foreign policy about turns and blunders that have impacted on Congo and its neighbours, as well as Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria and Libya

The Lesotho intervention — which many experts refer to as an invasion because it was not approved by King Letsie III — came as a result of a plea from the country's prime minister to quash military opposition to his government

It resulted in the devastation of Lesotho's capital, Maseru, and in anarchy — partly because the intervention was ill-conceived but also because, apartheid-era style, it ran roughshod over the Constitution of a neigh bouring, if tiny and landlocked, country

Molapo Qhobela, leader of the Basotho Congress Party, said "We had our problems. but when South Africa says we were 'hours away from a military coup', it is lying like a cheap clock. It was looking for an excuse to flex its military muscle and to say, 'I am the biggest in the region '

"The invasion is sickening when you think of those of us who died in support of the liberation struggle in South Africa," said Qhobela, whose party is among the main five opposition groups in Lesotho

The botched intervention in Lesotho comes only weeks after President Nelson Mandela lost the whip hand in the negotiations over the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe

Zimbabwe, along with Angola and Namibia, sent military backing to fight the rebellion against President Laurent Kabila Mandela argued for a negotiated settlement, a stance closer to the United States's position and seen by some as tantamount to letting the rebels do their work.

South Africa's lack of subtlety and knowledge has impacted throughout Africa. In 1994, Mandela briefly said South Africa would recognise the Saharawi of western Sahara, until Morocco the occupying power, objected.

The following year it attempted to take a brokering role in the Algerian civil war, but was politely told to back down.

■ Iden Wetherell reports from Zimbabwe **that there was insufficient time to call a meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Defence and Security to discuss the Lesotho situation But the intervention is clearly sanctioned under SADC inter-state security agreements, in particular Article 5 of the protocol on politics, defence and security agreed on at the Gaborone summit in 1996**

This provides for intervention where there is large-scale violence between sections of the population, or between armed or paramilitary forces and sections of the population, if there is a threat to the legitimate authority of the government; or if there is any crisis that could threaten the peace and security of other member states

While Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe will almost certainly have been consulted, both as chair of the organ and as a member of the presidential trolka of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe which in 1994 sought to resolve a previous crisis in Lesotho, his forces are otherwise fully engaged in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where some 3 000 Zimbabwean combat troops are propping up Laurent Kabila's regime

Mugabe s office said on Wednesday Zim babwe fully supports the intervention in Lesotho, but will not be sending in troops.

"Any military attack to undermine a sovereign government is viewed by all of us in the SADC and the OAU [Organisation of Afri can Unity] as rebellious and therefore as a matter of great concern requiring immediate redress wherever it occurs

"We continue to pledge full support to the government of [Lesotho] Prime Minister [Pakalitha] Mosisili, and therefore to our joint SADC force which is currently helping to secure the tenure of that legitimate government," the president's office said.

The Congo war has excited controversy in Harare, with members of Parliament de manding to know how much it will all cost and why they weren t consulted first.

Mandela defends Lesotho action

(167) Sowetan 25/9/98

OTTAWA – President Nelson Mandela yesterday angrily brushed off as ignorant criticism of South Africa's intervention in Lesotho and said it was necessary to prevent a coup in the tiny country.

"It doesn't matter how much criticism we have. If we are convinced about what we are doing, that's enough," he told journalists during his tour of North America.

"We do not worry about criticisms which are made essentially out of ignorance."

Mandela said South African troops had moved into Lesotho at the behest of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and were acting under an agreement among African nations not to allow coups to take place.

"We have been asked by the prime minister of the country (Lesotho)," Mandela said, adding that failure to restore peace to Lesotho would have caused a flood of immigrants into South Africa, which already suffered unemployment of 30 percent or more.

Mandela expressed condolences for the dead but said, "When you intervene in a situation of this nature, you must expect that there will be casualties".

Asked how long the troops would have to stay in Lesotho, he said "We never expected we would be in Lesotho for 30 minutes and everything would be all right. Let's wait and see."

Themba Molefe reports from Maseru that an uneasy calm has returned to the town as mop-up operations by the combined SADC forces continued.

The calm followed the first night under a curfew declared on Wednesday after two days of fighting and looting that has left all shops in Maseru burnt out.

Food shortages are beginning to be felt. Opposition parties were yesterday trying to decide what to do about the need for a meeting with a Lesotho government delegation.

They demanded that the SADC leadership should recuse themselves from chairing the talks and proposed a joint body headed by former Tanzanian president Dr Julius Nyerere and former SA state president Mr FW de Klerk.

Crisis proportions

Rumours were rife that opposition supporters were planning raids on villages known to support the Lesotho Congress for Democracy. Hundreds of people have fled to the small border town of Ladybrand, fearing attacks by rival gangs.

SA Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said the plight of refugees streaming across the border was serious but the situation had not yet reached crisis proportions.

An SA Red Cross advance team has arrived in Ladybrand where 1 300 people have sought refuge.

SA National Defence Force chief General Siphiwe Nyanda has released the names of four more soldiers killed in action in Lesotho. They are Lance Corporal Owageng Mothupi (23), Private Phillip Tshweu (29), Riflemen Lucas Magwazana (34) and Albert Mangogape.

All four were members of 1 Parachute Battalion based in Bloemfontein. Eight SA soldiers have been killed and 17 wounded in the operation so far. Sixty people are known to have died in the conflict so far.

Lesotho opposition party leaders said yesterday the situation would continue to deteriorate until South African and Botswana defence forces withdrew. At a news conference in Maseru, Mr Vincent Malebo, leader of the Marema-Tlou Freedom Party, and Basotho Congress Party deputy Mr T Makhakhe said the invasion was a "bungled operation".

"As long as there is a military force from outside the country here it will be virtually impossible to stop this destruction," Malebo said.

Meanwhile, Lesotho army chief Lieutenant-General Makhule Mosakeng, forced to resign at gunpoint by mutinous soldiers, resumed command of the Lesotho Defence Force yesterday afternoon.

Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said Mosakeng and the more than 60 senior officers who had fled to South Africa during the mutiny would resume their positions immediately and work closely with the forces from South Africa and Botswana.

(Additional reporting by Reuters-Sapa-AFP)



The South African National Defence Force displays weapons that were confiscated at the headquarters of the Lesotho Defence Force in Maseru yesterday after riots and looting in different parts of the country. South Africa and Botswana sent in troops on Tuesday morning to restore stability in the country. PIC: REUTERS

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An SA Red Cross advance team has arrived in Ladybrand where 1 300 people have sought refuge.

SA National Defence Force chief General Siphiwe Nyanda has released the names of four more soldiers killed in action in Lesotho. They are Lance Corporal Ofentse Mothupi (23), Private Phillip Tshiwela (2[illegible] Rifleman Lucas Mawana (19) and Alfred [illegible] Ngape.

All four were members of the Parachute Battalion based at Bloemfontein. Eight SA soldiers have been killed and [illegible] the operation so far. [illegible] people are known to have died in the conflict so far.

Lesotho opposition party leaders said yesterday they would continue to defy South African and Botswana defence forces withdrew. At a press conference in Maseru, Mr Molapo Malebo, leader of the Basotho Free Action Party, and Basutoland Congress Party deputy president Mahlakeng Mahlakeng said the withdrawal was a bungled operation.

"As long as there is military force from outside the country it will be virtually impossible to stop this destruction," Malebo said.

Meanwhile, Lesotho army chief Lieutenant-General Mathibeli Mosakeng, forced to resign at gunpoint by mutinous soldiers, resumed command of the Lesotho Defence Force yesterday afternoon.

Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said Mosakeng and the more than 60 senior officers who had fled to South Africa during the mutiny would resume their positions immediately and work closely with the forces from South Africa and Botswana.

(Additional reporting by Reuters-Sapa-AFP)



The South African National Defence Force displays weapons that were confiscated at the headquarters of the Lesotho Defence Force in Maseru yesterday after riots and looting in different parts of the country. South Africa and Botswana sent in troops on Tuesday morning to restore stability in the country. PIC: REUTERS



HANDS FULL OF ARMS A South African soldier at a military barracks in Maseru carries weapons captured from Lesotho rebels *PICTURE: AP*



MARCHING ORDERS South African soldiers escort a group of captured Basotho at the Lesotho army base close to the capital Maseru It is believed the group included looters and rebel fighters *PICTURE: AP*

Tensions ease as SADC takes control

(167) CT 25/9/98

AS THE dust begins to settle in Maseru, SADC leaders are united on the need for military intervention while continuing efforts to negotiate a political solution to the conflict.

THE mood in Lesotho eased last night as fighting between Lesotho rebel troops and those of the Southern African Development Community all but ceased People in Maseru were walking freely on the streets without the accompanying sound of gunshots.

Lesotho army chief Makhule Mosakeng resumed command of the Lesotho Defence Force yesterday afternoon after he was earlier forced at gunpoint to step aside

Lesotho's Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said on the country's state controlled radio that Mosakeng and the more than 60 senior officers who fled to South Africa during the mutiny, which began on September 11, would resume their positions immediately

Mosakeng and the other ousted officers returned to the LDF headquarters and began talks with the intervention force leaders and officials from South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

From last night, the LDF, the police and SADC troops began to enforce the dusk-to-dawn curfew announced on Wednesday All people found on the streets between 6pm and 6am would be arrested.

Meanwhile, recriminations started flying in Maseru, with Mosisili saying opposition political parties had conspired to assassinate him. Opposition politicians dismissed his claim as "trash"

Mosisili said intelligence reports had revealed a plot to kill him, Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope, Foreign Minister Tom Thabane and other senior government officials.

Responding, opposition alliance spokesperson Vincent Malebo said the opposition knew nothing about such a claim "I don't have time for trash like that He has nightmares and deserves it."

The SADC forces have suggested that the Lesotho government declare a state of emergency to allow law and order to be restored.

The commander of the SADC operation, Colonel Robbie Hartslief, said a state of emergency was necessary to enable the intervention soldiers to dislodge large amounts of weaponry that had been handed to civilians by dissident soldiers.

"What concerns me is the armed youths They have military weapons and they got those from the barracks."

Tracing the weapons, which Hartslief believes were distributed after the dissidents seized the keys to two official caches, is one of the biggest headaches for the intervention forces, which entered Lesotho on Tuesday

Mbeki was yesterday tight-lipped about the government's plans for Lesotho, while President Nelson Mandela insisted that SA troops would remain in place.

Talking to reporters at the start of a two-day state visit to Canada, Mandela said the South African military presence in Lesotho was part of a SADC force "We cannot take any unilateral action about our troops there."

He also insisted that South African and other regional governments had "tried peaceful means" to resolve the Lesotho troubles, but these had failed and "only then did we use force"

Government sources said Mbeki, who arrived back from Malaysia yesterday, was to be briefed by acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the National Intelligence Agency, the SANDF and Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi Mufamadi was said to be organising a media conference to take place at Ladybrand today

Top government officials including Defence Minister Joe Modise, chief of the SANDF Siphiwe Nyanda and Lesotho and Botswana government officials and military officers are expected to attend.

Mbeki's spokesperson Ronnie Mamoepa said the Lesotho government had agreed to the meeting aimed at restoring peace and stability, but there had been no response from Lesotho opposition parties.

Other SADC members were also expected Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who has clashed recently with Mandela, said yesterday that he fully supported SA's military intervention in Lesotho

"Any military attack to undermine a sovereign government is viewed by all of us in SADC as rebellious and therefore as a matter of great concern, requiring immediate redress," Mugabe said. — Staff Writers, Sapa

King prevented from addressing nation

MASERU The Lesotho government yesterday prevented King Letsie III from giving an address to the nation on Radio Lesotho in which he expressed his condolences to his people.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Mnyani Mphafi told local radio reporters everything that went on air, including the king's message, had to be approved by the government, in particular by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili.

Mphafi returned the statement to the king, who then sought Mosisili's intervention But he too refused to allow the king a voice on the radio

In the prepared address, which a Sapa journalist read, King Letsie's message was conciliatory, appealing to the nation to be calm, take stock of what had happened and put aside their differences to normalise the situation

The king expressed his condolences to bereaved families and business people who suffered massive losses.

Opposition parties reacted angrily to the Lesotho government censoring the king — Sapa

Mandela defends Lesotho action

(167) Sowetan 25/9/98

OTTAWA – President Nelson Mandela yesterday angrily brushed off as ignorant criticism of South Africa's intervention in Lesotho and said it was necessary to prevent a coup in the tiny country.

"It doesn't matter how much criticism we have. If we are convinced about what we are doing, that's enough," he told journalists during his tour of North America.

"We do not worry about criticisms, which are made essentially out of ignorance."

Mandela said South African troops had moved into Lesotho at the behest of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and were acting under an agreement among African nations not to allow coups to take place.

"We have been asked by the prime minister of the country (Lesotho)," Mandela said, adding that failure to restore peace to Lesotho would have caused a flood of immigrants into South Africa, which already suffered unemployment of 30 percent or more.

Mandela expressed condolences for the dead but said. "When you intervene in a situation of this nature, you must expect that there will be casualties"

Asked how long the troops would have to stay in Lesotho, he said. "We never expected we would be in Lesotho for 30 minutes and everything would be all right. Let's wait and see."

Themba Molefe reports from Maseru that an uneasy calm has returned to the town as mop-up operations by the combined SADC forces continued.

The calm followed the first night under a curfew declared on Wednesday after two days of fighting and looting that has left all shops in Maseru burnt out.

Food shortages are beginning to be felt. Opposition parties were yesterday trying to decide what to do about the need for a meeting with a Lesotho government delegation.

They demanded that the SADC leadership should recuse themselves from chairing the talks and proposed a joint body headed by former Tanzanian president Dr Julius Nyerere and former SA state president Mr FW de Klerk.

Crisis proportions

Rumours were rife that opposition supporters were planning raids on villages known to support the Lesotho Congress for Democracy. Hundreds of people have fled to the small border town of Ladybrand, fearing attacks by rival gangs.

SA Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said the plight of refugees streaming across the border was serious but the situation had not yet reached crisis proportions

An SA Red Cross advance team has arrived in Ladybrand where 1 300 people have sought refuge

SA National Defence Force chief General Siphiwe Nyanda has released the names of four more soldiers killed in action in Lesotho They are Lance Corporal Owageng Mothupi (23), Private Phillip Tshweu (29), Riflemen Lucas Magwazana (34) and Albert Mangogape.

All four were members of 1 Parachute Battalion based in Bloemfontein. Eight SA soldiers have been killed and 17 wounded in the operation so far. Sixty-six people are known to have died in the conflict so far.

Lesotho opposition party leaders said yesterday the situation could continue to deteriorate until South African and Botswana defence forces withdrew. At a news conference in Maseru, Mr Vincent Malebo, leader of the Maremaliou Freedom Party, and Basotho Congress Party deputy Mr Tseliso Makhakhe said the invasion "a bungled operation".

"As long as there is a military force from outside the country here it will be virtually impossible to stop this destruction," Malebo said

Meanwhile, Lesotho army chief Lieutenant-General Makhule Mosakeng, forced to resign at gunpoint by mutinous soldiers, resumed command of the Lesotho Defence Force yesterday afternoon

Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said Mosakeng and the more than 60 senior officers who had fled to South Africa during the mutiny would resume their positions immediately and work closely with the forces from South Africa and Botswana.

(Additional reporting by Reuters-Sapa-AFP)



The South African National Defence Force displays weapons that were confiscated at the headquarters of the Lesotho Defence Force in Maseru yesterday after riots and looting in different parts of the country. South Africa and Botswana sent in troops on Tuesday morning to restore stability in the country. PIC: REUTERS

As mutinous Lesotho troops take to the hills in preparation for a drawn-out struggle, we

The two versions of the Langa

M+G 25/9-1/10/98 (167)

William Boot

The Southern African Development Community's mishandling of the Langa commission of inquiry and its inability to publicly admit that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) had fraudulently stolen the May 23 elections are at the heart of Lesotho's descent into turmoil

The suspicion that the Langa report was doctored before it was released is more than just opposition paranoia Only weeks ago, passages and details from the interim report of the commission leaked from the locked rooms where it was being compiled

Among other observations, the interim report cited 'gross irregularities' in the way Lesotho s Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had handled not only the compilation of the voters roll, but also the electoral process itself

In fulfilment of the commission s brief to find a way forward for crisis ridden Lesotho, the interim report called for the elections to be annulled and fresh elections to be held under international supervision

Later, before Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's aborted trip to Lesotho where he was to release the final version of the commission's report to political role players, sources very close to the process confirmed the following that the contents of the report were "highly explosive", that there could be difficulties in maintaining order in the light of expected anger against the LCD government which recorded a landslide "victory" in the disputed elections, and that the major problem facing the Southern African Development Community s (SADC) troika of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe would be to manage proposed new elections in Lesotho

In the event, Mbeki did not make the report public on that occasion — though at a subsequent briefing Minister of Defence Joe Modise confirmed that he had had every intention of doing so, until his troika partners intervened to have it referred to the SADC's Mauritius summit for strategic consideration.

Nor was the increasingly controversial document published at the summit itself — apparently, despite the supposed need for a summit level stand on the Lesotho issue, not to mention the extreme volatility of the situation inside the country (with a military insurrection in progress) time constraints prevented its discussion

Not only that as SADC chair President Nelson Mandela reversed the earlier argument and declared that the summit was in fact not the appropriate forum for the publication of the report, but that it should be taken up directly with the principals inside Lesotho

With questions growing out of questions more days elapsed Lesotho slid deeper and deeper into crisis with junior officers in the military deposing their seniors, and, while stopping short of declaring a coup, effectively preventing the LCD government from operating

And still the report, dated September 9 in its final form, was not made public until September 17

Why? The report which finally saw the light of day is in many respects dramatically different to the interim one, and cops out on every score Far from containing potentially explosive revelations of election fraud and gross irregularities, and far from looking to the management of new elections, it makes vague reference to the need for streamlining the electoral process and deepening democracy

It admits that there could have been irregularities in the elections, but fails to find that the will of the people was not reflected It is profoundly unsatisfactory

Furthermore it ignores the evidence of what actually appears on the page For instance, the commission notes that when it came to examine the sealed white bags in which election materials are required by law to be stored as safe record of elections, they found that 95% of the bags had been unsealed, and in some cases attempts had been made to reseal them

To most observers this would probably constitute *prima facie* evidence of irregularities The commission however apparently accepted

SANDF's chaotic invasion

M+G 25/9-1/10/98 (167)

Sechaba ka'Nkosi



Miscalculated. Troops from South Africa and Botswana are desperately trying to stamp their authority on Maseru, while the Lesotho rebels have taken to the hills. PHOTOGRAPHS: NADINE HUTTON

Mutinous Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) soldiers sympathetic to opposition parties are removing arms from military bases in preparation for a prolonged war against the allied forces of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The soldiers have retreated strategically to the mountains where they have been able to delay the fall of their Makonyane army headquarters to the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), despite a heavy artillery and mortar onslaught from the two armies

As SANDF and BDF troops desperately tried to stamp their authority on the mountain kingdom, LDF troops, forced out of their barracks during this week s skirmishes, were reportedly regrouping to continue their battle against what they perceive as a foreign invasion

Some of their weapons from the barracks are believed to have filtered into the capital, Maseru, and surrounding villages to assist civilian armed resistance against the SADC troops

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili held an emergency Cabinet meeting at his official residence in Maseru to discuss the deteriorating situation in the country and the mutiny of his armed forces

Civilians are openly brandishing rifles in the streets, despite the heavy contingent of armed SADC troops An LDF lieutenant, who refused to disclose his name told the *Mail & Guardian* that most of his colleagues have prepared themselves for a guerrilla operation should all their bases fall to SADC

The lieutenant said if the SADC forces thought they could exhaust the LDF's ammunition supplies, they were in for a big surprise 'To us there is no other option but to fight on If we retreat we may be arrested or even killed The fact that some of them [SADC forces] have been killed shows that we are also serious about our mission," he said

Added another LDF officer 'We know we may not be as powerful as the two [Botswana and South Africa] armies but we are confident we can hold on for a very long time We believe the SADC miscalculated our capabilities"

Soon after the SADC intervention, named Operation Boleas, began, the miscalculations were evident The SANDF sent in about 600 soldiers to engage at least 2 000 members of what was known as a rebellious LDF contingent, which boasted strong support from armed civilians

The SANDF also had no clue of the routes to most of its targets. The army is reported to have driven to the Lesotho Sun hotel, in the opposite direction of its intended target of King Letsie III's royal palace The SANDF had to rely on journalists to tell it how many palace gates there were SANDF commanders had said there was one palace entrance, instead of three

Finally, the BDF took almost to 48 hours to join its South African counterparts in the operation, suggesting a lack of co-ordination between the command structures of the armies

By the time the SANDF had managed to identify its targets, the LDF was already briefed about the SANDF's presence and capabilities, and had prepared itself for an onslaught.

LDF members boast they knew about the impending attack as early as last week As a result, the SANDF was caught unawares — also about the extent of the resistance the LDF and civilians could put up

So far, nine SANDF members have been killed — a figure disputed by the LDF as conservative — and many more were wounded

Realising the situation was getting out of control, SANDF commanders were forced to bring in reinforcements to root the rebel Basotho soldiers and armed civilians out of Maseru.

On Wednesday, LDF members consistently fired on SANDF patrols in a display of power and determination The frustrated SANDF fired warning shots that were quickly returned A few hours later, the SANDF began assaulting citizens who were looting the city centre

Said an injured SANDF sergeant' It is true that the situation here is much tougher than we thought it would be It is complicated We have suffered casualties, but at least we are beginning to gain control of the area

Sensing that the Lesotho soldiers were firmly behind them, opposition leaders openly dared the SANDF and BDF to continue their mission at their own peril

Molapo Qhobela of the Basotholand Congress Party said the allied forces were betrayed by the battle-shy ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party (LCD) who had lost touch with what was happening in the country

' He [President Nelson Mandela] is honestly deceiving himself. As soon as the SANDF leaves, we go back to square one I am not going to disclose what we are going to do," Qhobela said.

Local residents also responded to calls by the opposition to chase off SADC soldiers, burning down most of Maseru's central business district and looting whatever remained of the city

Angry youths also sparked what started off as anti South African sentiment to an open assault on all foreigners — with Indians, who control most business in Lesotho, and journalists being prime targets

The youths hijacked cars on the city streets and stripped their victims of valuables before ordering them out of the country One of them, Romora Mokoena articulately claimed that the attacks were meant to show the Basotho anger with the SADC initiative

He contended that while the Basotho are peaceful people, an attack by the SANDF on the royal palace was considered an assault on the whole nation "Whoever ordered this invasion should have had the decency at least to consult our king prior to this We are not a rebellious nation, we are decent," he said

Calls for restraint from the newly formed youth organisation, the Social Democratic Party, were largely ignored by its claimed constituency Party president Masitise Seleso described the conflict as "a manifestation of Lesotho's political intolerance since independence"

He says while he and the youth did not support the SADC initiative, none of the local parties — including the LCD — can claim innocence in the ongoing conflict. "We are seeing the germination of the seeds of decay inherent in our political system We are witnesses today of cold and calculated brutality and bestiality, a desperate attempt of a generation to stay in power"

re-examine the report that caused all the trouble

report

the Lesotho IEC's explanation that certain documents needed to be "accessed" for audit ing purposes Similarly the commissioners take grave note of peculiarities in dates of birth as recorded in the voters' roll as compiled by the Lesotho IEC

These were uncovered by South African based forensic auditors OF&A and show what the auditors bluntly describe as a "scientifi cally impossible concentration" of births on particular days

But when they come to assess the implica tions they merely note that their own auditors were not able to access the relevant materials and furthermore that the Lesotho IEC said that political parties were kept fully informed of every aspect of the registration process

To pause here for a moment the lack of access to the voters roll afforded to opposition parties was the subject of a Supreme Court action where judgment was delivered in favour of the opposition by the same token the failure of the Lesotho IEC to make records available would on the face of it appear enough cause to question the freeness and fairness of the elections in terms of the commission brief — which explicitly includes an investigation of the role of the Lesotho IEC in the election process

Uncontested allegations that in flagrant violation of the Lesotho IEC's mandating legislation, logistics for the election were handled by the Lesotho Defence Force's Tactical Intelligence Bureau, are met with the rather lump and unsubstantiated claim that Lesotho IEC officials were also always present

Never mind that the intelligence bureau is frequently accused of acting as a secret police for the LCD government, that its signatories were the chief of the defence force the LCD prime minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tom Thabane

Never mind that in the run up to the election, frequent allegations were levelled against the intelligence bureau of making incon venient opponents of the government, in cluding an academic demographer who was the first to question the compiling of the voters' roll, disappear

Examples of such seemingly incompre hensible naivety are legion in the pages of the report as it was finally released

But what is important in this context is not the total weight of the evidence, but the con clusion the commissioners chose to reach that despite the fact that by their own admission they were not in any position to judge conclusively, they decided that the will of the people had in fact been reflected in the elec tion results

How could they legitimately reach such a conclusion on the basis of a situation where they themselves note that key documentation was "in such a state that no reliable con clusions could be drawn from it"?

As the report itself notes documentation (which if properly handled would have guar anteed the fairness of the elections) left the commission in a position where it was unable to decide either "that the elections were rigged, or that fraud is excluded"

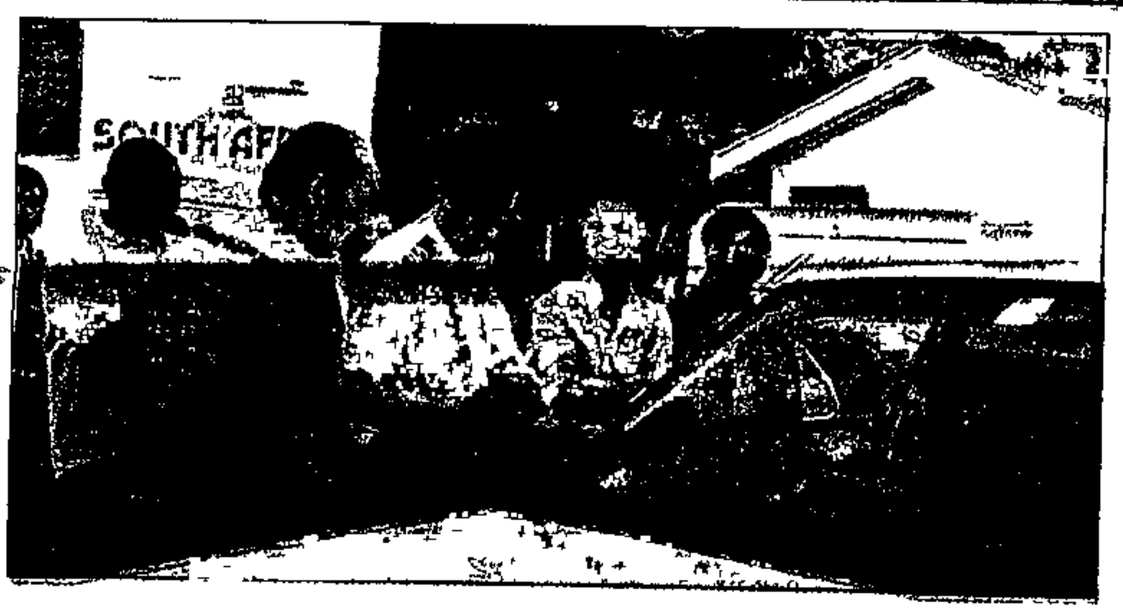
Nor does the commission's solution to the problem convince it takes the actual ballot papers as sole record — despite opposition arguments that these could reflect inflated voter numbers, that there was substantial evidence of spare ballot papers in existence and so on

The commission itself notes in this regard the difficulty created by evidence of tamper ing with the ballot boxes and temper bags and the "incorrect filing of electoral matter"

The questions raised here will be asked more and more as the turmoil in Lesotho continues as it almost certainly will

And so will questions like why South Africa chose, in such a dubious situation to commit not only its troops, but also its international reputation, to propping up a government that it could not clear of electoral fraud





Get it while you can SADC soldiers (above) frogmarch past shops left empty by bands of looters. Ex-patriots are leaving Lesotho in droves (left) after angry youths started assaulting all foreigners in Maseru

South Africa's foreign disasters

MTG 25/9-1/10/98

Alex Duval Smith

The smouldering remains of Lesotho, a kingdom raped of its constitutional integrity after South Africa's heavy handed military intervention, lie as visible proof of the post-apartheid government's disastrous foreign policy

Political analysts believe that it is chiefly South Africa's failure, since elections in 1994, to invent a credible role for itself in Africa which has led to a series of foreign policy about-turns and blunders that have impacted on Congo and its neighbours, as well as Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria and Libya

The Lesotho intervention — which many experts refer to as an invasion because it was not approved by King Letsie III — came as a result of a plea from the country s prime minister to quash military opposition to his government.

It resulted in the devastation of Lesotho's capital, Maseru, and in anarchy — partly because the intervention was ill-conceived but also because apartheid-era style, it ran roughshod over the Constitution of a neigh bouring, if tiny and landlocked, country

Molapo Qhobela leader of the Basotho Congress Party, said. "We had our problems but when South Africa says we were 'hours away from a military coup', it is lying like a cheap clock It was looking for an excuse to flex its military muscle and to say, 'I am the biggest in the region '

The invasion is sickening when you think of those of us who died in support of the liberation struggle in South Africa," said Qhobela, whose party is among the main five opposition groups in Lesotho

The botched intervention in Lesotho comes only weeks after President Nelson Mandela lost the whip hand in the negotiations over the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe

Zimbabwe, along with Angola and Namibia, sent military backing to fight the rebellion against President Laurent Kabila. Mandela argued for a negotiated settlement, a stance closer to the United States's position and seen by some as tantamount to letting the rebels do their work.

South Africa's lack of subtlety and knowledge has impacted throughout Africa. In 1994, Mandela briefly said South Africa would recognise the Saharawi of western Sahara, until Morocco, the occupying power, objected.

The following year, it attempted to take a brokering role in the Algerian civil war, but was politely told to back down.

■ Iden Wetherell reports from Zimbabwe that there was insufficient time to call a meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Defence and Security to discuss the Lesotho situation But the intervention is clearly sanctioned under SADC inter state security agreements, in particular Article 5 of the protocol on politics, defence and security agreed on at the Gaborone summit in 1996

This provides for intervention where there is large-scale violence between sections of the population, or between armed or paramilitary forces and sections of the population if there is a threat to the legitimate authority of the government; or if there is any crisis that could threaten the peace and security of other member states.

While Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe will almost certainly have been consulted, both as chair of the organ and as a member of the presidential troika of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe which in 1994 sought to resolve a previous crisis in Lesotho, his forces are otherwise fully engaged in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where some 3 000 Zimbabwean combat troops are propping up Laurent Kabila's regime

Mugabe's office said on Wednesday Zimbabwe fully supports the intervention in Lesotho, but will not be sending in troops.

"Any military attack to undermine a sovereign government is viewed by all of us in the SADC and the OAU [Organisation of African Unity] as rebellious and therefore as a matter of great concern requiring immediate redress wherever it occurs.

"We continue to pledge full support to the government of [Lesotho] Prime Minister [Pakalitha] Mosisili, and therefore to our joint SADC force which is currently helping to secure the tenure of that legitimate govern ment," the president's office said.

The Congo war has excited controversy in Harare, with members of Parliament demanding to know how much it will all cost and why they weren't consulted first.

A city ruined by bungled intervention

The bungled military intervention in Lesotho has had a huge cost in lives, economic progress and peaceful relations, writes **Kevin O'Grady**

(167) BD 25/9/98



Shops and buildings smoulder in Maseru

Picture: AFP

BURNING and smouldering buildings. Indiscriminate and unchecked arson and looting. At least 66 people killed. A once-thriving city practically destroyed.

These were the costs of this week's SA-led "peacekeeping" mission to Lesotho following almost two months of protests by opposition parties against the results of the mountain kingdom's May elections.

During those seven weeks, the opposition loudly proclaims, only five people were killed and "not a single window was broken".

Anyone present in Maseru this week would have found it difficult to argue with that point of view. The situation was rich in irony, however well-intentioned and legally correct Tuesday's dawn incursion by 600 SA National Defence Force (SANDF) troops may have been.

Its legal correctness is under dispute, as is the motive behind what is variously described as an "invasion", "incursion" or "intervention", depending upon to whom one speaks.

On Wednesday, SA's Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi was running circles of legalese around protests from Lesotho opposition parties that the country's constitution required King Letsie III to be informed of any military intervention.

Lesotho's constitution did require the king to be informed, Buthelezi agreed, but it did not stipulate when he should be informed. King Letsie III was told as soon as SA troops set foot on Lesotho soil, Buthelezi said.

Assuming for the moment that this was the correct position, and that SA and other Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states acted strictly in terms of the 1994 SADC agreement relating to Lesotho, there are still indications that SA bungled its first post-apartheid deployment of troops on foreign soil in several respects.

The first is that it is becoming increasingly apparent that the SANDF severely underestimated its task against the mutinous Lesotho Defence Force, whose sole *raison d'être* is the possibility of a land invasion from its immediate, and only, neighbour.

This worrying lack of intelligence has been confirmed by Defence Minister Joe Modise, who said SA's intelligence services failed to detect in advance the presence of 53 trucks loaded with ammunition and weapons that enabled mutineers holed up in the Makonyane barracks on the outskirts of Maseru to keep SA troops at bay for two full days.

The SA forces were also dangerously understrength, more than likely because of poor intelligence about the level of resistance anticipated, and entered the country prepared for a best-case rather than a worst-case scenario.

So instead of securing the capital and preserving peace and stability, as was the mission's intention, SANDF troops became tied up in a protracted battle with mutineers, giving opposition supporters the opportunity to plunder, loot and burn the city centre.

Central Maseru on Tuesday and Wednesday was mayhem and, for hours at a time, there was not a soldier in sight. Practically every building along Maseru's main street, King's Way, was burning. Plumes of thick black smoke could be seen from as far as Ladybrand, almost 20km away.

Along the entire route to Makonyane on the eastern side of the city, the picture was the same — smashed windows, buildings ablaze and bands of looters making off with fridges, washing machines, furniture and clothes and food by the bagful.

Burning barricades were scattered across the city, manned by groups of young men who, depending on their mood, either charged "toll fees" to let vehicles proceed or harassed, manhandled, threatened and robbed those who attempted to pass through.

The SA government's argument that SADC troops were not allowed to act against civilians, in terms of the agreement that led to their intervention, holds little water. If the SANDF had entered the country with, say, 5 000 troops instead of a paltry 600, the city could have been flooded with patrols, obviating the need to lift a finger against civilians who ran riot in the soldiers' absence and possibly saving Maseru from destruction.

Apart from the apparently botched military operation, there is also something disconcerting about the sequence of events before and after the SANDF's dawn "peacekeeping" incursion.

The day before the incursion, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi addressed a news briefing in Pretoria with the high commissioners to SA and Lesotho from three other (SADC) states.

Playing down, while at the same time acknowledging, the possibility of military intervention in Lesotho, Mufamadi said the SADC was concerned at the deteriorating security situation there. He scolded the Lesotho government and opposition parties for squabbling over a meeting venue and said the SADC's first priority was to avoid having to send troops in. Just 16 hours later, 600 SA troops rolled across Maseru Bridge and into the capital, with 200 of their Botswana Defence Force colleagues on the way from Gaborone.

At about 10am, five hours after SA soldiers entered Maseru, a statement was issued by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office welcoming intervention the previous night by Letsie which had finally brought agreement that Lesotho's opposing political parties would meet to discuss the findings of the Langa commission's investigation into alleged election irregularities.

Twelve hours before the incursion, the SA and Lesotho governments and Lesotho opposition parties all denied a coup had taken place, yet the incursion was later justified on the grounds that there had been one. The situation in Lesotho changed little after the denials were made.

These observations lend some weight to claims by SA and Lesotho opposition parties that all avenues for negotiation were not exhausted before troops were sent into Lesotho. If Lesotho's opposition had taken power by force, as the SA and Lesotho governments claim, why was the opposition adamant that talks should continue, and why the announcement of an agreement on negotiations brokered by Letsie the night before the incursion?

There is also mounting evidence to suggest that the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) government, whose interests the SADC intervened to protect, no longer enjoys the support of many of those who elected it.

If, as the Langa commission says, no more than 2,5% of Basotho voters cast their ballots in favour of the opposition, why were the streets of Maseru flooded with opposition supporters this week, and where were the LCD supporters who, one imagines, would have welcomed the SADC troops with open arms? Two days after the incursion, fewer than 1 000 Basotho were reported to have fled the country and the Maseru Bridge border post was congested by foreigners, not citizens.

The extreme anti-SA sentiment following the raid — South Africans removed their car registration plates to minimise their chances of identification and attack, but even this was no guarantee — was also clearly not expected by SA's government. If it had been, SA would have begun the evacuation of its citizens before, not after, the incursion.

Now that relative calm has returned to Maseru and its streets rounds, decisions must be made and questions answered about what to do next.

How long can SADC troops be expected to remain there in order to prevent a further popular uprising? Should new elections be held under impeccable international supervision to determine once and for all who should hold the reins of power?

Answers to these will be thrashed out in the coming days, but two questions are now being asked to which there can be no easy response. Regardless of the motive and legal correctness of the SADC action, was it worth the cost in human lives and to the economies of two countries?

And, while Basotho of different political persuasions have fought for control of the tiny mountain kingdom with a 909km-long border, who would now want the daunting task of rebuilding a city that has been all but destroyed in a two-day orgy of violence and of restoring the trust between the citizens of two countries which, geography dictates, must get on together?

Continued on Page 2

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23 Aug 1998 23 Sep
Graphic: KUBEN DAVID Source: I-NET BRIDGE

Mandela dismisses criticism on Lesotho

(167) BD 25/9/98

OTTAWA — President Nelson Mandela yesterday angrily brushed off as ignorant criticism of SA's military intervention in Lesotho, saying it was necessary to prevent a coup.

On Tuesday morning 600 SA troops moved into Lesotho, meeting resistance from Lesotho soldiers and sparking widespread looting and burning in the capital, Maseru. Botswanan troops arrived in the country that night.

About 66 people have been killed, eight of them SA soldiers.

"It does not matter how much criticism we have. If we are convinced about what we are doing, that is enough," Mandela said during a tour of North America. "We do not worry about criticisms, which are made essentially out of ignorance."

Reuter reports Mandela said SA troops had moved into Lesotho at the behest of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and were acting under an agreement among African nations not to allow coups to take place. "We have been asked by the prime minister (to intervene)."

Pule Molebeledi reports that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's spokesman, Ronnie Mamoepa, said the four-nation SADC delegation tasked with seeking peace in Lesotho — SA, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe — was continuing its efforts to bring the ruling and opposition parties together. Logistical arrangements were at an advanced stage for a meeting to take place as soon as possible.

Attempts to bring the parties together ahead of Tuesday's incursion failed because the parties could not agree on a mutually acceptable venue.

A government source said it was believed that the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy had indicated its willingness to participate in such a meeting while a response from opposition parties was being awaited.

However, **John Dludlu** reports that Lesotho Foreign Minister Tom Thabane ruled out talks with the op-

Continued on Page 2

Lesotho

(167)

Continued from Page 1

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position alliance which he accused of using violence as a short-cut to power

Thabane said the opposition had refused SA's offer of two aircraft to attend talks in Pretoria on Monday

Opposition spokesman Mamello Morrison said in Maseru this week that the opposition parties wanted to continue negotiations with the ruling party but would not attend a meeting outside Lesotho

The Lesotho government yesterday stopped King Letsie III from making a public address to the nation on the state-controlled Radio Lesotho in which he expressed condolences to the Lesotho people Information and Broadcasting Minister Mnyani Mphafi said whatever was to go on air, including the king's message, had to be approved by the government

Yesterday SA and Botswanan troops cleared the streets of looters in the burned-out capital and prepared to enforce a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

The heavy presence of troops and armoured cars finally managed to halt two days of looting

However, there were warnings that the turmoil had spread to the outlying countryside and the army and businessmen reported incidents of arson and theft far from the capital.

"Military resistance is over," said Col Robbie Hartslief, the SA officer commanding the joint operation But he conceded that his force was still trying to weed out pockets of Lesotho Defence Force rebels

Most of SA's casualties were sustained in the fight for a military base on the outskirts of the city.

More reports: Page 4
City ruined: Page 11

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Lesotho incursion tarnishes SA's peacemaker image

Brawls and the deployment of troops for the first time since the first democratic election brought the curtain down on this sitting of Parliament, writes political correspondent Wyndham Hartley

BD 25/9/98 (167)

THERE was a real sense of absolute disbelief People were wandering the corridors of Parliament slightly bemused at the thought that SA troops had been deployed in Lesotho by Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

What a terrible irony that he was driving the bus with President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki out of the country Another irony is that when he was first made acting president there were privately expressed fears that he could use the power to stage a coup but this did not happen and instead the Inkatha Freedom Party leader has become the man who took the rainbow nation to war.

The Democratic Party's (DP) leader Tony Leon and his Freedom Front counterpart Constand Viljoen approached the speaker with a request for a debate on the invasion first thing on Tuesday morning The rationale was that the president is required by the constitution to inform Parliament and the nation of the deployment of the defence force, particularly in a foreign country, and to ask for its sanction This resulted in the speaker scheduling an extraordinary debate where Buthelezi made his explanation to the National Assembly

The response from opposition parties was immediate condemnation They said that it was "aggression", "an invasion" and "unconstitutional"

Buthelezi described this as "mean" politics with the opposition parties using a Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiative in Lesotho for party political gain. He said repeated requests from the Lesotho government had led to the intervention What had effectively happened was a coup with the legal government ousted by opposition demonstrators, he said.

There is doubt about that, however, and the Lesotho opposition defends its protests against the election result as justifiable civil disobedience

It is an interesting point that the "invasion" is called unconstitutional by some for the simple reason that there was neither sufficient cause nor persuasive international obligation for this course of action. Buthelezi should not carry the can alone — he may have pushed the button, but he did that after careful consultation with Mandela and Mbeki.

It has been an unmitigated disaster Shops owned by South Africans in Maseru have been burned down SA soldiers and Lesotho soldiers and civilians are dead Eyewitnesses say the Maseru into which the dawn invasion marched was peaceful. The terrible violence, looting and arson was a response to the military intervention of SA and not the cause of the invasion, they insist

The point was made that it went directly against everything which SA has stood for in the recent past. In the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo for instance the attitude was to talk and the whole issue of military intervention was rejected.

A negotiated settlement with all the role players was the issue. Why was Lesotho different? Why did it warrant military intervention and not the Congo?

One hopes that it is not simply a case of trying to out-Mugabe Mugabe Some analysts say that the situation in Lesotho was that SA would have got egg on its face no matter which way it had jumped.

For example if it had continued to talk to all the protagonists — both government and opposition — in search of a negotiated settlement and there had been a coup with the opposition grouping grabbing power the SA government would have looked silly and been damned Just as they are now being damned for propping up the elected government in Lesotho with military force.

The real problems began with the botched release of the Langa report. Judge Pius Langa and his team, we will recall, were sent to Lesotho to investigate electoral fraud in Lesotho's May general election.

The opposition parties insist that the results, which awarded all but one seat to the Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party, were achieved illegally.

One day the director-general in Thabo Mbeki's office, Frank Chikane, was saying that they were flying to Lesotho to hand over the report Then, next thing he was saying that the report had to go to the SADC leaders first.

When it was finally unveiled in Lesotho there were blank pages and sections which did not correspond with the index. The Lesotho opposition said it was doctored.

While some will argue that this simply gave the opposition time to grab power it must be seen that this delay fanned the flames Basothos said that the delay was to tamper with the document and water it down so that the government could stay in place.

It is clear that the long delay in releasing the Langa report and its noncommittal findings were explosive in the Lesotho context

At best the situation was underestimated and at worst there was a criminal neglect by SA foreign affairs and intelligence authorities of the developing situation in Lesotho

The tatters of our foreign policy were on display in the national assembly this week.

For a president to admit the defeat of a negotiated option and go for a military one is a really sad day for the "new" SA.

While it was all too frequent in apartheid SA, one hoped that our foreign policy interventions would avoid military action for a little longer than four years

To make matters worse, the operation was clearly badly planned and managed thus ensuring that our collective face not only has egg on it but also has a bloody nose

The miracle of the rainbow nation and its negotiated settlement is gone and the image of the peacemaker has been considerably tarnished. The DP was wrong when it said the Employment Equity Bill was the death of the rainbow nation — that happened when SA invaded Lesotho.



BUTHELEZI

Lesotho raid reminiscent of darker days in SA's history

(167) ARG 25/9/98

WILLEM STEENKAMP

For many Capetonians the news of the Lesotho intervention has meant a return to darker days of doleful newspaper headlines and heart rending photographs of dead and wounded South African soldiers – even more shocking now, perhaps, because the country is not at war

Other old soldiers will know what I am talking about when I say that I was gripped by a sort of helpless rage at seeing our lads being carried away killed and wounded, my mind filled with images of other battles and other dead – and much sympathy for the loved ones of people like Corporal Jerome Sax, killed while tending his wounded comrades

By way of some small consolation, they should know that fighting soldiers have always had a boundless admiration for the "ops medics" and their disregard for personal danger while doing their duty

Inevitably it has all led to one angry question Why? How can it be (as one border veteran forcibly put it to me) that "a country like South Africa can get its arse kicked by the smallest army south of the Sahara? In the old days it would have been a piece of cake"

Well, maybe so But the issue must not be seen – and definitely not at this stage – in terms of who booted whose backside (the mutineers after all, are reported to have lost at least 16 dead)

The fact is that Lesotho in 1998 is not the border or Angola in the 1980s, and that makes a world of difference

For one thing, South Africa is not at war with Lesotho and the Lesotho Defence Force is not the enemy

Then again, South Africa and Botswana did not invade Lesotho but sent in an intervention force to fulfil strictly limited goals at the behest of the Southern African Development Countries

Those two facts colour everything that has happened so far, and will doubtless colour everything still to come If ever there was a case of comparisons being invidious, this is one.

'How can it be that South Africa can get its arse kicked by the smallest army south of the Sahara?'

The Lesotho intervention cannot be compared with "external operations" into Angola in the border war days

■ First, the political imperative is different.

Most border war external operations had specific short-term aims, usually amounting to a carefully orchestrated air and land attack on certain forces or bases in Angola, followed by an orderly withdrawal.

Sometimes it did not work out this way and they dragged on or changed shape and duration due to evolving circumstances – but not often, and not by design.

In this case the issue was much more diffuse. The combined force was tasked to occupy a variety of installations and buildings, ranging from King Letsie I's palace to the Maseru border post, to deny them to the Lesotho mutineers, who would then, presumably, begin to collapse

The situation would then be stabilised somehow Probably the best way to describe such a mission is "open-ended"

■ Second, the intervention troops were obviously very restricted in their operational procedures, thanks to the political imperative

There was no question of "softening up" the enemy with artillery and mortar bombardment, or cannon and missile strafing by ground attack aircraft – in fact there was not even an enemy as such.

As a result the intervention force found itself in any soldier's worst nightmare restricted basically to fighting with small arms only, under rules of engagement which did not apply to the other side

■ Thirdly, the intervention force was very small, given the size of the task – reportedly 600 South Africans and a contingent from the Botswana Defence Force

It must not be forgotten that any force with a Lesotho-type tasking has two main jobs firstly to take certain areas or installations and then to hold them for an unspecified period.

During the old externals an operation of this magnitude probably would have involved two full mechanised battle group – either leap-frogging their way from target to target, or launching a simultaneous two-pronged attack with another element held in reserve

Any such deployment was obviously impossible in this case, not only because of the bad impression it would create internationally but possibly also because the South African Army is currently at its smallest since the 1960s.

■ Fourth, the terrain was a factor

The fighting in Angola usually took place over a large, sparsely populated and featureless area with plenty of room to manoeuvre

In this case the intervention force had to go into a tight little country with most of the targets fairly close to one another in the most densely populated area.

■ Fifth, there is the question of time and timings.

Apart from "hot pursuit" operations, most border-era externals were preceded by weeks and sometimes months of extremely detailed planning, much of it based on an extremely sophisticated intelligence-gathering process, ranging from electronic interception to "eyeball" activities

They would then be launched at the most opportune moment.

It hardly seems likely, given the speed with which the Lesotho crisis escalated, that this sort of meticulous process was possible, although there can be little doubt that the military intelligence was able to provide considerable material from its normal operations.

An exacerbating factor in this case would have been the constantly evolving situation inside Lesotho as the country drifted closer to anarchy

■ Sixth, the nature of the opposition was also different.

In Angola the raiders benefited from definite ethnic aspects of the civil war there

In this case they were dealing with an ethnically homogeneous tribal nation with a history of fierce resistance to all invaders.

'Lesotho in 1998 is not the border of Angola in the 1980s – and that makes a world of difference'

Historically the BaSotho have always been tough customers when aroused, it is not generally remembered now that during the mid-19th Century, only a few decades after being welded together from disparate elements by Moshoeshoe I, they were among the few Southern African tribes who fought the Boers to a standstill – not once but twice

Less than two decades later, during the so-called "Gun War" of 1879, it took a British force of more than 2 000, armed with artillery and the latest rifles, eight months to subdue Chief Moorosi of the Phuthi clan, whose army consisted of no more than 300 poorly armed warriors.

■ Seventh, Lesotho is a nation in arms. The BaSotho have a long reputation of arms possession, and in addition large quantities of military weapons have been looted and distributed among the population.

A nation of horsemen, they have a long tradition of mobile warfare.

Inevitably there have been insinuations that things might have gone better if more white troops had been deployed. This is just not so

Both black and white soldiers perform well if they have good leaders, good training, good weapons and tight discipline.

That has been proved over and over again in the past few centuries, right up to and including the border war, which in its latter stages was waged mainly by locally enlisted Namibians.

Naturally there are certain questions which could be asked – but the answers should be weighed before there is any rush to judgement.

One could debate the wisdom (and indeed the legality) of the intervention, as various opposition parties are already doing.

One could speculate about the decision to use force instead of economic pressure, considering that in 1986 the mere imposition of normal border controls toppled Chief Leabua Jonathan within a few days – was it perhaps because of a perception of extreme urgency?

One could ask why the SANDF assembled an ad hoc force instead of deploying one of its standing battalions – could it have been due to the pressure of time, or the deployment elsewhere of our budget crippled combat personnel assets?

One could analyse the tactics glimpsed in the photographs and TV footage, and ask why some troops were not wearing their helmets (one can be sure any failures in combat discipline and drills are already being mercilessly dissected by the SA Army itself)

But that sort of discussion can come later In the meantime there is one interim lesson that emerges very clearly from the Lesotho affair, namely that "peace-support operations" can be very hazardous affairs

It is very likely that in the future we will necessarily be involved in such enterprises elsewhere in Africa.

It is therefore up to us as a nation to ensure that when we are, our soldiers are numerous, well equipped and well-trained enough to carry out their mission without unnecessary loss of life.

The right answer to the question "was it worth it?" must always be an unambiguous "yes"

■ *Willem Steenkamp is a well known military consultant and commentator who has many years experience as a Citizen Force officer in the South African Defence Force – during which time he has seen action.*

STUCK IN LESOT

HUGH ROBERTON
POLITICAL EDITOR

(167) ARG 25/9/98

As the dust begins to settle on the military intervention in Lesotho, an even bigger challenge is emerging for South Africa – where do we go from here?

By intervening militarily, South Africa has become an inextricable part of the complex and embittered political crisis facing the kingdom

But the most disturbing part of it all is that no one, either in South Africa or Lesotho, appears to have a clear and viable plan for resolving it

The recognised Lesotho government, at whose request the Southern African Development Community intervened, clearly cannot control the country. If it could, there would have been no need for intervention in the first place

It is a government which obviously does not enjoy overwhelming support from the citizens of Lesotho

And its legitimacy has been placed in doubt by the Langa Commission's finding that there was widespread fraud in the election which brought it to power.

Today Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili's government showed how intractible the problem is by rejecting further talks with opposition parties

King Letsie III has been attempting to bring government and opposition parties to the negiotiating table

Opposition alliance spokesman Vincent Malebo told Sapa "We are ready for talks with the government but only under the leadership of the king The ball is now in the hands of the government "

But yesterday the government showed its displeasure with the king by refusing to allow him even to broadcast a conciliatory message to the people

The option of holding new elections, often touted as a solution, can be but a mirage in present circumstances, where thugs and hooligans are still running wild in many towns and villages of Lesotho's mountainous and inaccessible interior and where the SADC peackeeping force is almost universally hated and distrusted

The security situation could become even worse According to the SA National Defence Force, some dissident Lesotho soldiers were today trying to regroup after three days of clashes with SADC troops

SANDF spokesman Daan Boshoff said some mutineers had retreated to the outskirts of the capital of Lesotho during the past week's fighting

"They are now trying to regroup, and are armed and dangerous We are talking about small groups which are difficult to pin down "

The prospect of South Africa having to pick up most of the tab for the orgy of looting and arson which was triggered by the intervention, including the reconstruction of some sort of domestic economy in the kingdom, has added to the urgency of the political crisis

So has the cost of the refugees now fleeing across Lesotho's borders

As a first practical step towards resolving the problem today, the SADC intervention force suggested that the government of the kingdom declare a state of emergency to allow law and order to be restored

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The commander of the operation, Colonel Robbie Hartslief, told Agence France Presse that a state of emergency was necessary to enable the peacekeepers to dislodge large amounts of weaponry that had been handed to civilians by dissident soldiers

"What concern me are the armed youths," he said "They have military weapons from the barracks."

Tracing the weapons, which Colonel Hartslief believes were distributed after the dissidents seized the keys to two official caches, is one of the biggest headaches facing the intervention force

The dissidents staged an insurrection on September 11, booting out their senior officers and taking control of two key military bases, Makonyane and Ratjemose

To page 3

P.T.O.

Maseru is gutted ruin

Basotho have yet to count the real economic loss as investors and businessmen vow not to return to Lesotho. **Themba Molefe** explains why.

Sowetan 25/9/98 (167)

A BUILDING known as Mokorotlo – which greeted visitors to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho as they entered Maseru – has ceased to exist after being looted and burnt to the ground

To those who may be superstitious, the destruction of Mokorotlo is a bad sign as it means that Lesotho is dead

In Sesotho, mokorotlo is a delicately hand-woven grass hat won by Basotho with pride It goes well with their beautiful, colourful blankets

Mokorotlo, the building, was a major source of income and a tourist attraction as most visitors could not leave the country without taking home something of the Basotho heritage

Meanwhile, as the body count in violence-gripped Maseru rises – it stood at 66 yesterday – the Basotho have as yet to count the economic losses

Indeed, as the debate rages around the validity of the decision to send a combined force of South African and Batswana soldiers to quell the unrest, Maseru seems completely destroyed

Not a single business has escaped the wrath of rampant looters These premises include local small supermarkets petrol stations and huge multi-nationals such as OK Bazaars and Metro Cash and Carry

Fragile economy

It has already been predicted that Lesotho's fragile economy will take decades to recover The kingdom is totally surrounded by South Africa on which it depends economically

The problems in Lesotho began when a coalition of opposition parties, led by the Basotho Congress Party, Basotho National Party and Marematlou Freedom Party, questioned the authenticity of the May 4 general election

The parties have charged that the country's independent electoral commission rigged the result.

What followed were demonstrations outside King Letsie III's palace by opposition followers, demanding that he nullify the elections and call a fresh poll But the king is a constitutional monarch

Today, almost four months later, with so many people dead, including eight young South African soldiers, Lesotho continues to burn and guns continue to blaze

The opposition now firmly believes that the Southern Africa Development Community troika of states, which was established to protect Lesotho's democracy four years ago, has failed

Opposition alliance leader Vincent Malebo has said that the king, in his capacity as the leader of the Basotho, should call everyone, including the government of prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili and the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, to the table



A South African National Defence Force soldier walks past a gutted restaurant in central Maseru yesterday, as looting and burning of buildings continued in the Lesotho capital.

PIC AFP

This would enable the nation to find its own solution

In various statements to support its notion of finding an internal solution, the opposition has called on the government to come out of hiding as it cannot run the country in hiding

Most of the expatriate business community and investors from Asian countries who had made Lesotho their home, have left the country and vowed not to return

A Taiwanesse multi-millionaire and supermarket chain owner, who told *Sowetan* the Basotho knew him as Isepo "Lee", said "I lost greatly"

The four-wheel drive bakkie in which he left the country with his family was the only thing he could salvage

The poor Basotho who have crossed the Caledon River into South Africa with little or no possessions to seek refuge said their homes had been destroyed and lives threatened because they supported the ruling LCD

Many of the opposition supporters in the streets of Maseru said their homes had been attacked

Who is to blame for things getting out of hand and how is this serious problem to be solved?

Prince Seeiso Seeiso, younger brother of Letsie III and heir apparent has appealed to all key players to rise above party political interests and unite in finding a solution to the Lesotho problem

He told *Sowetan* that the monarchy saw the arrival of the contingent of foreign troops as an invasion

He was critical of claims by Mosisili that he had informed the king about requesting intervention "At no stage did his majesty receive any request or information of such a nature from his prime minister, said Seeiso

So far Mosisili and his foreign minister Tom Thabane have not responded to Seeiso's claim and are believed to have taken refuge in Ladybrand in the Free State

Meanwhile, Operation Bodeas involving the South African National Defence Force and Batswana forces continues

(167)
fm 25/9/98

LESOTHO

IN THE SHADOW OF JONATHAN

Flawed or fraud, who knows?

The Langa Commission report into Lesotho's May 23 election has palpably failed to resolve the political impasse in that country, one that has already witnessed a shoot-out between police and soldiers, a mutiny by junior officers in its defence force and bloodshed in Maseru

The report contains the findings of an investigation by a 10-member team, headed by SA's Judge Pius Langa, into allegations by opposition parties that the election was rigged But instead of reaching a definite conclusion, the report has offered comfort to both sides the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the three main opposition parties, the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP), the Basotho National Party (BNP) and the Maremathlou Freedom Party (MFP)

The upshot is that battle lines have hardened amid a spate of frenzied reports of coups and counter-coups in the small, impoverished but proud nation which exists within an enclave enveloped geographically — and economically — by SA

Deputy Prime Minister Kalebone Maope notes, predictably, that the Langa Commission does not conclude that the May election was rigged Though the commission is seriously concerned about "apparent irregularities and discrepancies", it states emphatically "We cannot, however, postulate that it does not reflect the will of the Lesotho electorate" Maope thus concludes that there is no need for the LCD — which won 79 of the 80 seats — to step down and call for fresh elections

But the opposition parties focus on the commission's "serious concern" about irregularities and anomalies in the election process Opposition alliance chairman Vincent Malepo has therefore called on Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili to resign, reminding him that he had agreed to do so if the commission concluded that the election was fundamentally flawed His demand is underlined by opposition supporters who danced jubilantly in the streets of Maseru in the expectation of an LCD backdown Extension of the stalemate prolongs the tension which has racked Maseru since early August Warnings of a coup have to be taken seriously Loyalty of the Lesotho Defence Force to the elected government remains in doubt

It has already been purged of more than 20 senior officers, including its commander, Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng, by mutinous junior officers Most of the senior officers — who were forced to resign at gunpoint — have since sought sanctuary in SA The immediate cause of the mutiny tells its own tale about the political proclivities of the junior officers It is said to have been triggered by the dismissal of a colonel who countermanded an order to soldiers to remove opposition protesters camped outside King Letsie's palace trying to persuade him to annul the election

The ranks of junior officers are thought to contain former members of the BNP's fanatically loyal paramilitary unit that disbanded in the 1980s A coup attempt would have serious implications for SA, in part — but not only — because of its geographical proximity to Lesotho

With Zimbabwe and Botswana, SA is one of the three Southern African Development Community (SADC) nations that have twice intervened in Lesotho's affairs over the past four years in 1994, to restore the elected government of Mosisili's predecessor, Ntsu Mokhehle, after a coup, and again over the past few weeks

The objectives of the three intervening nations are spelt out in a communiqué released by Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi immediately before publication of the Langa Report

"SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana are committed to helping the people of Lesotho, within the broader efforts of the SADC, to create a climate for peace, security and stability as part of the initiatives aimed at Africa's renewal," it states "The Troika will, as guarantor of peace in Lesotho, do everything in its power to help the people of Lesotho find a lasting and peaceful resolution to the country's problems

"In the final analysis the problems of Lesotho are political and everything possible should be (done) to create a climate conducive for a political solution"

Pressures for military intervention in the event of a coup attempt are likely to be reinforced by the intervention from three SADC countries to help Laurent Kabila's government in the Democratic Republic of Congo against a rebel invasion of Kinshasa

Initial misgivings about military intervention by SA have since been neutralised by a statement at the recent SADC conference in Mauritius congratulating the intervening countries on their decisive action

Patrick Laurence

PRE-INDEPENDENCE

1868
Lesotho's current borders, with British mediation, are drawn after three-year skirmishes between Basotho and the Boers

1884
Then called Basotholand, Lesotho is detached from the Cape Colony following annexation in 1871

1910
Provision is made for a possible future incorporation of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland into the Union of South Africa

1952
Basotho nationalists led by Ntsu Mokhehle formed the Basotholand African Congress (later Basotholand Congress Party)

1965
The Basotho National Party under chief Leabua Jonathan wins the first democratic elections
•Independence followed — 1966

COUPS GALORE

1970	1974	1986	1992	1993	1994	1997	1998
ime Minister abua Jonathan orts election	Failed coup bid by opposition BCP led by Ntsu Mokhehle	Jonathan toppled in an army coup led by Maj Gen Lekhanya	Lekhany toppled by soldiers under Maj Gen Phisoana Ramaema	Mokhehle's BCP wins all 65 National Assembly seats	King Lotsie III dissolves government. SADC steps in to restore Mokhehle's administration	Ruling BCP splits Mokhehle forms LCD with parliamentary majority	Opposition parties mount sustained protest over earlier election results Langa Commission of Inquiry

Georges a storm for about 500 000 people

SA denies claims that Langa report was doctored

Star 26/9/98 (167)

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU and INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office has strongly denied charges that Southern African Development Community governments doctored the controversial Langa Commission report to play down alleged vote-rigging by the Lesotho government in the May 23 Lesotho legislative elections.

Several sources have reported that immediately before its publication on September 17, the report by Pius Langa, deputy president of SA's Constitutional Court, was ready to recommend that the electoral fraud by the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy party was so bad that new elections should be held.

However, that recommendation was not in the published report, which confirmed irregularities but was unable to say whether these were bad enough to have changed the overall outcome of the elections.

Some commentators have suggested that SADC heads of state who conferred over the report before it was published decided to dilute it for fear that it would cause disruption in Lesotho if it accused the government of massive vote fraud.

The commentators note, however, that ironically the report was more damaging in its allegedly doctored form because the opposition rejected it and continued its campaign of undermining the government and making Lesotho ungovernable.

This eventually prompted the intervention by an SA-led SADC intervention force.

Mamello Morrison, spokesperson for the opposition parties in Lesotho, said in Cape Town this week that Lesotho's King Letsie III felt the report – which he received on September 17 only "after it had been shuttled all over the region" – had been doctored.

Ronnie Mamoepa, the head of communications in the office of the deputy president, said yesterday that those who argued the Langa report differed markedly from its completion to its release "question the integrity of Justice Pius Langa and all the commissioners including the presidents of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa, as well as the SADC delegation".

Langa could not be reached for comment yesterday.

90 DAYS TO LIVE MASSIVE

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'We didn't know what hit us'



EXCLUSIVE REPORT
by SHALO MBATHA

Angry soldiers say ambushers concentrated on the medics

(167) Star 26/9/98

Angry wounded South African soldiers say they were sitting ducks for cowardly Lesotho ambushers, who attacked from the cover of civilian houses in Maseru and who targeted medical personnel trying to help the wounded.

Speaking from their beds in 3 Military Hospital, Bloemfontein, the wounded troops said they had not expected to be ambushed from civilian homes near the Makonyane base. "We didn't know what had hit us at first," said one.

And the South African wounded soldiers maintain that the carnage among the South Africans was high because they felt they could not retaliate with the heavy weaponry on their armoured fighting vehicles because the snipers were using civilians as shields

Lieutenant Pierre Scherman (24) of 1 SSB Battalion, who was the first South African hit in "Operation Boleas", remembers screaming, as the shots hit the South African convoy. "They are concentrating on the medics! What kind of war are they fighting?"

He said snipers directed their fire at medics trying to help the wounded and at the ambulances trying to evacuate casualties

Private Modise Motshane (25) of 44 Parachute Brigade, who was hit in the upper leg by a sniper's bullet, and whose two closest friends died centimetres away from him as they crouched for cover behind a wrecked truck, is bitter that the





WOUNDED Lieutenant Pierre Scherman (above) and Private Modise Motshane
Photographs: CHRIS ADLAM

attackers would "open fire on peacekeepers in broad daylight without provocation".

He added: "I am disappointed by the fact that the media says we are ill trained. You cannot find a better fighting force than us I am very, very proud to be a member of the SANDF. Given half a chance, I will go back there again to defend our honour and integrity"

Motshane and Scherman are both angry – but not at the politicians who ordered the Southern African Development Community intervention; nor at their own military commanders, who ran the operation on the ground.

They are angry at the cowardly way they were attacked and at those fellow South Africans who believe they were incompetent or entered Maseru as if, in the words of Scherman, "we were going to a tea party".

Scherman said. "Our brief was to keep the warring parties apart where possible disarm them, and to maintain a low profile. We had pamphlets explaining the purpose of our presence written in seSotho, as well as loudhailers."

The soldiers were also briefed to operate strictly in accordance with international peacekeeping norms, which allow retaliatory fire only if peacekeepers are in mortal danger – they are not allowed to fire first.

But the South Africans didn't even get a chance to distribute their pamphlets or use their loudhailers as they came under fire less than half an hour after entering the country

When medics started trying to help the first casualties, they came under heavy fire.

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(167) ARG 26/9/96

SHALO MBATHA

Angry South African soldiers say they were "sitting ducks" for "cowardly" Lesotho ambushers who attacked from the safety of civilian houses in Maseru and targeted medics trying to help the wounded

Speaking from their beds in 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein, wounded troops said the ambush near the Makonyane military base had taken them completely by surprise "We didn't know what had hit us at first, ' said one

They said they could not retaliate with the heavy weapons on their armoured vehicles because snipers were using civilians as shields That led to the high South African death toll, they said

Pierre Scherman, of 1 SSB Battalion the first South African wounded in Operation Boleas, remembers screaming They are concentrating on the medics! What kind of war are they fighting?"

He said snipers directed their fire at the medics trying to help the wounded and at ambulances trying to evacuate casualties

Modise Motshane, 25, of 44 Parachute Brigade, was hit in the leg by a sniper's bullet His two closest friends died centimetres away from him as they crouched for cover behind a broken down truck They opened fire on peacekeepers in broad daylight without provocation, he said bitterly

I am disappointed by the fact that the media says that we are ill trained You cannot find a better fighting force than us I am very, very proud to be a member of the SANDF

Lieutenant Scherman and Private Motshane are angry Not at the politicians who ordered the Southern African Development Community sanctioned (SADC) peacekeeping force to enter Lesotho, nor at their military commanders

Their wrath is directed at the "cowardly" attack by the Lesotho fighters and at fellow South Africans who believed they entered Maseru as if "we were going to a tea party", said Lieutenant Scherman

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But the South Africans didn't even get a chance to distribute the pamphlets or use their loudhailers they came under fire less than half an hour after entering the country at 5.30am on Monday

Lieutenant Scherman is enraged that medics came under heavy fire when they went to assist the first casualties He said it went against every soldier's basic code of honour

"All soldiers know that medics help every soldier, enemy or not."

In the heat of battle some medics panicked and jammed their radios on "transmit", so no one could communicate with them

Lieutenant Scherman realised what was happening and, using the armoured vehicle's turrets as cover, tried to signal to the medics to evacuate their position Then the young lieutenant felt "a hot burning in my shoulder"

For the 24 year-old soldier, a 30 minute war would not do As his wound was being stitched and he was hooked up to a drip, Lieutenant Scherman decided his men needed him.

"A call came in about another wounded soldier inside the barracks I held my drip high and ducked bullets and dragged him inside the ambulance He had been shot in the upper leg

"We went around the barracks attending to the wounded for some time, until the medics told me I was losing too much blood '

He does not see himself as a hero "Come on My men needed me I had a job to do '

The two wounded soldiers were



FORCEFUL PRESENCE, General Siphiwe Nyanda, the SANDF chief, arrives at the Makonyane base after it was secured by the South African forces

State of disaster declared in Ladybrand

Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development Minister Valli Moosa yesterday declared a state of disaster in the magisterial districts of Ladybrand Ficksburg Wepener, Fouriesburg, Zastron and Clocolan in the Free State in terms of the Civil Protection Act of 1977

The ministry said 4 000 Lesotho refugees were in the area and more were expected

"Bordering South African towns may not have the ability and capacity to keep up with the influx of people " the ministry said

Since most refugees might not have a home work or family to go back to the ministry said a prolonged refugee stay would be inevitable

Mr Moosa expressed his sympathy to the families affected by the Lesotho upheaval and thanked everyone who had supported the communities in the area – Sapa



AMMO FOR AFRICA. tons of confiscated arms and ammunition at the Makonyane base Picture REUTERS

We did not botch Lesotho operation, says General Nyanda

General Siphiwe Nyanda, the chief of the South African National Defence Force, believes the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) military operation in Lesotho suppressed a mutiny by the tiny mountain kingdom's defence force

He denied the intervention had been botched

' Certain things did happen that may not have pleased us," General Nyanda said, referring to the destruction of property in Maseru, but he said the operation was a success and was executed as planned

He praised the SADC commander, Colonel Robbie Hartslief, saying the colonel had responded quickly to changes on the ground to achieve the mission s objectives

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26/9/98



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Picture: JUDA NGWENYA

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"I lost my two best friends within 20 minutes of each other on Monday," said Private Motshane

Private Mangoegepe was shot through the forehead and died immediately; Private Tshoeu was shot in the chest near the heart.

"We had been friends for five years," said Private Motshane "There were four snipers on the mountain with clear shots at us and it was not easy to defend ourselves.

"The three of us had been to a soccer game on the weekend between Sundowns and Celtics and I tried to keep Tshoeu's mind off his injuries and spoke about the match.

"As we talked he just sighed loudly and never said anything again. I knew he had died and refused to grieve because we were still under fire. We piled their bodies together as shields and fought on I got hit after Tshoeu had died. Only then did I think of death"

Private Motshane was a member of the Bophuthatswana Defence Force and was involved in the 1994 skirmishes with the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging in Mmabatho.

"I have never seen anything like this before All wars have rules that soldiers have to abide by Lest the Basotho people forget, Botswana and South Africa were tasked by the SADC to keep the peace in Lesotho"

Lieutenant Scherman admitted he had been afraid "You get scared all right but it doesn't last – you just think of the lives of the men

"The guys do stupid things at this point We tease each other with stuff like, 'When you don't make it back I'm going to take your girlfriend' But we are all very tight despite the different languages Usually the black guys would speak a black language among themselves, but to me it's always English

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More reports on pages 23, 24, 25 & 26



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Too few troops with too little information

But experts warn against making MI the scapegoat for SA soldiers' bloody battle in Lesotho

(167) ARG 26/9/98

ESTELLE RANDALL AND
ADRIAN HADLAND

In spite of the major overhaul of Military Intelligence structures ordered by the Cabinet earlier this year, the quality of information being used to guide South African troops into battle has been poor and inaccurate, observers say

The weakness of intelligence provided to the 600 SANDF soldiers who entered Lesotho this week left them unprepared and ill-equipped, and led to a much higher rate of casualties than had been expected.

So far, eight South African soldiers have been killed and many injured in attempting to control civil and political unrest in Lesotho

SANDF officials said yesterday that troops who entered Maseru on Tuesday morning, armed initially only with blanks, were met by unexpectedly determined resistance Other reports suggested soldiers on the ground had inadequate maps, and the barest logistical information and guidelines on how to handle prisoners or looters

A major overhaul of MI was commanded by the Cabinet earlier this year following ongoing concerns that the covert organisation was ill prepared to deal with the demands of the new era and was staffed primarily by apartheid-era agents

Evidence of a crisis within the organisation reached a climax when the SANDF head, General Georg Meiring, was forced to retire prematurely after a false coup plot report was handed to President Nelson Mandela.

The coup was allegedly to be led by an extraordinary mix of political figures, including ANC MP Winnie Madikizela Mandela and United Democratic Movement leader Bantu Holomisa.

The report was widely dismissed as a fantasy, General Meiring was forced to resign, and the bid to revamp MI was stepped up

While the military and civilian intelligence arms of the South African Government declined to comment on criticisms of intelligence operations in Lesotho, observers continued to question what went wrong this week.

James Higgs, director of studies at the Institute of International Affairs, believes there are more questions than answers following the assertion from SANDF spokesperson Laverne Machine that intelligence gathering in preparation for the deployment of troops had been good.



ILL-PREPARED a SANDF soldier eats from a 'ratpack' at the captured army base in Maseru

"Either the intelligence gathered was used poorly, or the military has a different understanding of what constitutes good intelligence," Mr Higgs said.

He questioned the reasons for sending in only 600 SANDF troops when the intention had been to secure three different sites – Maseru itself, the barracks outside Maseru and the Katse Dam area.

Even to the untrained eye, Mr Higgs said, and without the degree of resistance encountered, this would have been difficult.

"You can't secure all these places with just 600 men," he said "You would need at least 5 000."

Shahazad Ahmed, a colleague of Mr Higgs and a visiting fellow from Cambridge University in England who is focusing on South Africa's intelligence operations, warned against making intelligence gathering the scapegoat in the Lesotho debacle.

"Internationally, the trend is that intelligence gathering is good, but that it is used badly Intelligence operatives only gather information, but policy-makers have to act on it."

Mr Ahmed said reports that South African soldiers had to ask for directions when they arrived in Lesotho, and that they were surprised by the degree of resistance they encountered, fuelled speculation that the troops were ill-prepared for their mission.

It was perhaps too early to expect more information from South Africa's intelligence community, he said. But it was in the interests of the intelligence structures to be "more forthcoming"

He said questions which would have to be answered when a full post-mortem was conducted included the role of the National Co-ordinating Committee on Intelligence in processing information about the Lesotho situation and the reasonin behind sending in only 600 troops

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The SANDF said in reply to que tions that it was "international prac tice not to discuss or reveal intell gence gathering processes or activ ties"

SANDF spokesman Colonel Joh Rolt said that if there had been problem internally with gatherin intelligence, as was being specula ed, then it was best that the problen was sorted out internally

"That is more important than set ting the record straight," he said.

The latest reports suggest tha huge amounts of weaponry hav been stolen from Lesotho Defenc Force soldiers and bases, and tha these are being used by rebel forces

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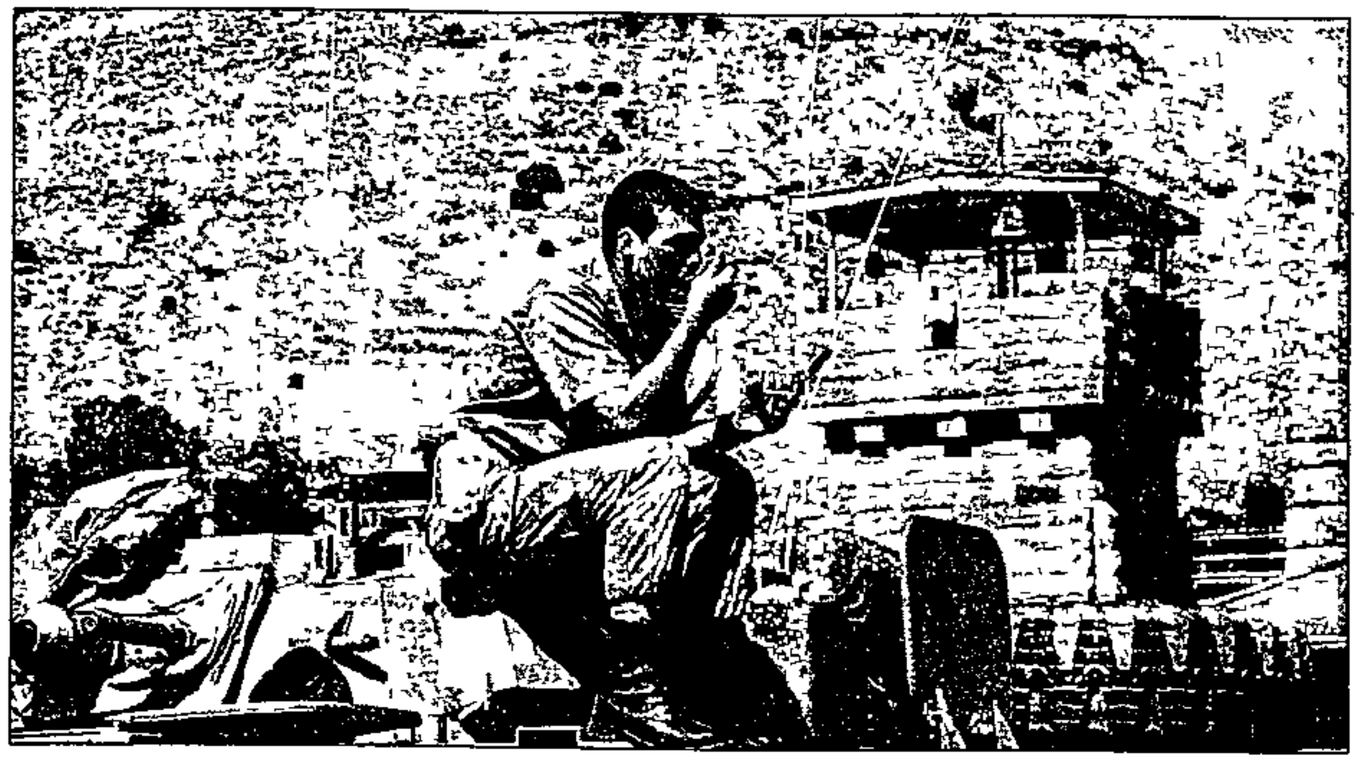
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Lesotho spin doctor slams SA's invasion and 'lies'

(167)
ARG 26/9/98

Morrison addresses world's press

JOVIAL RANTAO

There's no doubt that Mamelo Morrison was born to talk Talking is her business The woman is simply garrulous and she gets paid for it

As she waved her hands in the air confidently addressing international journalists in Parliament yesterday, it was not difficult to see why the five opposition parties in Lesotho – eager to get their message to the world – chose her as their spin doctor

The 46 year-old grandmother, freelance journalist, teacher, cabinet minister and gender activist oozes with confidence She thinks on her feet She is overwhelmingly articulate and has an answer for every hack's question Her smiles, spiced by girlish giggles, were equally impressive

Ms Morrison should be well-known to South African radio listeners In the past month, she has been the voice and the face of the coalition of Lesotho opposition parties which include the Basotholand Congress Party, Marematlou Freedom Party and the Basotho National Party

The former civil servant, known for her closeness to the Basotho royal family, spits venom when she talks about South Africa and its involvement in Lesotho which she described as 'an exercise in futility"

She does not run out of adjectives when she conveys the anger of the Basotho towards the "invasion" On South African soil, in the highest legislation-making body, Ms Morrison launched a blistering attack on President Mandela and the Government

"For some reason South Africa decided to mix political problems with problems faced by the military South Africa has acted dishonourably and has failed to discharge its duties as the chair of the Southern African Development Community The saddest thing is the complex and intricate web of lies from the office of Mandela and Mbeki South Africa has lost the moral to broker a peaceful resolution," she said

Ms Morrison displayed her touch of political wisdom when she prefaced her media address with a quote from an unknown poet

"If you can convince thinking men that you are right and the humane that you're just you have achieved your point because half of what you gain through violence is lost What you gain through argument you gain forever "

She insisted that she was not a member of the parties she represented and was a professional paid to speak on their behalf Ms Morrison admitted to journalists that the Democratic Party, which invited her to South Africa, could have used her for their own political purposes "But I have used them in the process to increase their pressure on the Government to withdraw it troops," she said

When questions about the payment of her passage were posed, DP leader Tony Leon hurriedly jumped in and shouted that the party did not pay for her The only thing that the DP seem prepared to pay for was her lunch

She also admitted that she never knew that "one day I will have something in common with the Freedom Front"

As she winged her way to Bloemfontein, Defence Minister Joe Modise refused to comment on a quote she attributed to him It went something like "You're a bunch of drunkards and we will wipe you out in 30 minutes "

Foreign Affairs director-general Jacky Selebi who had been involved in efforts to find a peaceful resolution, said Ms Morrison had two days ago, attributed the comment to him "It depends who she talks to and she can decide who to attribute it to "

Ms Morrison was not there to answer for herself but if she was she would have talked her way out of that corner

'We stood no chance'

(167) ARG 26/9/98

SHALO MBATHA

Angry South African soldiers say they were "sitting ducks ' for "cowardly" Lesotho ambushers who attacked from the safety of civilian houses in Maseru and targeted medics trying to help the wounded

Speaking from their beds in 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein wounded troops said the ambush near the Makonyane military base had taken them completely by surprise "We didn't know what had hit us at first," said one

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Lieutenant Scherman and Private Motshane are angry Not at the politicians who ordered the Southern African Development Community sanctioned (SADC) peacekeeping force to enter Lesotho, nor at their military commanders

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FORCEFUL PRESENCE General Siphiwe Nyanda, the SANDF chief arrives at the Makonyane base after it was secured by the South African forces Picture JUDA NGWENYA

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The two wounded soldiers were matter-of-fact when they recounted the horrors

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Their wrath is directed at the "cowardly ' attack by the Lesotho fighters and at fellow South Africans who believed they entered Maseru as if "we were going to a tea party", said Lieutenant Scherman

"Our brief was to keep the warring parties apart, where possible disarm them and maintain a low profile We had pamphlets explaining our presence as well as loudhailers

The soldiers were also briefed to operate strictly according to international peacekeeping norms, which only allow retaliatory fire if peacekeepers are in mortal danger

But the South Africans didn't even get a chance to distribute the pamphlets or use their loudhailers they came under fire less than half an hour after entering the country at 5 30am on Monday

Lieutenant Scherman is enraged that medics came under heavy fire when they went to assist the first casualties He said it went against every soldier's basic code of honour.

"All soldiers know that medics help every soldier, enemy or not."

In the heat of battle some medics panicked and jammed their radios on "transmit", so no one could communicate with them

Lieutenant Scherman realised what was happening and, using the armoured vehicle's turrets as cover, tried to signal to the medics to evacuate their position Then the young lieutenant felt "a hot burning in my shoulder"

For the 24-year-old soldier a 30 minute war would not do As his wound was being stitched and he was hooked up to a drip, Lieutenant Scherman decided his men needed him.

"A call came in about another wounded soldier inside the barracks I held my drip high up ducked bullets and dragged h inside the ambulance He had shot in the upper leg

"We went around the barracks attending to the wounded for time, until the medics told me losing too much blood"

He does not see himself as a hero "Come on My men needed me I a job to do

The two wounded soldiers were



FORCEFUL PRESENCE General Siphiwe Nyanda, the SANDF chief, arrives at the Makonyane base after it was secured by the South African forces

State of disaster declared in Ladybrand

Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development Minister Valli Moosa yesterday declared a state of disaster in the magisterial districts of Ladybrand, Ficksburg, Wepener, Fouriesburg, Zastron and Clocolan in the Free State in terms of the Civil Protection Act of 1977

The ministry said 4 000 Lesotho refugees were in the area and more were expected

"Bordering South African towns may not have the ability and capacity to keep up with the influx of people," the ministry said

Since most refugees might not have a home work or family to go back to the ministry said a prolonged refugee stay would be inevitable

Mr Moosa expressed his sympathy to the families affected by the Lesotho upheaval and thanked everyone who had supported the communities in the area – Sapa



AMMO FOR AFRICA tons of confiscated arms and ammunition at the Makonyane base Picture REUTERS

We did not botch Lesotho operation, ' says General Nyanda

General Siphiwe Nyanda the chief of the South African National Defence Force, believes the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) military operation in Lesotho suppressed a mutiny by the tiny mountain kingdom s defence force

He denied the intervention had been botched

Certain things did happen that may not have pleased us," General Nyanda said, referring to the destruction of property in Maseru, but he said the operation was a success and was executed as planned

He praised the SADC commander, Colonel Robbie Hartslief saying the colonel had responded quickly to changes on the ground to achieve the mission's objectives

To page 3

P.T.O.

Lesotho invasion a stand against coups

CP 27/9/98 (167)

For far too long, coup after coup has derailed Africa's political stability. The SADC's intervention in Lesotho should hammer out a much-needed message that this type of politicking will no longer be tolerated.



Group Political Commentator

The intervention by the South African and Botswana armed forces in the Lesotho crisis is long overdue, not withstanding the near hysterical condemnation of this action by the National Party and the United Christian Democratic Party and several other political commentators in the country

This does not excuse the faulty manner in which the operation was conducted by the South African National Defence Force, which resulted in the unfortunate deaths of eight SANDF members

Unconfirmed reports claim that five Basotho civilians were killed. It has been confirmed that 58 members of the Lesotho Defence Force were also killed.

This action must send a clear message to others in the region who may be harbouring ambitions of seizing power through the barrel of the gun. their adventures will not be tolerated.

The SADC took a decision three or four years ago that the illegal overthrow of democratically-elected governments by soldiers would not be tolerated in the region and that, if need be, military action would be used to restore such governments to power

The events in Lesotho, where the opposition parties were encouraging civil disobedience while the army – obviously working in collusion with them – did nothing to restore order, was calculated to bring down the elected government.

The actions of the three opposition groups working in cahoots with junior officers in the Royal Lesotho Defence Force was a clear challenge to the SADC resolve that it would not allow democratically-elected governments to be ousted by the army

For several weeks the SADC troika of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe explored every diplomatic avenue to resolve the crisis in the mountain kingdom over allegations by the opposition parties that the ruling party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, had rigged the May general elections

A commission of inquiry headed by our Constitutional Court deputy president, Pius Langa, investigated the opposition's allegations and two weeks ago conceded that there were irregularities, but could not make a ruling whether these warranted fresh elections

In the light of this inconclusive report, the SADC once more tried diplomacy to break the deadlock between the ruling party and the opposition

While these efforts were being pursued the Lesotho capital, Maseru, was approaching anarchy, with protesters hijacking government vehicles and shutting down the national radio station while government ministers were being barred from conducting their business

In the midst of all this lawlessness the army and police stood by

Two weeks earlier the junior army officers had forced – at gunpoint – their seniors, who had demanded they take action against the protesters, to quit the force

Some will question why there seems to be unanimity among SADC members regarding military intervention in Lesotho when the same body was spit down the middle when some member states sent troops into the Democratic Republic of Congo

On the surface there may appear to be inconsistency, but in reality this is not the case

In the case of the DRC, those who sent in the troops (Angola Namibia and Zimbabwe) did so prematurely, without giving diplomacy a chance

South Africa, the most vocal in opposing military action, insisted all along that peaceful negotiations between Laurent Kabila's government and the Tutsi-led rebels must first be given a chance

This did not preclude military action if diplomacy failed.

Frankly, I do not subscribe to the theory doing the rounds that South Africa took this action because it wanted to secure the flow of water from the Highlands Water Scheme

The fact is that the Basotho recognise that the Highlands Scheme is their major foreign currency earner and only someone who has lost his mind would want to sabotage or "kill" this golden goose

South Africa knows that complete chaos in Lesotho would send thousands of refugees fleeing across the Caledon river

This would put a further strain on the stretched resources of the country

South Africa also has an obligation to stabilise Lesotho, whose political problems date back to 1970 when the then Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan, annulled elections, which many believed he had lost, and suspended the constitution

At the time Lesotho and Malawi were the only countries in Africa which had full diplomatic ties with South Africa.

It was generally claimed that Jonathan was encouraged by John Vorster to take this action

Since then, Lesotho has not known political stability. A South African engineered coup in 1986 toppled Jonathan who had now cut off links with Pretoria and moved closer to the ANC

South African considerations aside, the SADC initiative must also be seen against the backdrop of Africa's efforts to safeguard the emergence of multi party democracy on the continent.

It was through military intervention by a West African regional organisation, Ecowas, that Liberia and Sierra Leone were saved from disintegrating as sovereign states

Part of the reason this continent is backward is because, for far too long since decolonisation in the 60s, the army has intervened many times against popularly-elected governments

Military coups are in most cases accompanied by denying people their civil liberties as happened in Uganda under Idi Amin

Coups in Africa must come to an end and if it means that regional bodies like SADC and Ecowas must resort to arms to ensure that elected governments remain in power so be it



LAW AND DISORDER *. Looters flee as troops of the SA Development Community's intervention force attempt to restore order to Maseru. The SADC troops invaded Lesotho at the request of Prime Minister Phalitha Mosisili. (Inset) King Letsie III*



MISLED. General Siphiwe Nyanda, chief of the SANDF, arriving at the Makoanyane military base in Maseru after it was seized by SA troops Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

11 days that led to war

SA military was fed seriously deficient intelligence on rebels' intentions

This week Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi authorised the first deployment of SA troops in combat on foreign soil since the SANDF was formed in 1994 RAY HARTLEY looks at the 11 days leading up to his fateful decision

IT WAS past midnight in Mauritius on September 11 when President Nelson Mandela handed his Home Affairs Minister, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a copy of the Langa report into the May general election in Lesotho

The two leaders were attending the Southern African Development Community's summit, which had just endorsed military intervention in the Congo

The endorsement represented a surprising about-face for Mandela's government, which had previously loudly opposed a "military solution" for the Congo, advocating instead a cease-fire and talks

On the stroke of midnight, Buthelezi had begun his eighth term as Acting President, a duty that was to continue while Mandela travelled on his valedictory visit to the US and Canada and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki, visited Malaysia.

Eleven days later, Buthelezi would use his authority as acting commander-in-chief of the South African armed forces to order the first foreign deployment of combat troops since the change of government in 1994, initiating a bloody conflict that would leave at least 58 dead and Lesotho's capital razed

Buthelezi, who has a reputation as a workaholic and a fastidious follower of procedure, immediately read the Langa report.

His conclusion was that the drafter of the report, Deputy President of the South African Constitutional Court Pius Langa had produced a document that was "neither fish nor fowl"

The claim by a coalition of opposition parties that the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili had rigged the outcome — a landslide victory — was neither confirmed nor disproved

Buthelezi called Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe Along with South Africa and Botswana, Zimbabwe had been charged by the SADC with monitoring democracy in Lesotho following elections there in 1993 Mugabe said he shared Buthelezi's view

Both Mugabe and Mandela counselled that the report should not be handed over to the opposition immediately because this would cause "frust[illegible]"

ST 27/9/98 (167)

political deal-making

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In two meetings that weekend, Modise made it plain to the mutinying soldiers that their actions were treasonable and that, unless order was restored to the tiny country by the Lesotho Defence Force, the SADC would step in militarily

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What they did not know was that the information supplied to them by military intelli[illegible]

The next day he called Lesotho's King Letsie III to inform him of the decision of the SADC countries to intervene. Although neither Buthelezi nor the king have commented on their talks, it is hard to believe that Buthelezi would have gone

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Both Mugabe and Mandela counselled that the report should not be handed over to the opposition immediately because this would cause "frustration" and the result of this would be unpredictable.

They agreed that the report should be handed over only once they were sure its contents could be debated in proper negotiation channels between the opposition and the Lesotho government.

But later that day, everything changed Rebel Lesotho soldiers, led by a second lieutenant, mutinied and arrested senior officers, jailing them in Maseru

Among those taken prisoner was Lesotho army chief Lieutenant General Makhule Mosakeng, who was forced to resign from his post.

On returning to Cape Town from Mauritius the next day, Buthelezi held talks with ministers, directors-general and the military that would edge South Africa closer to deploying its forces

For the first time since April 1994, the team that would manage the crisis would be free of the military and civilian "old guard" — members of the previous government who kept their jobs as part of the transition deal

Foreign Affairs Director-General Jackie Selebi had replaced veteran Rusty Evans With a strong international reputation after his successful chairmanship of international talks to ban land-mines, he would play a leading role in the absence of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alfred Nzo, who had left for the US with Mandela.

Selebi, a former ANC exile and head of its exiled Youth League, would bring to the strategy sessions a quick wit, well versed in political deal-making

Also recently appointed to head defence intelligence was Lieutenant General Mojo Motau. Inscrutable and brooding, Motau was to put his intelligence system through its operational paces for the first time in the coming weeks.

Motau's appointment had taken effect as military intelligence endured harsh criticism for what came to be known as the Meiring Report — a discredited document which claimed that there was a left-wing plot led by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and others to overthrow the ANC government.

The man after whom the report had been named, General Georg Meiring, had resigned after the storm caused by his decision to hand the report to the government without seeking proper verification.

Motau would report to the new SANDF chief, General Siphiwe Nyanda, a veteran of the ANC's military wing, who would make operational decisions about troop deployments

The Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, and the Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamadi, would also play a critical role in the unfolding drama.

Mufamadi represented South Africa on a task team including representatives from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique that was charged with shepherding recalcitrant Lesotho opposition and government parties towards talks

But it was Modise who stepped onto centre stage the day after the soldiers mutinied, travelling to Maseru to meet with the mutineers at their barracks



BUTHELEZI

In two meetings that weekend, Modise made it plain to the mutinying soldiers that their actions were treasonable and that, unless order was restored to the tiny country by the Lesotho Defence Force, the SADC would step in militarily

The rebel soldiers agreed to release the officers, but would not return them to their command positions, a move which indicated they were planning to take power

By Wednesday, September 16, the situation had deteriorated, with armed soldiers and opposition supporters bringing government and business in Maseru to a standstill.

Nyanda had, meanwhile, seen to it that South Africa's military intervention force was positioned to move into the kingdom

It had been assembled by stealth in positions adjacent to key installations that would have to be secured the South African-built Katse Dam project east of Maseru and the military bases around the capital itself

Under the command of Colonel Robbie Hartslief, the force would, along with a contingent of Botswana troops, fight under an SADC flag

Nyanda had been supplied with intelligence to the effect that there would be little resistance in Lesotho Based on this, they were to motivate for a military intervention at a series of Tuynhuys briefings over the next few days

The argument they put to Buthelezi was simple. there were three forces in Lesotho — the government, the civilian opposition and the rebellious military By moving in and containing the military, the SADC forces would pave the way for the opposition and the government to settle their differences in a more stable environment.

What they did not know was that the information supplied to them by military intelligence operatives was seriously deficient.

The operatives had failed to pick up the fact that arms were being moved from the military bases and that rebels had plans to take up ambush positions on the hillside and around the palace to engage the SADC force

Then Buthelezi received a desperate, pleading letter from Prime Minister Mosisili It was addressed to Mandela, Mugabe, Botswana's President Festus Mogae and Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano

"I wish to urgently request your excellencies to come to the rescue of my government and the people of Lesotho The only intervention I can and do request urgently is of a military nature.

"This morning, the situation has worsened further serious threats being made include abducting ministers, killing the prime minister, deputy prime minister and foreign minister at any time.

"The most serious tragedy is that the police and, in particular, the army, are, at the best, spectators "

And then came the punch line. "We have a coup on our hands "

Buthelezi called Mbeki in Kuala Lumpur The two discussed options, concluding that military intervention was the best solution

Then Buthelezi called Mandela in the US and got the same advice

It was time for a decision on military intervention Buthelezi consulted Modise, his deputy Ronnie Kasrils and Selebi at Tuynhuys Buthelezi signed a formal presidential approval of military intervention

The next day he called Lesotho's King Letsie III to inform him of the decision of the SADC countries to intervene. Although neither Buthelezi nor the king have commented on their talks, it is hard to believe that Buthelezi would have gone ahead with the operation if it had been rejected outright.

With everything in place for immediate intervention, Buthelezi and his team decided to postpone action one last time until a meeting of representatives of Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique set for last Sunday, September 20

The day before the scheduled meeting, Buthelezi received a second letter from Mosisili — this time it was even more urgent.

"This morning we have received reports of a shooting attack last night at the house of a local member of Parliament

"Extensive damage to property has been occasioned For three days running, life in Maseru has been grounded as rampaging hordes of armed opposition party protesters and some soldiers continue to terrorise the city

"A sniper shot has been taken at a cabinet minister's car As a result, ministers of government are confined to their residences "

Again, Mosisili kept his most powerful appeal for last "The situation is so desperate that some of us may not see the planned meeting of Sunday the 20th."

Buthelezi spoke several times to the prime minister by phone and to the president of Botswana He tried to call Mugabe, who was not available, and Chissano, who could not be reached because he was on a state visit to Brazil



MODISE

Chissano had earlier informed Buthelezi that he would back "whatever decision is reached by the SADC" on Lesotho, and Mugabe's representative had indicated that country's support for a military intervention

On Monday this week, Mufamadi met representatives from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique in Pretoria The meeting confirmed the SADC mandate that action, including military intervention, would be taken in the event of a coup in Lesotho

Afterwards, on the steps of the Union Buildings, Mufamadi warned against "any such stupid thing" as a coup "The position in the SADC on coups is well known — they are not tolerated "

Talks between opposition parties and the Mosisili government had broken down over a neutral venue, something for which the rebels would be "judged harshly by history", Mufamadi said

On the same day, Mufamadi met Buthelezi in Pretoria to brief him on the fact that military intervention had the SADC's full backing

Buthelezi now had the agreement of Mandela, Mbeki, intelligence and military advisers, and the SADC that the only course of action would be a quick intervention by a joint SADC force.

Somewhere between Monday evening and the early hours of Tuesday morning he gave the green light to Nyanda, and the South African troop convoy moved into Lesotho at 5 30am

Soldiers discover secret bunker in attack on rebels' base

ANDREW TRENCH

THE crack South African troops who seized the Makoanyane base in Maseru from rebel soldiers unleashing fusillades of machinegun fire.

As they thundered in, rebel soldiers hiding in the base opened fire, injuring the crew of an Oryx helicopter which had to hurriedly pull out.

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At midnight, the 43rd Mechanised Infantry Brigade rolled in and about 140 soldiers, backed by more than 40 Ratels armed with 20mm and 90mm guns, entered



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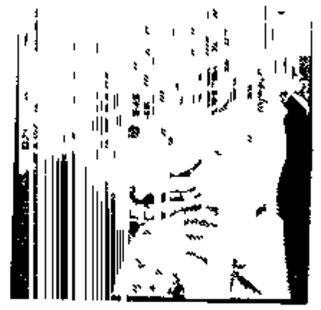
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Soldiers discover secret bunker in attack on rebels' base

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THE crack South African troops who seized the Makoanyane base in Maseru from rebel soldiers uncovered a sophisticated underground bunker designed to offer protection from chemical and biological weapons

The complex was in the final stages of construction and it was believed that a few rebels might still be holed up in it. SA troops cut off the bunker's electricity and air supplies in the hope of flushing them out But by late yesterday none had emerged

At the wrecked base, troops found dozens of boxes, marked "agricultural equipment", which contained Eastern European weapons

In one room alone there were tens of thousands of rounds of AK-47 ammunition as well as 662 000 rounds of R4 and R5 ammunition

The battle for the base began shortly before sunrise on Tuesday when Oryx and Allouette helicopters swept down on it, unleashing fusillades of machinegun fire.

As they thundered in, rebel soldiers hiding in the base opened fire, injuring the crew of an Oryx helicopter which had to hurriedly pull out. These were the opening moves in a fight that would rage for nearly two days It was the first real test of the training of many young South African soldiers, some of whom had joined the army only last year.

The South Africans encountered what they described as "substantial" rebel forces The base can accommodate a battalion of about 800 men.

It contained far fewer rebels than that, but they had access to more than 20 tons of weapons, including mortars and between 7 000 and 10 000 R4, R5 and AK-47 rifles

Rebels hiding behind the main administration building rained mortars down on SA troops, who had disembarked from the helicopters which had managed to land.

As the battle raged on into the night, it became clear the troops would not be able to dislodge the rebels without help

At midnight, the 43rd Mechanised Infantry Brigade rolled in and about 140 soldiers, backed by more than 40 Ratels armed with 20mm and 90mm guns, entered the fight

At first light on Wednesday, they began pounding the rebels' positions and by 8am the mortars were silenced.

The Ratels then advanced to a line of trees below the administration buildings and fired on the rebels holed up there.

The rebels fled before the advance of the armoured vehicles and headed for the surrounding mountains, from where they continued to fight for several hours before being driven off

The troops finally captured the base at around midday on Wednesday

SA forces captured only 15 rebels at the base Many more escaped with their weapons

The Sunday Times yesterday spoke to a 22-year-old Lesotho Defence Force private, who said he was among those who fired mortars at the "invading" SA troops



RATTLING THE REBELS: An SANDF Ratel section leader from the 43rd Mechanised Infantry Brigade drives past a pile of weapons confiscated from dissident Lesotho soldiers Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

The soldier, who did not want to be named, was interviewed at one of the assembly points set up by the SANDF where all Lesotho soldiers have been told to report

He said many of the rebel soldiers had been "new" privates"

"Some of our guys are still up there [in the mountains] They are waiting to see what happens," he said "They [the SA troops] came as an invasion They started shooting and when you're attacked you have to defend yourself "

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MISLED General Siphiwe Nyanda, chief of the SANDF, arriving at the Makoanyane military base in Maseru after it was seized by SA troops Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

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With everything in place for immediate intervention, Buthelezi and his team decided to postpone action one last time until a meeting of representatives of Zimbabwe

be reached because he was on a state visit to Brazil

Chissano had earlier informed Buthelezi that he would back "whatever decision is reached by the SADC" on Lesotho, and Mugabe's representative had indicated that country's support for a military intervention.

On Monday this week, Mufamadi met representatives from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique in Pretoria. The meeting confirmed

be debated in proper negotiation channels between the opposition and the Lesotho government.

But later that day, everything changed Rebel Lesotho soldiers, led by a second lieutenant, mutinied and arrested senior officers, jailing them in Maseru.

Among those taken prisoner was Lesotho army chief Lieutenant General Makhule Mosakeng, who was forced to resign from his post.

On returning to Cape Town from Mauritius the next day Buthelezi held talks with ministers, directors-general and the military that would edge South Africa closer to deploying its forces

For the first time since April 1994, the team that would manage the crisis would be free of the military and civilian "old guard" — members of the previous government who kept their jobs as part of the transition deal.

Foreign Affairs Director-General Jackie Selebi had replaced veteran Rusty Evans With a strong international reputation after his successful chairmanship of international talks to ban land-mines, he would play a leading role in the absence of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alfred Nzo, who had left for the US with Mandela.

Selebi, a former ANC exile and head of its exiled Youth League, would bring to the strategy sessions a quick wit, well versed in

Report — a discredited document which claimed that there was a left-wing plot led by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and others to overthrow the ANC government.

The man after whom the report had been named, General Georg Meiring, had resigned after the storm caused by his decision to hand the report to the government without seeking proper verification

Motau would report to the new SANDF chief, General Siphiwe Nyanda, a veteran of the ANC's military wing, who would make operational decisions about troop deployments.



BUTHELEZI

The Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, and the Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamadi, would also play a critical role in the unfolding drama.

Mufamadi represented South Africa on a task team including representatives from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique that was charged with shepherding recalcitrant Lesotho opposition and government parties towards talks

But it was Modise who stepped onto centre stage the day after the soldiers mutinied, travelling to Maseru to meet with the mutineers

ly Wednesday, September 16, the situation had deteriorated, with armed soldiers and opposition supporters bringing government and business in Maseru to a standstill.

Nyanda had, meanwhile, seen to it that South Africa's military intervention force was positioned to move into the kingdom

It had been assembled by stealth in positions adjacent to key installations that would have to be secured the South African-built Katse Dam project east of Maseru and the military bases around the capital itself

Under the command of Colonel Robbie Hartslief, the force would along with a contingent of Botswana troops, fight under an SADC flag.

Nyanda had been supplied with intelligence to the effect that there would be little resistance in Lesotho Based on this, they were to motivate for a military intervention at a series of Tuynhuys briefings over the next few days

The argument they put to Buthelezi was simple. there were three forces in Lesotho — the government, the civilian opposition and the rebellious military By moving

ambush positions on the hillside and around the palace to engage the SADC force.

Then Buthelezi received a desperate, pleading letter from Prime Minister Mosisili It was addressed to Mandela, Mugabe, Botswana's President Festus Mogae and Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano

"I wish to urgently request your excellencies to come to the rescue of my government and the people of Lesotho The only intervention I can and do request urgently is of a military nature.

"This morning, the situation has worsened further serious threats being made include abducting ministers, killing the prime minister deputy prime minister and foreign minister at any time.

"The most serious tragedy is that the police and, in particular, the army, are, at the best, spectators "

And then came the punch line. "We have a coup on our hands "

Buthelezi called Mbeki in Kuala Lumpur The two discussed options, concluding that military intervention was the best solution

Then Buthelezi called Mandela in the US and got the same advice

It was time for a decision on military intervention Buthelezi consulted Modise, his deputy Ronnie Kasrils and Selebi at Tuynhuys Buthelezi signed a formal presidential approval of military intervention.

of representatives of Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique set for last Sunday, September 20

The day before the scheduled meeting, Buthelezi received a second letter from Mosisili — this time it was even more urgent

"This morning we have received reports of a shooting attack last night at the house of a local member of Parliament

"Extensive damage to property has been occasioned For three days running, life in Maseru has been grounded as rampaging hordes of armed opposition party protesters and some soldiers continue to terrorise the city

"A sniper shot has been taken at a cabinet minister's car As a result, ministers of government are confined to their residences."

Again Mosisili kept his most powerful appeal for last. "The situation is so desperate that some of us may not see the planned meeting of Sunday the 20th "

Buthelezi spoke several times to the prime minister by phone and to the president of Botswana. He tried to call Mugabe who was not available, and Chissano, who could not



MODISE

re or a. ... mee ng con ... the SADC mandate that action, including military intervention, would be taken in the event of a coup in Lesotho

Afterwards, on the steps of the Union Buildings, Mufamadi warned against "any such stupid thing" as a coup "The position in the SADC on coups is well known — they are not tolerated "

Talks between opposition parties and the Mosisili government had broken down over a neutral venue, something for which the rebels would be "judged harshly by history", Mufamadi said

On the same day, Mufamadi met Buthelezi in Pretoria to brief him on the fact that military intervention had the SADC's full backing

Buthelezi now had the agreement of Mandela, Mbeki, intelligence and military advisers, and the SADC that the only course of action would be a quick intervention by a joint SADC force.

Somewhere between Monday evening and the early hours of Tuesday morning he gave the green light to Nyanda, and the South African troop convoy moved into Lesotho at 5 30am.

Soldiers discover secret bunker in attack on rebels' base

ANDREW TRENCH

THE crack South African troops who seized the Makoanyane base in Maseru from rebel soldiers uncovered a sophisticated underground bunker designed to offer protection from chemical and biological weapons

The complex was in the final stages of construction and it was believed that a few rebels might still be holed up in it. SA troops cut off the bunker's electricity and air supplies in the hope of flushing them out But by late yesterday none had emerged

At the wrecked base, troops found dozens of boxes, marked "agricultural equipment", which contained Eastern European weapons

In one room alone there were tens of thousands of rounds of AK-47 ammunition as well as 662 000 rounds of R4 and R5 ammunition.

The battle for the base began shortly before sunrise on Tuesday when Oryx and Allouette helicopters swept down on it,

unleashing fusillades of machinegun fire.

As they thundered in, rebel soldiers hiding in the base opened fire, injuring the crew of an Oryx helicopter which had to hurriedly pull out. These were the opening moves in a fight that would rage for nearly two days. It was the first real test of the training of many young South African soldiers, some of whom had joined the army only last year

The South Africans encountered what they described as "substantial" rebel forces. The base can accommodate a battalion of about 800 men.

It contained far fewer rebels than that, but they had access to more than 20 tons of weapons, including mortars and between 7 000 and 10 000 R4, R5 and AK-47 rifles

Rebels hiding behind the main administration building rained mortars down on SA troops, who had disembarked from the helicopters which had managed to land

As the battle raged on into the night, it became clear the troops would not be able to dislodge the rebels without help

At midnight, the 43rd Mechanised Infantry Brigade rolled in and about 140 soldiers, backed by more than 40 Ratels armed with 20mm and 90mm guns, entered the fight.

At first light on Wednesday, they began pounding the rebels' positions and by 8am the mortars were silenced

The Ratels then advanced to a line of trees below the administration buildings and fired on the rebels holed up there.

The rebels fled before the advance of the armoured vehicles and headed for the surrounding mountains, from where they continued to fight for several hours before being driven off

The troops finally captured the base at around midday on Wednesday

SA forces captured only 15 rebels at the base. Many more escaped with their weapons

The Sunday Times yesterday spoke to a 22-year-old Lesotho Defence Force private, who said he was among those who fired mortars at the "invading" SA troops



RATTLING THE REBELS An SANDF Ratel section leader from the 43rd Mechanised Infantry Brigade drives past a pile of weapons confiscated from dissident Lesotho soldiers Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

The soldier, who did not want to be named, was interviewed at one of the assembly points set up by the SANDF where all Lesotho soldiers have been told to report.

He said many of the rebel soldiers had been "new privates"

"Some of our guys are still up there [in the mountains] They are waiting to see what happens " he said "They [the SA troops] came as an invasion They started shooting and when you're attacked you have to defend yourself "

SA companies won't pull out despite losses

(167)

By ALI MPHAKI

CP 27/9/98

SOUTH African companies doing business in Lesotho will not pull out from the mountain kingdom despite the huge losses suffered at the hands of looters this week

Dozens of South African companies in the Lesotho capital of Maseru were targeted by mutineers and protesters who went on the rampage, looting businesses and setting them alight

Apparently they were angered by the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) intervention, which they saw as an invasion

Shoprite managing director, Whitey Basson, said the OK store in Maseru, which Shoprite co-owns with a Lesotho consortium, was looted and all the stock stolen

He said OK suffered losses of between R3 million and R4 million

While decrying the situation in Lesotho, which he described as "sad" for the southern African region, Basson said they would like "to get back into business" as soon as possible.

He said there was very little they could do to safeguard their investments in Lesotho, as this was the government's responsibility

The store has been closed since Monday All the workers were told to go home

Another South African wholesaler with eight outlets in Lesotho, Metro Cash and Carry, suffered heavy losses when one of its branches was looted

The other branches escaped the wrath of the "protesters".

Clothing store Ackermans also lost both of its Maseru stores after after one was set alight and the other looted

Pep Stores managing director, Andre Labuschagne, told City Press eight of their shops were gutted and two looted.

He said although four stores in the north of Lesotho remained unaffected, it was too early to decide whether Pep Stores would continue doing business in the kingdom

Labuschagne added he was uncertain whether insurance companies would compensate them for their losses

Also affected were Jet Stores, Edgars, Sales House, Bally Spitz and cosmetic outlet Red Square.

A spokesman for these five companies, Mark Bouwer, could not quantify their losses

He added that assessors would visit Lesotho in the coming week

Shoddy intelligence job, again

(167) CP, 27/9/98

By DESMOND BLOW

THE more things change, the more they stay the same, so goes the old saying.

It would appear that South African intelligence services are as ill-informed now as in the apartheid days – when a South African Defence Force raid on Lesotho in December 1982 left 42 people dead

Although the raid was planned to kill ANC cadres who were alleged to be planning raids on South Africa, the apartheid soldiers – acting on incorrect and outdated information – raided several Lesotho homes and killed innocent Basotho fathers, mothers and children as well as South African refugees

They even had the wrong flat number of Limpho Hani, wife of Chris Hani, at Kuena Flats in Maseru, and stormed into the flat of 21-year-old Matumo Ralebitso, daughter of a Lesotho cabinet minister and former ambassador to Mozambique

While the South African security forces blasted Ralebitso, who jumped to her death from her second floor flat after being wounded, Limpho Hani and her three small daughters cowered beneath the bed in their flat nearby

The intelligence services still had things wrong, and the SADF announced that it had confirmed the killing of Mrs Hani, which was echoed by the foreign minister at the time, Pik Botha

In the suburb of Upper Thames troops burst into the house of Molatsi Hlalele and shot dead Hlalele, his wife and 14-year-old son All were Lesotho nationals.

Claims by the SADF that they had seized loads of arms and ammunition from ANC cadres in Lesotho which proved there were ANC bases there were strongly denied by the Lesotho government.

They said the weapons shown to newsmen had beenn captured in Angola and Namibia and the SADF had made a false claim to justify their raid into Lesotho.

☐ This week the South African intelligence services were again out of touch with the true facts· 60 people died, including eight South African soldiers, and 17 more were wounded

But again the South African force acted on inadequate and incorrect information. They were led to believe by the intelligence that they would have the support of most of the population, and that the Lesotho paramilitary forces were poorly armed and would lay down their weapons without a fight.

As a result they sent in only 600 troops to Lesotho on Tuesday and did not even wait for a contingent of Botswana Defence Force soldiers

Defence Minister Joe Modise admitted on Wednesday that the intelligence services had not detected in advance the presence of 53 trucks loaded with weapons and ammunition at Makonyane barracks, the principal base of the Lesotho Defence Force

"We did not have information that they were equipped to that extent," said Modise.

He said preparations for the military intervention had been based on information gathered by both the National Intelligence Agency and Military Intelligence.

Modise said basically the troops had gone in to restore law and order They created anarchy instead

Over the two days of fierce fighting, angry Basotho who resented the invasion of their country without the invitation of King Letsie III – who according to the Lesotho constitution had to approve the "peacekeeping force" – burnt and looted South African businesses

Even armed civilians were reported to have fired at South African troops

On Wednesday afternoon the Ministry of Labour building in Maseru and other buildings on the city's main street were burning as widespread arson and looting continued Looters helped themselves to merchandise from Metro Cash-And-Carry, Pep and many South African stores

Even the sizable Taiwanese expatriate business community were not spared their wrath.

No troops were evident to stop the looters who openly carried their booty

No thought had been given to assist the police preventing arson and looting, and they had fled

South Africa had sent in so small a force because national and military intelligence had told them they would be welcomed by most of the population, even though the Langa report had found that the recent election had not been truly free and fair, and there were allegations that the Langa report had been "doctored" and the government did not have anything like the support it claimed

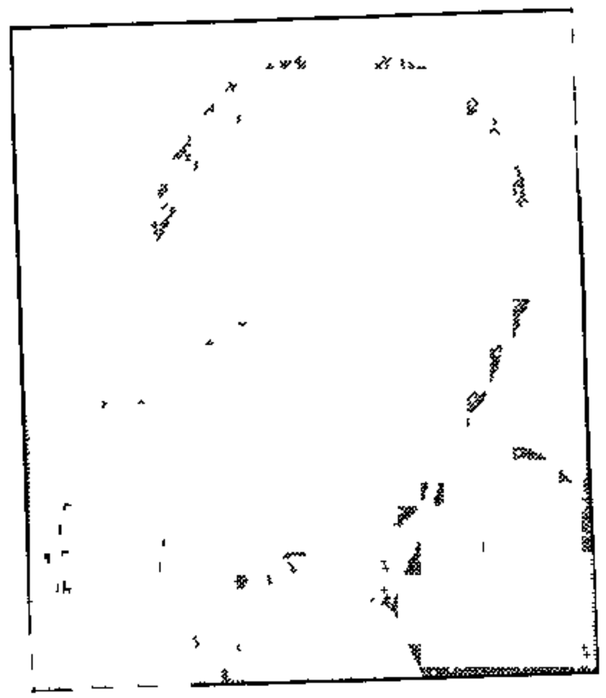
Was it also intelligence reports that led Minister of Safety and Security Sidney Mufamadi to say that although a coup had not been declared "we cannot escape the conclusion that there has been a coup"?

Was this based only on the fact that junior officers in the LDF had mutinied against their senior officers and refused to act against opposition and civilians who protested that the recent elections had been rigged?

The small South African force doing its best to defend itself was for more than 48 hours unable to stop the chaos and the result has been that the Basotho could look on the South Africans as the Vietnanese looked on the US army who also originally went in to defend their unpopular government

History once again repeated itself in Lesotho as the tiny mountain kingdom became a mini-Vietnam

☐ South African Secret Service director general, Billy Masetla, this week told City Press the intelligence structure had prepared a well coordinated plan before the SANDF moved into Lesotho on Tuesday



WE DIDN'T KNOW . . *Defence Minister Joe Modise says they didn't know how strong the rebels were*

Lesotho invasion a stand against coups

CP 27/9/98 (167)

For far too long, coup after coup has derailed Africa's political stability The SADC's intervention in Lesotho should hammer out a much-needed message: that this type of politicking will no longer be tolerated.



LAW AND DISORDER *Looters flee as troops of the SA Development Community's intervention force attempt to restore order to Maseru The SADC troops invaded Lesotho at the request of Prime Minister Phalitha Mosisili (Inset) King Letsie III*



Group Political Commentator

The intervention by the South African and Botswana armed forces in the Lesotho crisis is long overdue, not withstanding the near hysterical condemnation of this action by the National Party and the United Christian Democratic Party and several other political commentators in the country

This does not excuse the faulty manner in which the operation was conducted by the South African National Defence Force, which resulted in the unfortunate deaths of eight SANDF members

Unconfirmed reports claim that five Basotho civilians were killed It has been confirmed that 58 members of the Lesotho Defence Force were also killed

This action must send a clear message to others in the region who may be harbouring ambitions of seizing power through the barrel of the gun. their adventures will not be tolerated.

The SADC took a decision three or four years ago that the illegal overthrow of democratically-elected governments by soldiers would not be tolerated in the region and that, if need be military action would be used to restore such governments to power

The events in Lesotho where the opposition parties were encouraging civil disobedience, while the army – obviously working in collusion with them – did nothing to restore order, was calculated to bring down the elected government.

The actions of the three opposition groups working in cahoots with junior officers in the Royal Lesotho Defence Force was a clear challenge to the SADC resolve that it would not allow democratically-elected governments to be ousted by the army

For several weeks the SADC troika of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe explored every diplomatic avenue to resolve the crisis in the mountain kingdom over allegations by the opposition parties that the ruling party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, had rigged the May general elections

A commission of inquiry headed by our Constitutional Court deputy president, Pius Langa, investigated the opposition's allegations and two weeks ago conceded that there were irregularities, but could not make a ruling whether these warranted fresh elections

In the light of this inconclusive report, the SADC once more tried diplomacy to break the deadlock between the ruling party and the opposition

While these efforts were being pursued the Lesotho capital, Maseru, was approaching anarchy, with protesters hijacking government vehicles and shutting down the national radio station while government ministers were being barred from conducting their business

In the midst of all this lawlessness, the army and police stood by

Two weeks earlier the junior army officers had forced – at gunpoint – their seniors, who had demanded they take action against the protesters, to quit the force

Some will question why there seems to be unanimity among SADC members regarding military intervention in Lesotho when the same body was split down the middle when some member states sent troops into the Democratic Republic of Congo

On the surface there may appear to be inconsistency, but in reality this is not the case

In the case of the DRC, those who sent in the troops (Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe) did so prematurely, without giving diplomacy a chance

South Africa, the most vocal in opposing military action, insisted all along that peaceful negotiations between Laurent Kabila's government and the Tutsi-led rebels must first be given a chance

This did not preclude military action if diplomacy failed.

Frankly, I do not subscribe to the theory doing the rounds that South Africa took this action because it wanted to secure the flow of water from the Highlands Water Scheme

The fact is that the Basotho recognise that the Highlands Scheme is their major foreign currency earner and only someone who has lost his mind would want to sabotage or "kill" this golden goose

South Africa knows that complete chaos in Lesotho would send thousands of refugees fleeing across the Caledon river

This would put a further strain on the stretched resources of the country

South Africa also has an obligation to stabilise Lesotho, whose political problems date back to 1970 when the then Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan, annulled elections, which many believed he had lost, and suspended the constitution.

At the time Lesotho and Malawi were the only countries in Africa which had full diplomatic ties with South Africa

It was generally claimed that Jonathan was encouraged by John Vorster to take this action

Since then, Lesotho has not known political stability A South African-engineered coup in 1986 toppled Jonathan, who had now cut off links with Pretoria and moved closer to the ANC

South African considerations aside, the SADC initiative must also be seen against the backdrop of Africa's efforts to safeguard the emergence of multi party democracy on the continent.

It was through military intervention by a West African regional organisation Ecowas that Liberia and Sierra Leone were saved from disintegrating as sovereign states

Part of the reason this continent is backward is because, for far too long since decolonisation in the 60s, the army has intervened many times against popularly elected governments

Military coups are in most cases accompanied by denying people their civil liberties, as happened in Uganda under Idi Amin

Coups in Africa must come to an end and if it means that regional bodies like SADC and Ecowas must resort to arms to ensure that elected governments remain in power, so be it.

CP 27/9/98

No choice but military intervention

(167)

JOEL NETSHITENZHE (right), CEO of Government Communication and Information Systems, defends the SADC intervention in Lesotho.



LAST Thursday, Lesotho's army chief, Lieutenant-General Makhule Mosakeng and 60 senior officers resumed command of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF)

General Mosakeng attended a meeting of the Joint Operational Centre, which includes the Lesotho Police Commissioner and representatives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to discuss measures to further improve security On Friday, SADC diplomats were facilitating negotiations towards a meeting of all parties

The SADC military operation is starting to bear fruit A balance of power has been attained that allows for rational negotiations

At no stage was there a consideration within SADC, or more particularly the troika made up of South Africa, Zimbwabwe and Botswana – and lately Mozambique – to find a military solution to a political problem

In the days prior to the intervention by the South African National Defence Force, rationality in negotiations had disappeared

This is because a gradual seizure of power had already taken place in Lesotho Junior officers had dismissed their commanders and even the "newly-appointed" army chief had gone into hiding after being threatened for refusing to lead a coup Police had lost control and many were in hiding. The mutineers and their allies in the opposition had all but seized the reins of government.

There was no other choice for the SADC but to intervene The principle that no one should be allowed to overthrow an elected government had to be enforced, lest the region become a den of instability.

The Lesotho government elected in May remains the legal authority The Langa Commission could not pronounce on whether there was electoral fraud or not It acknowledged that there were serious irregularities, but could not conclusively say the will of the Basotho had not been expressed through the elections

The SADC had been facilitating negotiations to find a solution Its modus operandi was to ask the Lesotho parties themselves to propose the way forward

With the deteriorating situation, the SADC responded positively to the request by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosilili for help The prime minister was acting in accordance with his constitution and laws he is not obliged to seek anyone's permission before making such a request.

As with the situation in the Democractic Republic of Congo, our abiding preference had always been for a peaceful settlement

But a refusal to act in this instance would have been to betray not only a close neighbour, but an elected government; it would have been a signal that anywhere in the region the will of the majority can be held to ransom with impunity by forces unhappy with the substantive outcome of an election.

It has also become fashionable to refer to South Africa losing its "moral authority". Moral authority does not mean a lenient granny to be taken advantage of, and accommodating to coups and destabilisation! Real moral authority derives from being considerate, but acting with firmness when necessary

A few more details require clarification

It is said the operation was "bungled" because the BDF arrived late But the BDF arrived as planned! A joint military operation does not mean each constituent unit should arrive at the Maseru Bridge at the same time The planners had to consider the consequences of large columns of BDF soldiers being seen crossing the border into South Africa and moving all the way to Ladybrand prior to the operation

It should also be emphasised that the troops were instructed to act with restraint and to respond with force only when there was no other option This they did with distinction Given the armoury that has been unearthed at Makoanya military base, it is a tribute to these soldiers that heavy casualties were not sustained

If the SADC force underestimated the extent of resistance, it is partly because it had been invited by a democratically-elected government The resistance demonstrates the rot that had set in within the LDF, as a politicised force out of tune with its own populace The mutineers were not defending the legal authority

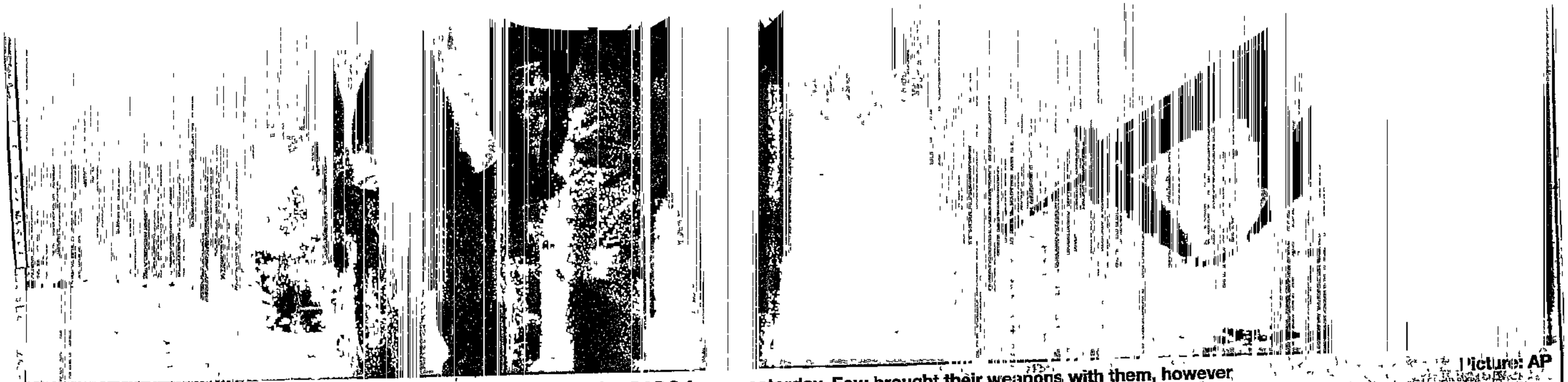
□ As to the "absence" of President Mandela and Deputy President Mbeki, Acting President Buthelezi was operating on their constant advice and instructions, and they were in touch with their colleagues in the region

We should remember that this is a new SANDF; it does not kill women, children and other civilians in their sleep claiming that they are military targets

It carries out its operations as humanely as possible And it is fully aware that this may at times cause us some casualties, but this is better than barbarity

It is a measure of this culture that the SADC contingent is helping the injured on both sides Government regrets the loss of life on both sides and it has expressed its condolences to all the next of kin

Lest we forget, SADC soldiers who laid down their lives are heroes who paid the supreme sacrifice in defence of stability in Southern Africa, so the people of Lesotho can at last know ture Pula, Khots le Nala



Picture: AP

LOOK, NO ARMS: Lesotho Defence Force members surrendering to the SADC force yesterday. Few brought their weapons with them, however

ANDREW TRENCH and MICHAEL SCHMIDT ST 27/9/98

(167)

MORE than a thousand Lesotho soldiers handed themselves over to the South African-led Southern African Development Community force in Maseru yesterday as calm returned to the country

The 1 120 soldiers handed themselves over at Ragamose base in western Maseru after being given an order, on Radio Lesotho on Friday, to report to the facility However, they brought only 24 weapons with them

The troops, mostly in civilian dress, were given until tomorrow afternoon to return to the base with their uniforms and weapons as the SADC force warned that large numbers of weapons were still in circulation The prospect of heavily armed civilians and rebels crossing the border remains a threat

South African farmers on the border with Lesotho have already armed themselves in anticipation of "revenge" attacks by heavily armed rebel soldiers and civilians who were driven from the Lesotho capital, Maseru, by the SADC troops this week

Colonel Robbie Hartslief, the commander of the joint South Africa-Botswana SADC force that on Tuesday moved into Lesotho, yesterday announced that the troops had moved to suppress unrest in rural towns

South Africa has moved 450 more soldiers into Lesotho Hartslief said the troops and 100 armoured vehicles moved into Mafeteng and Mohalehoek Troops were also moved into Wepener in the Free State on the Lesotho border The new deployment is aimed at quelling rioting

Hartslief said the SADC force had recovered more than 100 tons of arms and ammunition, but it was "impossible to tell" how many weapons were circulating among civilians

The SA government has meanwhile declared six districts bordering Lesotho "crisis areas" in anticipation of thousands more refugees

At the Ragamose base yesterday, the surrendering soldiers expressed concern that they were about to fall under the command of the South Africans, whom they clearly despise

"As soldiers we are not trained to surrender," said one

● The Deputy President of the Constitutional Court, Judge Pius Langa, has denied that his report into election-rigging in Lesotho was changed for political reasons The report found there had been irregularities in the May election, but that these would not have affected the outcome

● The Lesotho government is believed to be pushing for its army to be rearmed even while South Africa attempts to disarm their soldiers according to the SADC mandate

It is understood that the key player in this move is Lieutenant-General Makhule Mosakeng, who was reinstated this week after being forced to resign by mutinous soldiers last week South African Defence Minister Joe Modise is expected to arrive in Maseru tomorrow to discuss the issue

● See pages 4 and 5

Surrender your arms, rogue troops ordered

(167)

By Khangale Makhado and Sapa

TODAY is crunch day for rebel Lesotho soldiers – they have been told they have until close of business to hand themselves and their weapons over to Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces or face "dire consequences".

A little more than 1 000 soldiers reported to the Ragamose military base near Maseru on Saturday following an order to surrender

The week-long fighting in Lesotho has so far claimed 134 lives.

The Lesotho Defence Force members who reported to the base on Saturday make up more than 50 percent of the force, a reality that may persuade the minority of mutineers to throw in the towel.

Devastation

Despite the devastation Maseru suffered last week through arson, destruction to buildings and looting, the situation in the capital appeared to be returning to normal

For the first time since the invasion by the South African-led SADC force a week ago, locals were seen moving freely through the city

Yesterday President Nelson Mandela reiterated that the SADC intervention in Lesotho had been the right thing to do

Addressing a press conference in Cape Town after arriving back from a gruelling overseas trip, Mandela said it appeared, however, that some people in Lesotho did not want peace

He said no-one could blame acting president Mangosuthu Buthelezi for the intervention because he had consulted himself, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and the relevant officials.

He said if it was a mistake, "we are all involved".

Mandela said according to the charter of the Organisation for African Unity, no recognition would be given to a government that came to power by means of a coup

Lengthy discussions

He said the situation in Lesotho was a virtual coup which had resulted in prime minister Phakalitha Mosisili appealing to the SADC, and not South Africa, for intervention South Africa was there to find a peacefull settlement.

Mandela said he was convinced the leaders of Lesotho would realise that a peaceful political settlement was the way to go

The African National Congress has also come out in support of the SADC intervention

Mr Smuts Ngonyama, political head in the ANC's department of information, said at a press conference in Johannesburg that the organisation's national working committee was of the view that the military operation had achieved its objective

"The ANC supports the continued search for peaceful negotiated settlement (but) it is the people of Lesotho who must at the end of the day come with a final decision."

Referring to the refugee situation, Ngonyama said although the ANC did not have sufficient resources to deal with the crisis, it encouraged relevant government bodies and NGOs to offer humanitarian assistance

Despite the apparent quiet in the country, SADC forces are leaving little to chance More South African soldiers, backed by troops from Botswana, have moved into the kingdom to help disarm mutineers and restore peace

Intervention force troops will be on the lookout for soldiers who will not be reporting to the base and will be searching for missing weapons, Colonel Jorrie Jordan of the SANDF said.

The South African military's first peacekeeping mission since the election of a democratic Government in 1994 turned bloody when the force arrived without advance warning. Believing they were being invaded, both loyalist and mutinous Lesotho soldiers turned their guns on the South Africans

Last week's mayhem in Maseru led to about 4 000 people, including many foreign businesspeople, seeking refuge in the neighbouring Free State town of Ladybrand They have been housed in makeshift accommodation.

● See also pages 2 and 9.



Residents of Lesotho wave at Botswana soldiers as they pass through the centre of Maseru yesteday. Thousands of citizens started with a cleaning campaign in Maseru after the social unrest that left the capital looted and gutted. PIC: REUTERS

CAPE TIMES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1998

R1BN PROPERTY LOSSES

Huge price of Lesotho action

CT 28/9/98 (167)

THE CATHOLIC Bishops of Southern Africa have called for troops to be withdrawn, ties with Lesotho repaired and clarity given about compensation **MELANIE-ANN FERIS** reports

THE cost of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention in Lesotho continues to mount, with property losses alone estimated at R1 billion, according to the South African Cross Border Crisis Committee

The cost to South Africa has not been calculated, but several border towns have been crippled by the thousands of refugees who fled Lesotho at the weekend, said crisis committee spokesperson Steve Buys

Laverne Machiné, speaking for the SA National Defence Force, said yesterday it was not clear who would foot the bill for the military intervention, but it would not be covered by the defence force budget

In Ladybrand, where there were about 2 000 refugees, businesses were struggling to keep up the demand for food, Buys said "Residents are trying to help by housing some of the refugees in their homes Support from the government and the Red Cross has been slow "

Keith Gower, director-general of Red Cross South Africa, said the organisation was feeding 1 800 registered refugees Plans were under way to move the refugees — split into three camps according to their political affiliations — to a tented camp today.

The Salvation Army has secured a school and rooms to house refugee families It is to deliver food, clothes and funds to the refugees this week.

The SANDF has made available a helicopter to supply food and has provided a field kitchen

The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndungane, and two senior bishops are to visit Lesotho and South African border towns in a ministry of reconciliation this week.

Ndungane said attempts would be made to find out if the South African government had a plan of action for relief for the refugees, to supply food and to rebuild Lesotho's economy

"We also wish to engage in a discussion about the role of the SADC in conflicts," he said

The bishops of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa have called for armed forces to be withdrawn immediately and for immediate steps to be taken to repair relations between South Africa and Lesotho They have also called for clarity about compensation being given to those who have incurred losses

Defending the intervention, the ANC said troops had been sent into Lesotho in the best interests of its people and to restore democracy

The ANC would assist where possible to rebuild Maseru, but its doing so should not be interpreted as accepting responsibility, said Smuts Ngonyama, head of the ANC National Working Committee

Democratic Party spokesperson Ryan Coetzee said South Africa's intervention highlighted a disturbing lack of leadership by the president and the deputy president, both of whom had been out of the country when the decision was taken

The acting president, Minister of Home Affairs Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had not briefed opposition leaders until the day after the SADF moved in.

South Africa was now faced with humanitarian, military and economic consequences that should be tackled as a matter of urgency, Coetzee said

The National Party will meet representatives of Lesotho's opposition parties and King Letsie III in Ladybrand today to propose solutions, its spokesperson, Daryl Swanepoel, said

● People wishing to make contributions can contact the Red Cross at (011) 486-1313 or the Salvation Army at (011) 403-3614

Maseru's R1-bn hang-over

Rampage by arsonists has left tiny kingdom with a crushing repair bill as rebellion comes to an end

By Melanie-Ann Feris and Sapa-AFP
Maseru

Thousands of Lesotho residents poured into the capital at the weekend to heed a clean-up call by the Maseru municipality, as the cost of last week's looting-and-arson spree was estimated at about R1-billion

The estimate – which covers only damage to property and which was made by a committee of local and South African businessmen who were left with gutted properties after last week's anarchy – is an enormous bill for the small kingdom, which ranks among the world's poorest nations.

The Lesotho government had estimated it will take three to four years to rebuild the capital

Most shops in Maseru were looted and burnt down, as were those in many other parts of the country, in two days of chaos last week.

As the first steps were taken to clean up what little remains of the capital, President Nelson Mandela yesterday strongly defended the intervention by South African and Botswana troops. He said he was convinced the Southern African Development Community intervention had been the right thing to do, and that the exercise would be a success.

Addressing a press conference in Cape Town yesterday after returning from a gruelling overseas trip, a tired-looking Mandela said it appeared that some people in Lesotho did not want peace.

Mandela said no one could blame Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi – who was acting president in his absence – for the intervention, because Buthelezi had consulted him, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and the relevant officials

He said the situation in Lesotho was a virtual coup, which had resulted in its prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili appealing to SADC, not South Africa specifically, for intervention

In Lesotho, Colonel Robbie Hartslief, commander of the intervention forces, said yesterday that only a few pockets of unrest remained, in the south.

He said Lesotho Defence Force leaders estimated they controlled just under half of the 3 000 soldiers who make up the kingdom's army Many of the troops had fled into the hills around the capital after skirmishes with SADC troops on Tuesday and Wednesday

The two main army bases in Lesotho were under control, Hartslief said, but the situation at the other nine bases in the country was unclear, because communication with them could not established

Groups of "dissident" soldiers were still hiding in the mountains, said Hartslief, but he could not say how many

SADC forces have been reinforced, and now comprise about 1 200 soldiers from South Africa and Botswana The shortage of food and medical supplies was now the principal problem in the kingdom, Hartslief said.

At the weekend, more than 1 000 Lesotho army soldiers and dissidents returned to their bases – most of them without their weapons

SANDF spokesperson Laverne Machiné said the soldiers had been told to report to their bases today in full uniform, with their weapons The Red Cross was to be present during the registration of the dissidents

"The officers and soldiers of the Lesotho Defence Force must be disarmed and they (must) have no subsequent access to weapons," she said.

Meanwhile, more than 100 tons of arms and ammunition have been recovered, mainly through SANDF operations, as well as from private homes during door-to-door searches

The weapons will be brought to South Africa where they will be registered and stored

▶ Refugees

I'm fine, merely tired – Mandela

[illegible] the result of his [illegible] Mandela's [illegible] and that had given him a clean bill of health.

Yesterday he had check-ups done by three doctors. He said his problem was merely one of fatigue

He would be in office at least until the election and would fully participate in – if not lead – the campaign, Mandela said.

▶ President's punishing schedule
Page 3

Defence chiefs jet to Lesotho

ARG 28/9/98 (167)

Maseru – The defence ministers of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe were expected here today as the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy and opposition parties remain deadlocked over the political crisis in Lesotho.

Defence Minister Joe Modise and his counterparts from Zimbabwe and Botswana were to be briefed by the joint operation centre commanders on the latest developments after last week's bloody intervention in the mountain kingdom

Their arrival coincided with the return of Lesotho Defence Force soldiers who went home when SADC troops arrived.

The SADC task force in Lesotho said today a large amount of weaponry could still be in the hands of rebel soldiers

Task force area commander Lieutenant-Colonel Jorrie Jordaan said it was almost impossible to know whether all weapons were accounted for because the Lesotho Defence Force did not have an inventory

Lesotho government offices reopened today as thousands of public servants heeded the government's call to return to work

We did the right thing – Mandela, page 3



An SA National Defence force soldier searches passengers boarding a taxi about 85km south of Maseru in Lesotho yesterday Picture AFP

SADC will be asked to help rebuild Maseru

John Dludlu BD 28/9/98 (167)

THE international community and members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) would be asked to help rebuild Maseru, the burnt-out capital of Lesotho, Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said last night

He defended the SADC intervention in the country, as well as the integrity of Pius Langa, deputy president of the SA Constitutional Court, who chaired a task team that investigated claims by the Lesotho opposition alliance that the May general election was rigged

He said the Maseru administration would not entertain talk that the Langa report — which found extensive irregularities in the May election, but did not recommend a fresh poll — had been "doctored" for political reasons

He dismissed as "rubbish" suggestions that SA, which led the intervention into Lesotho last week, should shoulder the bulk of the cost of rebuilding Maseru "The hooligans were 99% Basotho," Thabane said He said "all countries of goodwill", including "SA as a people and brothers", would be asked to help rebuild the country

The SADC military intervention has been widely criticised for having prompted the chaos that followed Thabane continued to rule out chances of talks on the way forward with the opposition alliance, saying there was no reason to negotiate anything

His hardening stance comes amid growing frustration within the SADC over the perceived reluctance of Lesotho opposition parties to agree to a meeting and venue to resolve the current political impasse, **Pule Molebeledi** reports

Meanwhile, in a move to curtail and disarm mutineers, Lesotho soldiers are to be instructed to report to their bases today with all weapons in their possession

Chief joint operations media liaison Lt-Col Laverne Machine, said further offensive actions against Lesotho Defence Force bases would be curbed until after planning had been approved by SA National Defence Force chief Gen Siphiwe Nyanda She said the mutiny by Lesotho soldiers would be investigated to determine its causes and the activities of mutineers

Nomavenda Mathiane reports that the African National Congress supported last week's intervention, saying it was done in the interests of the Basotho people and democracy

ANC spokesman Smuts Ngonyama said yesterday Lesotho was part of the SADC, which had a responsibility to intervene in situations when there was a threat to peace and democracy

Relative calm was reported in Maseru yesterday However, there were reports of the shelling of a military base near the capital The attack was believed to have been carried out by rebel soldiers

MORE THAN 100 DEAD IN LESOTHO

Mandela and king to hold meeting in city

(167) CT 24/9/98

PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA stepped into negotiations to restore order in Lesotho while the SADC defence ministers met Lesotho's president to discuss the situation

LESOTHO'S King Letsie III is to meet President Nelson Mandela in Cape Town today to discuss the situation in the troubled country

Reports yesterday said that more than 100 people were killed in Lesotho following last week's military intervention by the South ern African Development Community (SADC)

The SA government communications service said Mandela had asked for the meeting to share ideas with the king about developments in the kingdom, and partic ularly to give fresh impetus to nor malising the country, and to find ing a lasting solution to the crisis

Mandela took the initiative in consultation with Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and Botswana's President Festus Mogae. He was also consulting the presidents of Zimbabwe and Mozambique

Last week it was said the king was bypassed when the decision was made to send an intervention force to Lesotho — and Mosisili said then the king was "part of the problem"

The defence ministers from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe yesterday paid a courtesy call on Mosisili at his offices in Maseru yesterday SA Defence Minister Joe Modise and his Zimbabwe and Botswana counterparts arrived in the capital to be briefed on developments

Lesotho government offices re-opened yesterday as thousands of



'NOT CONSULTED': Letsie III

public servants heeded the government's call to return to work.

"Under the circumstances, I am pleased that a large number of public servants have returned to work this morning," government secretary Ken Tsekoa said in Maseru.

The Botswana government yesterday said it would send 120 troops to join the 340 soldiers already with the combined South African Botswana intervention force in Lesotho

South Africa and Botswana, acting in the name of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), sent 800 troops to Lesotho on September 11 after Mosisili sent a plea for help saying there had been a coup

The incursion met with fierce resistance and provoked stinging criticism that the mission had been botched.

The government in Lesotho said yesterday that in addition to an appeal to the International Monetary Fund for aid, it hoped the region would help its plight.

"We are not going to be bothering only the large international community," Foreign Affairs Minister Tom Thabane said, adding that he expected the SADC to extend its military involvement to humanitarian assistance

SADC mediators have been trying to kick-start stalled talks between the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy — whose victory in 79 of the country's 80 constituencies was the catalyst for the protest and army uprising

But Thabane was in no mood for reconciliation "Compromise on what? If you compromise on principle you make looting part of your political system."

The LCD blames opposition parties for days of looting last week in which the capital was torched, businesses were destroyed across the country and hundreds have fled across the border to South Africa in fear of their lives.

SANDF spokesperson Laverne Machiné said there were still reports of some looting in towns in outlying areas "We have soldiers deployed and they are containing the situation"

Scattered groups of armed mutineers wandering outside Maseru or hiding in the mountains were being rounded up

"We still have to contend with isolated sniping incidents, but the task force is confident that capturing those rebels will only be a matter of time" — Sapa



GUARDING AGAINST LOOTERS: A security guard stands at the ready in front of a partly looted shop in Maseru yesterday Many Maseru residents returned to work only to find the businesses where they were employed had been destroyed *PICTURE: AP*

Lesotho troops hand in weapons

MASERU More than 1 000 soldiers from Lesotho's rebellious army heeded a call to report for duty yesterday as the calm forcefully restored to the kingdom's ruined capital persisted.

South African army officers estimated they had disarmed more than half of the 2 500-strong Lesotho Defence Force, whose resistance to military intervention on September 22 has left scores dead and the impoverished country perilously low on food.

"The turnout this morning was more than I expected There are about 1 600 people here Almost everyone brought weapons It looks like the weapons they were issued with These weapons have been taken away and put into a vault," said a South African major who declined to give his name.

SANDF spokesperson Laverne Machiné said about 10 tons of weapons and ammunition had been found in caches and bases of the Lesotho Defence Force.

She said the task force would continue its search for weapons as it believed a large amount of weaponry could still be in the hands of rebel soldiers.

Task force area commander Jorrie Jordaan said it was almost impossible to know whether all weapons were accounted for because the LDF did not have an inventory

Machiné said arms found by the task force were not being confiscated.

"We are merely retrieving, registering and storing the weapons in terms of an earlier status of forces agreement among SADC countries. A political decision will determine how the retrieved arms should be dealt with."

She said a large consignment of weapons was found at Makoanyane military base outside Maseru, where dissident Lesotho soldiers had put up fierce resistance against the task force last week.

"Many of the weapons were camouflaged as agricultural equipment, giving rise to speculation that they might have been earmarked for illegal trade."

Machiné said the find at Makoanyane dispelled initial indications that dissidents at the base had been preparing to resist the task force

"Had they had time to assemble the arsenal, which included anti-tank guns, the mutineers would have slaughtered our soldiers The fact that this did not happen indicates that they were surprised by the task force" — Sapa, Reuter

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Cleaning up . Maseru residents walk past a fire-gutted business, while workers clear debris from the building

SA reluctant to foot Maseru riot bill as insurers hesitate

Star 30/9/98 (167)

By Jacqui Reeves, Melanie-Ann Feris and Sapa

The South African Government is coming under pressure to set up a fund to rebuild Lesotho's destroyed capital Maseru and bail out businesses which suffered huge losses in last week's devastation

Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndungane, joined political parties and Lesotho's opposition coalition in calling Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries to reconstruct Lesotho

Ndungane, during his visit to Lesotho refugees in Ladybrand, warned SADC leaders not to shirk responsibilities

"SADC countries can't get away from their responsibilities They made a decision, so we want to put a case to SADC countries to assist in Lesotho," he said

President Mandela yesterday said he expected the subject to be raised at Friday's peace talks between Lesotho's rival parties brokered by mediators from Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe

Speaking in Cape Town after talks with Lesotho's King Letsie III, Mandela also questioned why South Africa should be expected to help rebuild Lesotho's economy when it was the Basotho people themselves who were responsible.

South African companies whose businesses were destroyed in last week's riots are also calling on the Government to either bail them out or intervene on their behalf, as insurance companies are reluctant to pay for damage incurred

Businesses are expecting to know by today what the exact figure will be for damage to the Maseru CBD Conservative estimates stand at R1-billion.

Insurers are arguing that damage was related to political and military action, categories which are not covered by standard policies

According to Mike Strydom, managing director of the South African Special Risk Insurance Association, special risk assurance which also covers politically motivated damage does not extend across the borders

"From media reports it seems that damage in Lesotho was caused by mutiny If this is the case then I believe that the claims will not be paid out People with property damage will have to seek compensation from non-insurance sources, and by this I mean the Government," said Strydom

He said, however, that the Government would only pay if a war compensation fund had been established

Lesotho crisis committee leader Steve Buys said "No one, from any government, is willing to define what happened here They won't say if it was a war, a riot, a civil uprising or anything As long as it's classified a war, no one will be paid out a cent"

▶ SA should apologise

Any threat justifies intervention — SADC

CT 1/10/98 (27621) (767)

LUANDA. Armed forces chiefs of staff yesterday declared that any threat to a member of the 14-nation Southern African Development Community could justify intervention by its allies

After a meeting here of the chiefs of staff of 10 SADC nations, the Zambian representative chairing the session, Solomon Mumbi, said if such intervention took place in some countries, he saw no reason it should not occur in others

He said the armed forces' leaders had drawn up a series of recommendations for submission to SADC heads of state to ensure better regional security, but would not disclose what they were

His statement on justified intervention was an allusion to backing for President Laurent Kabila of Congo by Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad, and to last week's deployment in Lesotho of soldiers from SA and Botswana

Luanda newspapers said yesterday that the government could, in current circumstances, call on SADC members to help it against die-hard troops of Unita leader Jonas Savimbi, who have been blamed for clashes which have killed hundreds of Angolans since March — Sapa-AFP

SADC army chiefs agree on intervention

Star 1/10/98

(167)

A meeting of the regional body's military leaders has decided on a series of measures to ensure the security of its members

SAPA-AFP
Luanda

Regional armed forces' chiefs of staff yesterday declared that any threat to a member of the 14-nation Southern African Development Community could justify intervention by its allies

Following a meeting in Angola of the chiefs of staff of 10 SADC nations, the Zambian representative chairing the session, Solomon Mumbi, said that if such intervention took place in some countries, he saw no reason why it should not occur in others.

Mumbi added that the armed forces' leaders had drawn up a series of recommendations for submission to SADC heads of state to ensure better regional security, but would not disclose what they were.

His statement on justified intervention was an allusion to backing for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Angolan, Zimbabwean and Namibian troops to help President Laurent Kabila against Tutsi-led rebels, and also to last week's deployment in Lesotho of soldiers from South Africa and Botswana to quell an army mutiny related to disputed election results.

Yesterday's pro-government press in Luanda stated that the government could, in current circumstances, call on fellow SADC members to help it against diehard rebel troops of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita). Savimbi has been disavowed by former senior aides but is blamed for clashes which have killed hundreds of Angolans since March.

The SADC meeting began in

Proposals will be submitted to heads of state

Luanda on Tuesday amid calls for increased military support for Kabila, who has been fighting a Tutsi-led rebellion that began on August 2 and won allied support at the end of August to stave off an attack on Kinshasa and its south-western supply region.

Angola's defence minister, General Pedro Sebastio, said on Tuesday that, in accordance with decisions taken at an SADC summit in Mauritius two weeks ago, reinforcements would be added to the foreign SADC troops already in the DRC.

One of the Kinshasa strongman's sons, Joseph Kabila, who is head of the DRC's armed forces, led his country's delegation to the talks.

In Angola, the government charges that Savimbi's Unita still has at least 30 000 armed men even though the movement claimed to have totally demobilised in March in line with peace protocols signed in Lusaka, Zambia, in November 1994

Unita has been subjected to international sanctions over its failure to abide by the Lusaka accords, notably also in handing over its strongholds to central administration. The past month saw the emergence of a dissident wing which charges that Savimbi is a warmonger and has disavowed his leadership.

The SADC groups together 14 countries – Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All but four – Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique and Lesotho – were represented in Luanda by their military chiefs

Any intervention should be authorised

(167) (22977) Star 1/10/98

By Cedric de Coning

The controversial SADC intervention in Lesotho this past week raises the question why have we not learned from Somalia and the many other examples of failed interventions?

Lesotho was not peacekeeping or even peace enforcement. Peacekeeping is when the United Nations or other bodies such as the OAU or Nato are authorised to enter a conflict as a third party of neutral forces to monitor the implementation of a peace agreement or cease-fire. Peace enforcement is where no such consensus exists, but where the international community, normally out of humanitarian considerations, authorises a force to enforce peace.

Lesotho was instead a deployment of forces on the side of one of the parties to a conflict to entrench that party's position. The South African Government argued that the intervention in Lesotho was at the invitation of the government and in reaction to a coup, that is, to protect the legitimately elected government, and to restore normality.

South Africa also tried to argue that the broad mandate given to South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe in 1996 to resolve the conflict in Lesotho, and the decision by SADC and the OAU not to tolerate any coups, were the basis for its intervention

But it did not help that the initial, and most sensitive, intervention into Lesotho was done by South African troops only And so just as the mission in Somalia was seen as serving narrow American interests and the Zimbabwe-led SADC intervention into the DRC as serving Zimbabwean national interests, so the South African-led SADC intervention in Lesotho is similarly being perceived by a significant portion of the Lesotho population and the international media as a South African operation.

Set out the objective of mission and key tasks

The Lesotho Defence Force and the opposition parties saw the SADC task force as an attempt by South Africa to support the government.

And so the SADC force met with fierce opposition with tragic loss of life on both sides, widespread looting and destruction of property, with severe implications for the Lesotho economy The Lesotho intervention has again shown that the perceived legitimacy of the intervention becomes critical to its success

The only way to avoid this is by having clear, transparent, procedures for authorising missions of this kind, both nationally, but more importantly at the appropriate sub-regional (SADC), regional (OAU) or international (UN) level.

The UN procedures ensure that any mission involving the dispatch of troops has been authorised at the highest level, that there is a transparent and public mandate, that the rules of engagement are clear, and that the status of the mission personnel in the host country has been agreed to

Once these steps have been taken in the public domain, everybody knows that a UN mission has been approved for a certain country, and what this mission is supposed to achieve.

A clear and transparent authorising procedure is also needed in SADC so that everybody knows what constitutes legitimate approval for a SADC mission, for example, a decision taken at the foreign minister level of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. Such a decision should be in the form of a UN Security Council-type mandate that sets out the objective of the mission, key tasks, the expected end state of the mission and the level of force that is authorised for the mission.

This procedure should also address the relationship between SADC, the OAU and the UN in terms of what kind of mission can be authorised by whom. For this to happen, the current impasse around the SADC Organ and the dual chairmanship of the SADC Organ and SADC proper, have to be urgently resolved.

The SADC heads of state, and especially presidents Mandela and Mugabe, must show the political will to resolve this issue as a matter of urgency.

The lack of a proper mandate, objectives, nature of the mission and rules of engagement make it that much more difficult for those responsible for a mission to explain to the families of those who might die in an operation what greater good was served by their deaths. – Star Foreign Service

■ *Cedric de Coning is the programme manager peacekeeping at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)*

SA's Lesotho foray treated with pinch of salt

By Greg Mills

Viewed from abroad, South Africa's first real foray into peace-keeping operations seemed to have had mixed results In France, military specialists commented unfavourably on the apparently heavy losses sustained by South African forces against only lightly armed dissident elements of the Royal Lesotho National Defence Force.

South Africa's efforts come at a new juncture in terms of both relations within and between the states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and in the international community's attitude towards (generically termed) "peace-support" operations, particularly in Africa.

Both the South African use of troops and the earlier intervention by SADC members Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia into Laurent Kabila's Congo, signal a failure of conflict-resolution mechanisms in Southern Africa. Why has this happened?

First, despite all the noise around Africa's new leadership generation, the current cast seem to be as incapable of engendering trust and facilitating co-operation than the last Second, these events have occurred at a moment of leadership frailty worldwide. Clinton's problems over the Lewinsky affair have undoubtedly impaired Washington's capacity to conduct foreign policy.

Third, there are many deep-seated domestic insecurities which need to be addressed. Lastly, high principles mean little in Africa's harsh environment. While human rights groups might applaud Pretoria for its dedication to democratic norms and principles in its attitude towards its regional neighbours, this has, unfortunately, not helped its regional diplomacy a great deal. It amounts to trying to deal with fraught, dangerous issues with one hand tied behind its back. What are the implications for SA?

At a time when the international community is desperately trying to wash its hands of involvement in Africa's seemingly unending conflicts, – a policy trend quaintly termed the "promotion of African solutions and capacity to solve African problems" – the portents are not good.

As one French veteran of peacekeeping from Beirut to Bosnia cynically commented after hearing of South Africa's incursion into Lesotho, "good luck" He identified three main, inter-related difficulties with contemporary peace-keeping missions first, the technical difficulties in conducting missions in hot spots far away from the comfort of an office in Johannesburg There is also a need to adequately prepare forces in terms of education and training for all the different "mission nuances", as well as in the provision of exact military capabilities, obligations and rules of engagement.

Finally, there needs to be a clearly "defined and delimited" political framework and exit strategy for the intervention. What does this mean for Pretoria's policymakers?

Without the establishment of a clear political mandate and conscious pursuit of such goals by all diplomatic means available, the apparently all-too-frequent resort to military tools only serves to worsen the image of the continent abroad An African renaissance appears, in the circumstances, an awfully long distance off. – Star Foreign Service

■ *Dr Greg Mills is the National Director of the SA Institute of International Affairs who has been researching in France.*

Any intervention should be authorised

(167) OAU 1/10/98

By Cedric de Coning

The controversial SADC intervention in Lesotho this past week raises the question. why have we not learned from Somalia and the many other examples of failed interventions?

Lesotho was not peacekeeping or even peace enforcement. Peacekeeping is when the United Nations or other bodies such as the OAU or Nato are authorised to enter a conflict as a third party of neutral forces to monitor the implementation of a peace agreement or cease-fire. Peace enforcement is where no such consensus exists, but where the international community, normally out of humanitarian considerations, authorises a force to enforce peace.

Lesotho was instead a deployment of forces on the side of one of the parties to a conflict to entrench that party's position. The South African Government argued that the intervention in Lesotho was at the invitation of the government and in reaction to a coup, that is, to protect the legitimately elected government, and to restore normality.

South Africa also tried to argue that the broad mandate given to South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe in 1996 to resolve the conflict in Lesotho, and the decision by SADC and the OAU not to tolerate any coups, were the basis for its intervention.

But it did not help that the initial, and most sensitive, intervention into Lesotho was done by South African troops only. And so just as the mission in Somalia was seen as serving narrow American interests and the Zimbabwe-led SADC intervention into the DRC as serving Zimbabwean national interests, so the South African-led SADC intervention in Lesotho is similarly being perceived by a significant portion of the Lesotho population and the international media as a South African operation.

The Lesotho Defence Force, and the opposition parties saw the SADC task force as an attempt by South Africa to support the government.

And so the SADC force met with fierce opposition, with tragic loss of life on both sides, widespread looting and destruction of property, with severe implications for the Lesotho economy. The Lesotho intervention has again shown that the perceived legitimacy of the intervention becomes critical to its success.

The only way to avoid this is by having clear, transparent, procedures for authorising missions of this kind, both nationally, but more importantly at the appropriate sub-regional (SADC), regional (OAU) or international (UN) level.

The UN procedures ensure that any mission involving the dispatch of troops has been authorised at the highest level, that there is a transparent and public mandate, that the rules of engagement are clear, and that the status of the mission personnel in the host country has been agreed to.

Set out the objective of mission and key tasks

Once these steps have been taken in the public domain, everybody knows that a UN mission has been approved for a certain country, and what this mission is supposed to achieve.

A clear and transparent authorising procedure is also needed in SADC so that everybody knows what constitutes legitimate approval for a SADC mission, for example, a decision taken at the foreign minister level of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. Such a decision should be in the form of a UN Security Council-type mandate that sets out the objective of the mission, key tasks, the expected end state of the mission and the level of force that is authorised for the mission.

This procedure should also address the relationship between SADC, the OAU and the UN in terms of what kind of mission can be authorised by whom. For this to happen, the current impasse around the SADC Organ and the dual chairmanship of the SADC Organ and SADC proper, have to be urgently resolved.

The SADC heads of state, and especially presidents Mandela and Mugabe, must show the political will to resolve this issue as a matter of urgency.

The lack of a proper mandate, objectives, nature of the mission and rules of engagement make it that much more difficult for those responsible for a mission to explain to the families of those who might die in an operation what greater good was served by their deaths. – Star Foreign Service

■ *Cedric de Coning is the programme manager peacekeeping at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)*

SA's Lesotho foray treated with pinch of salt

By Greg Mills

Viewed from abroad, South Africa's first real foray into peace-keeping operations seemed to have had mixed results. In France, military specialists commented unfavourably on the apparently heavy losses sustained by South African forces against only lightly armed dissident elements of the Royal Lesotho National Defence Force.

South Africa's efforts come at a new juncture in terms of both relations within and between the states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and in the international community's attitude towards (generically termed) "peace-support" operations, particularly in Africa.

Both the South African use of troops and the earlier intervention by SADC members Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia into Laurent Kabila's Congo, signal a failure of conflict-resolution mechanisms in Southern Africa. Why has this happened?

First, despite all the noise around Africa's new leadership generation, the current cast seem to be as incapable of engendering trust and facilitating co-operation than the last. Second, these events have occurred at a moment of leadership frailty worldwide. Clinton's problems over the Lewinsky affair have undoubtedly impaired Washington's capacity to conduct foreign policy.

Third, there are many deep-seated domestic insecurities which need to be addressed. Lastly, high principles mean little in Africa's harsh environment. While human rights groups might applaud Pretoria for its dedication to democratic norms and principles in its attitude towards its regional neighbours, this has, unfortunately, not helped its regional diplomacy a great deal. It amounts to trying to deal with fraught, dangerous issues with one hand tied behind its back. What are the implications for SA?

At a time when the international community is desperately trying to wash its hands of involvement in Africa's seemingly unending conflicts, – a policy trend quaintly termed the "promotion of African solutions and capacity to solve African problems" – the portents are not good.

As one French veteran of peacekeeping from Beirut to Bosnia cynically commented after hearing of South Africa's incursion into Lesotho, "good luck" He identified three main, inter-related difficulties with contemporary peace-keeping missions first, the technical difficulties in conducting missions in hot spots far away from the comfort of an office in Johannesburg. There is also a need to adequately prepare forces in terms of education and training for all the different "mission nuances", as well as in the provision of exact military capabilities, obligations and rules of engagement.

Finally, there needs to be a clearly "defined and delimited" political framework and exit strategy for the intervention. What does this mean for Pretoria's policymakers?

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■ *Dr Greg Mills is the National Director of the SA Institute of International Affairs who has been researching in France.*

Army officers slam Lesotho move

Star 1/10/98 (167)

Norman Chandler
Defence Correspondent

Senior army officers yesterday slammed the Government's military response to the Lesotho crisis, charging that the incursion, which left nine South African soldiers dead, was badly planned and executed

The officers listed the Government's failure to provide reliable intelligence, unwillingness to use crack units specially designed for such situations and the politicians' creation of a "utopia of peace" as factors that contributed to the debacle

Apart from the nine South Africans who died when about 600 South African troops entered the Lesotho capital Maseru as part of a Southern African Development Community initiative to restore order in the kingdom, the incursion set off a wave of anti-South African feeling and sparked at least three days of rioting and looting that devastated the city

Fifty-eight Basotho soldiers died and 47 civilians were killed

Army officers attending the annual Infantry Symposium in Middelburg yesterday said South Africa's troops were sent "blindfolded" into Lesotho.

The army last night rejected the criticism, but the officers emphasised that they were being critical only because it would assist future operations.

'Incursion a wake-up call for politicians'

The deputy chief of the army, Major-General Roland de Vries, said "there were basic things that were not right" in the operation and said criticism was "important" for the army to know about

The harshest criticism came from the Chief of Special Forces Brigadier-General Borries Bornmann who said bluntly that "we were blindfolded"

Special forces played a limited role in the action, which was spearheaded by infantry

"The wrong people were sent in and there was a lack of intelligence, a major mistake," Bornmann said. "Our troops could not adapt to the terrain. The planning and preparation was an acute problem," he added.

He said the blame could be laid at the door of politicians

"It's a wake-up call for politicians they created a utopia in which the situation was painted as peaceful ... they also said we didn't need money for defence."

Sergeant-Major Koos Moorcroft said: "The best thing which has come out of Lesotho is that the soldiers have had a scrap together. This is great for the army's integration process"

Defence Ministry spokesperson Colonel Puso Tladi said most of the criticism had come from armchair critics.

► Doctor's funeral

Complex interplay of forces behind Maseru debacle

(167)

BD 2/10/98

Lesotho needs money, not tanks, if it is to build lasting prosperity and democracy, argues Kuseni Dlamini

MUCH of what has been said or written on the Lesotho crisis has tended to focus on the wrongness or rightness of SA's, or rather the Southern African Development Community 's, intervention in the tiny kingdom

The fact that more is at stake in the debacle than just the above has largely been ignored The complex interplay of internal and external forces deserves consideration if the crisis is to be resolved and a recurrence prevented

Lesotho as a state is a historical creation of the British, its former colonial masters

It dates back to 1869, when the British and Afrikaners between them renegotiated the Aliwal North treaty to formalise the boundaries of present-day Lesotho As a result of this treaty, Lesotho lost more than half its arable land to what is today the Free State. The population of Basotho South Africans, some with close family and historical ties with Lesotho, is more than double Lesotho's population

The Aliwal North treaty was a blow to the Basotho not least because the British and Afrikaners did not allow even the king of the Basotho, Moshoeshoe 1, to air the views of his people — let alone any organs of civil society that might have existed at the time The king died a year later

Lesotho today is a geopolitical entity reflecting, as much as resulting from, the historical tensions between two European settler colonial regimes That is largely why, according to academics Peter Vale and Khabele Matlosa, Lesotho has been largely "unable to provide for the interests of its citizens".

Increasing global and regional interconnectedness is transforming the role of individual states Although states retain sovereignty, governments continue to suffer erosion of their authority. They face the pressures of globalisation at one level and of grassroots movements at another.

This results in individual states being increasingly unable to fulfil their core functions (especially security) without recourse to international assistance. This in turn has dramatic implications for the sovereignty, autonomy and accountability of the state. It also involves a sensitivity and vulnerability to external developments, and compromises the independence of a state as it erodes the boundaries between the internal and external domains.

The existence of regional bodies like the Southern African Development Community is evidence of the limited capacity of individual states to resolve independently the policy and security problems they face

The time is now ripe for the SADC and Africa to create a regional forum that can provide leadership and direction in political, economic, social and global issues A process through which conflicting and diverse interests can be accommodated and cooperative action taken is urgently needed as a quick and practical response to the challenges posed by the Maseru situation

Security, by its very nature, is a national, regional and international "public good" Markets or individual governments acting in isolation cannot provide it The southern African organisation as a regional body must accept the responsibility to provide regional "public goods" such as policing, security, justice, financial stability, infrastructure, human rights and good democratic governance It is partly within this context that the SADC's intervention in Lesotho should be understood.

However, accurate and shrewd intelligence in military operations of this kind is indispensable It is not enough to have honourable and justifiable motivations to intervene in crisis situations Maybe the organisation should seriously consider jacking up its intelligence capacity by setting up a regional intelligence network that reports to its secretariat

The organisation should also have a standing army whose members are representative of all member states This would spread the costs of intervention and avoid the tendency to describe operations as aggression by this or that member state.

The crises in Maseru and Kinshasa are contrary to the concept of an African renaissance as much as they make the ideal more relevant and appealing than ever.

The southern African body needs, as a matter of urgency, to launch a campaign to rebuild Lesotho This campaign should form the socioeconomic and political foundation for lasting peace and democracy in Lesotho and, by implication, southern Africa As Vusi Mavumbela of the office of the deputy president has argued, democracies never go to war with each other Economic recovery in Lesotho will lead to political stability which in turn will make Lesotho safe for democracy

Without economic recovery and political stability there will never be peace in Africa Regional security and peace in Africa demands an economically healthy and politically stable region and continent. The sooner the regional organisation and other friends of Lesotho elsewhere in the world send money, not tanks, the better the prospects for peace and for the African renaissance will be

□ *Dlamini is a former student of the universities of Natal and Oxford. He was a Rhodes Scholar at the latter institution*

LESOTHO CRISIS

THE CORDITE OF

SA had to send in troops, though ill-prepared, on SADC's behalf

SA's decision to intervene militarily in Lesotho is a defining point in its post-apartheid history After a mere four years, the new SA's foreign policy, infused with a whiff of cordite and an image of steel-helmeted troops, has been superimposed on President Nelson Mandela's "vision of co-operation for development"

Television footage of armoured vehicles crossing the Caledon River into Maseru has appalled many South Africans Instead

of pride in their soldiers, eight of whom were killed in a two-day shoot-out with Lesotho soldiers, there is a visceral unease that not even Mandela has been able to still

Their dismay is fuelled by memories of murderous raids into the tiny kingdom by SA commandos in 1982 and 1985, even though the avowed purpose of the present task force (restoration of stability in Lesotho) is radically different from that of the earlier raiders (elimination of anti-apartheid insurgents in Lesotho)

Opposition parties in Lesotho have been quick to exploit the disquiet in SA The response of their spokesman, Mamello Morrison, still echoes in SA ears "Your Boers are here History will judge Mandela harshly"

But to record these points is not to deny there is a case for SA's intervention, particularly as it was carried out on behalf of the 14-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) Amid the clamour of objections from opposition parties in SA, Botswana — which initially contributed 200 soldiers to the expeditionary force — and Lesotho, there has not been a single dissenting voice from the governments of SADC member countries

The case for intervention rests on four premises

❑ That SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe had obligations as guarantors of peace in Lesotho under a 1994 agreement,

❑ That the SADC, whose chairman is Mandela, had undertaken not to countenance the overthrow of legitimate governments in the region,

❑ That the government of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili was the legitimately elected government of Lesotho, despite protest by opposition parties, and

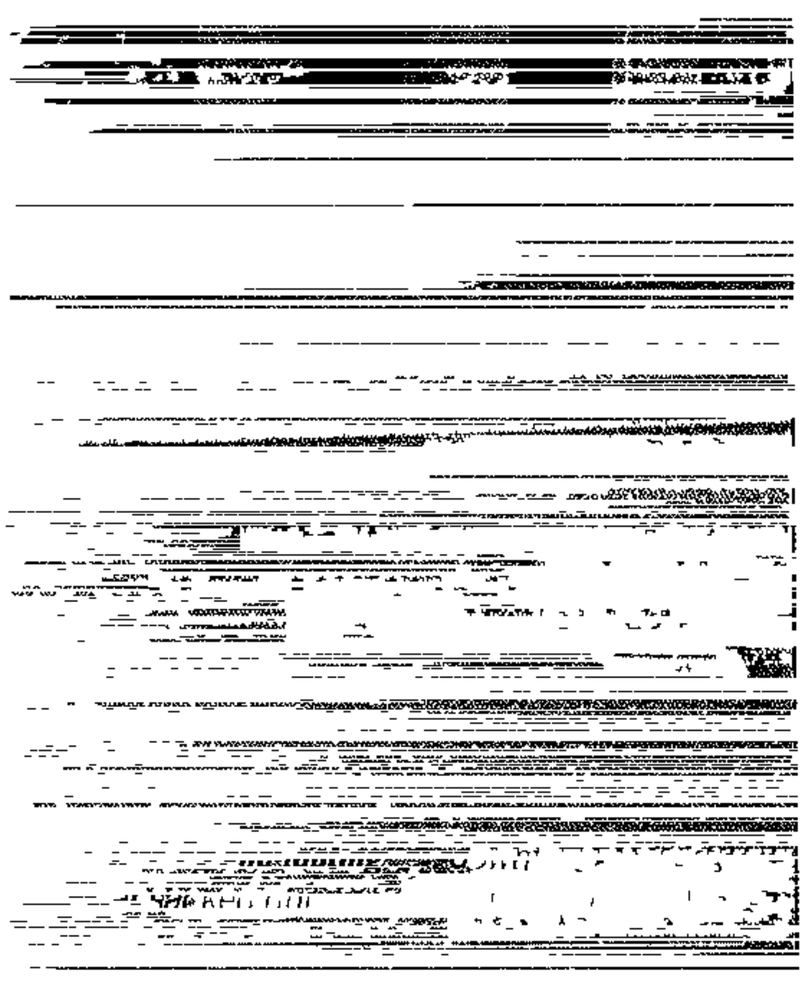
❑ That in the 10 days before SA troops crossed into Lesotho on September 22 the kingdom had been brought to a state of near anarchy by an opposition campaign to make it ungovernable

The 1994 agreement was signed by King Letsie III and the then Lesotho Prime Minister, Ntsu Mokhehle, and underwritten by SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe It was brokered by the "troika" after Letsie initiated a coup in August of that year against Mokhehle, whose Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) swept to power in the 1993 election, winning all 65 contested seats

Claiming royal prerogative, Letsie dissolved parliament, dismissed Mokhehle's government, suspended parts of the constitution and installed a provisional government One of the members of the provisional government was Evaristus Sekhonyana, the leader of the Basotho National Party (BNP), which, ironically, had ruled Lesotho without a legitimate mandate for 16 years, from 1970 — when it aborted the election to forestall a BCP

CO-OPERATION

pm 2/10/98 (167)



victory — to 1986 when it was overthrown by a military rebellion

It is neither irrelevant nor malicious to note that in October 1994 Sekhonyana, prominent in the current Lesotho crisis, was sentenced to a heavy fine after being convicted of sedition and inciting the army and the police to violence

In terms of the 1994 accord, Letsie reinstated Mokhehle's democratically elected government in return for immunity from prosecution of the leaders of the royalist-inspired coup attempt The Lesotho signatories to the agreement acknowledged implicitly SA's right to intervene if peace were undermined

Intervention by the SADC in the affairs of member countries — of which Lesotho is one — is provided for in article 5 of the protocol on politics signed in 1986, long before the present crisis One of the conditions sanctioning intervention is when the legitimate authority of a member state is threatened As Safety & Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi puts it "The position of the SADC on coups is well known They are not tolerated"

The May 1998 election, won decisively by Mosisili's Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), has been shrouded in controversy, much of it generated by opposition parties and skilfully propagated in SA Their shrill campaign may relate to their failure in the 1993 and 1998 elections, in which their combined tally of seats is precisely one

The LCD — formed last year when Mokhehle and the bulk of his lieutenants broke away from the BCP, leaving only a rump of the original party under the leadership of Molapo Qhobeka — represents the vast majority of Basotho Having faithfully followed the now retired father of African nationalism in Lesotho Mokhehle, for nearly five decades, they did so again when they voted for the LCD in the May 23 election

Much of the SA media coverage of the LCD's victory — it won 60,5% of the vote and all but one of the 80 National Assembly seats — has been distracted by opposition protest It fails to note several salient facts, a synopsis of which follows

❑ The election was organised by an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), established under the Lesotho Constitution, and not by the LCD,

❑ It was monitored by several teams of electoral observers, including one from the Commonwealth and another from the SADC, who declared it to be substantially free and fair,

❑ Several Maseru-based diplomats hold the same view, though they concede there were a few administrative irregularities,

❑ Opposition parties petitioning the courts against the outcome sought to challenge the result in individual constituencies — Lesotho has a "first past the post" constituency-based electoral system — but not the result as a whole, and

❑ The overall result is consistent with the 1993 victory when the LCD in its previous incarnation as the BCP won 74,7% of the vote and all the contested seats

A forensic audit of the election by the Langa Commission, established as part of the SA-led SADC bid to broker a settlement between the feuding Lesotho parties, did not endorse opposition allegations that the poll had been rigged While it had serious concerns about irregularities, it could not conclude that the election failed to reflect the will of the people

But by the time the Langa report was released to parties in Lesotho on September 17, the situation was rapidly deteriorating The primary cause was an opposition-led campaign to make the kingdom ungovernable It was seen by the LCD government as an attempt by opposition politicians to attain the power denied them at the polls

A critical step in the process occurred on September 11, when pro-opposition junior officers in the Lesotho Defence Force coerced 30 senior officers, including the commander, lieutenant general Makhulu Mosakheng, into resigning at gunpoint

From then on, the Lesotho army simply turned a blind eye to unlawful actions by opposition protesters These ranged from the seizure and impounding (in the palace grounds) of government vehicles, to blockading roads and preventing civil servants from going to their offices or MPs from entering the National Assembly

The result was a breakdown of government Faced with a grave and deteriorating situation, Prime Minister Mosisili twice wrote to the SADC leaders, including Mandela, urgently requesting intervention

In the first letter, dated September 16, he talked of threats to abduct and murder Cabinet Ministers "The only intervention I can and do request urgently is of a military nature," he said "We have a coup on our hands" In the second letter, dated



Mbeki with Malaysia's Mahathir *he should have been at the mountain*

astonishment at the ferocity of the resistance on the first two days

Only one deduction can be made SA's tactical intelligence was conspicuously deficient There were reports of SA officers asking directions of Lesotho citizens and quizzing journalists on the number of doors to the royal palace These embarrassing reports have been beamed throughout the world, courtesy of the BBC

It is now obvious that the initial task force of 600 soldiers was simply too small to fulfil its task of capturing key targets, including LDF bases, and maintaining law and order While they were tied down by LDF soldiers, shops and property were looted and burnt in Maseru and, later, in smaller towns

There was also a lack of co-ordination with the later 460-strong Botswana unit sent to give an SADC colour to the intervention They did not arrive at Ladybrand on the border of Lesotho until dusk on the first day If they had entered Lesotho with the SA soldiers, there might have been fewer casualties and less destruction

The absence from SA of both Mandela and Mbeki — and Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo — during the critical hours before the decision to intervene has rightly drawn adverse comment

If Mandela had long-standing appointments in the US, Mbeki's agenda in Malaysia, where he was attending the Commonwealth Games, does not seem to have been pressing It certainly did not justify his absence from SA at arguably the most critical hours in the short history of ANC rule As the effective President-designate, Mbeki should have returned and conferred with his lieutenants when it became clear intervention was a serious consideration To question Mbeki's judgment is not to join the chorus of Buthelezi-bashers

The first cross-border excursion by SA since the installation of a democratically elected government cannot be described as a complete success, despite praise for the troops from expedition commander Colonel Robbie Hartslief and SANDF Commander-in-Chief Mandela

It's no consolation that during the years of white minority rule, comparable blunders were committed because of faulty intelligence and incomplete planning the bombing of a jam factory in Mozambique during a punitive raid by the SADF in May 1993 and, more pertinently, the killing of innocent Lesotho citizens in the December 1982 search-and-destroy raid against ANC combatants in Maseru

A plaque near the Maseru gate commemorates the 42 people killed by SA commandos in 1982 The epitaph of the intervention by post-apartheid SA may well be memories of the plundered and burnt-out shops in Maseru **Patrick Laurence**

fluctuating Rand.

Five years ago the Rand was 3 4 to the Dollar Now it's closer to 7 To protect your long-term investments against the fluctuating Rand, Old Mutual offers you Worldwide Funds With investments in 22 overseas countries, your money's value is so much more secure Speak to your Old Mutual adviser or your broker about the benefits of Worldwide Funds Or visit us on the Net at http //life oldmutual co za

OLD MUTUAL

A security company [illegible] would then drive to the plane, the pilot landed. Then the pilot [illegible]

Nyanda to discipline Lesotho task force critics

(167) Star 2/10/98

By Norman Chandler
Defence Correspondent

Top defence force officers who expressed criticism of the planning and execution of duties by the SADC joint task force in Lesotho are to be severely reprimanded.

The Ministry of Defence said yesterday that the men must be prepared to take the consequences of their actions. In terms of section 118 of the Defence Act, they are prohibited from "improper disclosure of information".

The South African National Defence Force was reeling yesterday over the unprecedented comments made on Wednesday by senior officers about the conduct of SADC forces, in particular South African tactics.

The officer commanding Special Forces Regiment, Major-General Borries Bornman, told an infantry symposium at Middelburg that "the wrong forces were sent in" and heavily criticised the lack of intelligence available and the planning of the action.

Colonel Puso Tladi, speaking on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, General Siphiwe Nyanda, said responsibility for

SANDF left reeling over comments

their statements rested with the generals and other ranks.

Nyanda has demanded an explanation from Bornman.

The ministry said. "Those who have criticised the action will be spoken to. They were in fact not anywhere near the process of planning and execution of the action, and have no understanding of the inner workings of the process which was followed."

It was made clear that while the critics remained officers of the SANDF, they should have supported the action.

"It is good that they did speak out but they should have been in possession of the facts before they did so, particularly as they are not ordinary members of the SANDF but a part of the collective senior echelon of the SANDF and must be prepared to take the consequences of their responsibility," the ministry said.

Nyanda said statements made by the senior officers "required perspective" and that their opinions, as reflected in the media, "are essentially their own personal opinions about the planning and execution of an operation in which none of them were involved, nor have they received briefings on the conduct of the operation.

"The SANDF, as part of normal practice, will hold its own intensive debriefing to determine the lessons learned from Operation Boleas. I welcome informed criticism from members of the SANDF, but

'Wrong forces were sent in'

would obviously require these opinions to be expressed in a fora where they can be evaluated before being made public."

Some generals interviewed by The Star yesterday agreed with Bornman.

► More reports, comment

NE

We must help

Lesotho – Mbeki

Fresh elections set for mountain kingdom

ARG 3/10/98

(167)

Maseru

A new general election would be held in Lesotho within 15 to 18 months, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki announced in a special televised address last night

The new poll was agreed to by Lesotho government and opposition parties during peace talks brokered by Southern African Development Community mediators in Maseru earlier yesterday, he said

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy party of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili would govern until the elections were held, and Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission would be reconstituted and strengthened, Mr Mbeki said

Negotiations would continue to address other measures that might be necessary to ensure the elections were free and fair and that all political parties participating in the poll had a level playing field

The SADC would maintain a security presence in Lesotho until it was determined that the Lesotho security forces were able to discharge their legal and constitutional roles effectively

"All parties in the dispute, including the opposition parties, will co-operate with SADC in this regard"

Mr Mbeki said the agreement laid a firm basis for Lesotho's return to normality

"It constitutes an undertaking by all political formations in that country that they will cease all activities directed at mobilising people to oppose the government of Lesotho on the basis that the elections of May 1998 were fatally flawed"

Mr Mbeki said the South African government was pleased with the outcome of yesterday's multiparty talks in Maseru

"We would like to congratulate all participants at this meeting for the constructive manner in which they approached the challenge of speedily resolving the problems facing the people of Lesotho"

Mr Mbeki said the coup d'etat in Lesotho, which, he said, prompted last week's military intervention by SADC, had been defeated in keeping with the regional grouping's commitment to protect and entrench democracy in all our countries

The agreement had been driven by Lesotho's interests rather than narrow party-political considerations and afforded the people of Lesotho another opportunity to ensure stability and development for themselves Mr Mbeki also thanked South African and Botswana troops for acting in a disciplined and humane way and for helping to bring about this result

"We also reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the families of all those both in our own country and in Lesotho who lost their loved ones during the course of this operation to defend democracy in Lesotho and stability in our region," Mr Mbeki said

He said the South African people and Government shared the pain of those who lost their properties in Maseru and elsewhere in Lesotho as a result of arson and looting which took place "as our forces were suppressing the coup d'etat"

The SADC and the rest of the international community would continue to assist Lesotho as the kingdom addressed its political and socio-economic challenges

"As South Africans, we have a responsibility to assist the Kingdom of Lesotho to overcome its problems We must all celebrate (that) the cause of democracy has succeeded and that new measures will be taken in Lesotho to reaffirm the principle that the people shall govern," said Mr Mbeki

However, outside the talks venue, tension had been rising as the talks dragged on An increasing number of opposition supporters were singing anti-South African songs and verbally attacking President Nelson Mandela, accusing him of killing Lesotho's people and destroying their economy Yesterday morning only about 100 supporters were gathered at the square, but by last night the number had grown to between 700 and 1 000

South African Government officials said the Lesotho government was entitled to refuse to hold new elections, since the Langa Commission has not undermined the credibility of the May 23 elections

People on the streets of the burnt-out capital Maseru said they hoped peace would return soon "All we want is peace from these talks Whatever the politicians decide at the talks it must bring peace," said one resident Said another "We are sick and tired of these politicians never agreeing" – Foreign Correspondent, Sapa

Maseru talks 'constructive', page 25

Fiasco was simply the inevitable outcome of inept Foreign Affairs leadership, says Anthony Holiday

ANC divided on Lesotho invasion

ARGT 7/10/98 (167)

As politicians, foreign policy pundits and stock market profiteers in Southern Africa and elsewhere try to digest the implications of South Africa's invasion – to call it by its proper name – of little, land-locked Lesotho, the political fall-out from the adventure in the invader's camp is already evident.

Make no mistake The African National Congress, both inside and outside Parliament, is by no means at one on this issue, whatever its apologists – including President Mandela – may say for public consumption in order to save face and make the best of a terribly bad job

These apologists have an unenviable task.

They can try to blame the whole débâcle on the intransigence of mutineers in the Lesotho Defence Force, as Ronnie Mamoepa – who heads the communications outfit recently set up in Thabo Mbeki's office – has done in wearisome offi-



HUMBLE ORIGINS Kader Asmal

cialese They can go on to point out, in equally dreary legalese, that Article 5 of the protocol on politics and security, agreed by members of the Southern African Development Community at the 1966 summit in Gabarone, does indeed provide for armed intervention in situations resembling those prevalent in Lesotho when our troops went in.

What they cannot do is explain why we committed troops in this case, having only just refused to do so in the Congo

They are equally helpless to explain away the military miscalculations which cost the lives of nine young South African soldiers while failing to prevent the virtual destruction of Maseru by arsonists and looters

Still less are these officious voices able to tell us when and where it will all end, how long our military will remain bogged down in Lesotho, or what the medium to long-term effects on what out of charity one refers to as our "foreign policy" will be

Given all this aporia, it would have been miraculous if the invasion had incited no discontent within the ANC

And miracles are a rare occurrence in politics.

As it is, there has been discontent aplenty, although it has so far been prudently kept out of the public sphere

Some MPs, serving on the parliamentary portfolio committee on foreign affairs, are particularly incensed at the lack of prior information – let alone consultation – which was a specially worrying feature of the decision to invade.

A post intervention caucus briefing by Defence Minister Joe Modise, at which, I understand, the doubters held their peace, will do little to still private disquietudes.

In particular, it will be ineffective in stemming a current of opinion inside the ANC and among its supporters that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is being hopelessly badly led by its incumbent minister, Alfred Nzo, and his deputy, Aziz Pahad, who is, for most practical purposes, the man who runs things in this crucial sector of our state apparatus.

For those who share this opinion, the Lesotho débacle was quite simply the inevitable outcome of this inept leadership

This crisis of confidence ought to focus attention on the short, rotund figure of the Minister of Water Affairs, Kader Asmal, who, aside from Mr Pahad, is the only credible successor to Mr Nzo

Polite formalities aside, the two men do not like one another Professor Asmal, who some experience as pompous and opinionated, tends to be contemptuous of Mr Pahad's abilities and lifestyle

Both are highly educated and intelligent in their different ways Mr Pahad holds a diploma in foreign relations from the prestige School of African and Oriental Studies in London and a master's degree in the same subject from Sussex University Professor Asmal has an international reputation as an academic lawyer and was Dean of the Law Faculty at Trinity College, Dublin.

But the resemblances end there Mr Pahad is the son of a wealthy businessman, is something of a bon vivant, has been divorced and remarried and, during his years in exile, had a reputation as a ladies' man.

Professor Asmal, by contrast, has humble origins in Natal His exile years were spent assiduously climbing the academic ladder, bringing up his two adopted sons and running the Irish anti-apartheid movement, ably assisted by his wife, Louise He keeps a good table, but has no interesting vices, aside from having been a heavy smoker – a habit he has recently abandoned.

But two things about Professor Asmal which make him a key figure in the aftermath to the Lesotho incursion.

The first is that it is agreed on all sides that he has made a thorough success of his portfolio and has proved himself a consummate parliamentarian.

The second feature is that, given his background as a Marxian idealist and his general approach to such matters as international arms control, he cannot possibly be in agreement with what was done in Lesotho or the manner in which it was done

As a lawyer, he will know that the report on the validity of the Lesotho elections, provided by the Langa Commission, was at best a flimsy legal pretext for military intervention and, at worst, no pretext at all.

With an election looming, Professor Asmal is unlikely to go public about his misgivings at this stage.

But in the closed recesses of the ministries and in confidential conferences of his party, he is in a position to make his views felt and have his claims to a more senior portfolio taken seriously

■ *Dr Holiday teaches philosophy in the University of the Western Cape's School of Government*

Armed intervention raises serious questions about SANDF's peacekeeping capa

Lesotho debacle cost

(167) ARG 3/10/98

South Africa's botched military intervention in Lesotho last week has cost it dearly in terms of its international standing and peacekeeping aspirations – not to mention human life – sources at the United Nations said.

Diplomatic sources and UN offi cials this week said South Africa's poorly planned and executed armed intervention raised serious questions over the capability of the SA National Defence Force to handle peacekeeping missions Diplomatically, the intervention could have further fallout as it is seen as an indication of disarray in South Africa's regional policy Observers here are baffled as to the apparent "about turn" by the ANC Govern ment in advocating diplomatic ver sus military intervention

After years of arguing for negotiated solutions rather than military action and initially criticising its fellow Southern African Develop ment Community (SADC) members who favoured a military approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa recently threw its weight behind the SADC military prop-up of Kabila

Now observers here say the Congo and Lesotho cases show a clear lack of coherent policy in dealing with civil disorder in neighbouring states

"There is a fear that this is becoming a trend Lesotho may be technically a different case but occurring in the wake of other interventions in Congo, Liberia, Congo-Brazzaville and Guinea Bis sau it is cause for concern," one observer said

But the sources said the most damaging aspect of last week's botched operation was the loss of credibility as a prospective peacekeeping leader in the region and on the continent

"The international community was looking to South Africa to take the lead in any regional and African peacekeeping role South Africa was regarded as having the best military and has the moral authority to be a meaningful play er," one senior UN peacekeeping official said "But now people are questioning the military side of things The intervention may have been legal but the fiasco raises questions of the validity and timing of the action "



REBEL ROUND-UP. but international observers say the Congo and Lesotho cases indicate a clear lack of coherent policy in dealing with civil disorder in r

He said questions were also being asked regarding the South African military's equipment, training, personnel, preparedness and intelligence Among these were the effects of the recent military budget cutbacks on what was once Africa's premier fighting power

"The South Africans have admit ted that they were not expecting such fierce resistance That's an intelligence and planning mistake And then they only sent in 600 troops "

The source said the delay in the arrival of the Botswana troops also hinted at a lack of communication and co ordination between the South African and Botswana mili tary which the source said was viewed as crucial to any joint peacekeeping effort

"South Africa has a lot to learn about peacekeeping "

Rallying to defend the action, Foreign Affairs Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Affairs Abdul Minty said it should not be viewed as a peacekeeping operation but rather a police action to disarm the military to prevent a possible coup

"The problem is that this is the first military operation of its kind which used blanks When other countries have gone into a country with overkill it is hailed as a success There was no attempt at a 'blitzkrieg' in the Lesotho action "

He said South Africa was unfair ly bearing the brunt of the criticism when much of the trouble was out of their control "The nature of the action was to disarm the mutiny to prevent a coup It was expected of the Lesotho police to control the streets and carry out normal civil order We were not intending to act against civil disobedience "

Mr Minty also pointed a finger at the Lesotho troops who had fired on medical personnel and those suspected of having sealed themselves in underground bunkers where it is feared they may have died

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A spokesman for the UN this week confirmed that neither Secretary-General Kofi Annan nor the Security Council – the organ tasked with overseeing international peace and security – had been informed of the South African led military initiative to prop up the Lesotho government until late on Monday

While permission is not required and there is no obligation to inform the UN prior to such military action, Article 51 of the UN Charter does call on member states involved in "such measures" to "immediately report" these measures to the Security Council

But Mr Minty disputed the action was an Article 51 case and said no such obligation existed.

"Article 51 is contained in Chapter 7 of the UN Charter dealing with issues of international peace and security and involving external threats This was clearly an internal police-type action," he said.

Such action was legal in terms of international customary law which allowed for legitimate governments to call on others for help in defending themselves It was also in line with SADC agreements not to allow for the military overthrow of elected governments Mr Minty also said there was no precedent for informing the UN of this type of intervention

But even some South African officials believe the damage has already been done "We screwed up," one South African official put it bluntly "Even if there was no legal obligation for South Africa to inform the UN of its actions, we were certainly aware of a moral responsibility to let the secretary general and president of the Security Council know what was going on "

One official at a mission currently serving on the Security Council agreed it was expected of South Africa to keep the UN informed. "It is expected of a member state involved in cross border military action, particularly of a peacekeeping nature, to inform the Security Council."

Sources at the UN confirmed that it only became aware of South Africa's intervention via the media and its officials based in Maseru – despite the fact President Nelson Mandela and Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo were visiting the UN at the time

The first notice of the conflict was a note from Jean Kalilani, World Health Organisation (WHO) representative and Designated Official for Security in Lesotho, who sent an urgent message to UN Under Secretary General Iqbal Riza, Chef de Cabinet in Annan's office, on Thursday morning informing him that South African troops had crossed the border

But Mr Minty denied the UN had been kept in the dark, saying many discussions had taken place since Thursday's action, including a briefing of the secretary-general

Explaining the five-day delay in informing the Security Council, Mr Minty said South Africa could not act unilaterally and had needed to co ordinate with Lesotho and Botswana.

In reaction to the concerns raised by peacekeeping officials, Mr Minty said their perceptions were based on a lack of knowledge and understanding of the situation, further supporting critics' claims that South Africa should have moved swiftly to inform the international community – Independent Foreign Service

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Lesotho: Give peace a chance

(167) Star 7/10/98



The meeting held in Maseru today to find a negotiated solution to the conflict which has engulfed Lesotho in the aftermath of the general elections of May 1998 reached the following important decisions

- a new general election will be held in 15 to 18 months.
- for this purpose, the Independent Electoral Commission will be reconstituted and strengthened.
- negotiations will continue to address such other measures as may be necessary to ensure that these general elections are free and fair, and that all political parties participating in the elections are assured of a level playing field.
- the present government of Lesotho will remain in place until such time as the elections are held.
- SADC will maintain a security presence in Lesotho until such time as it is determined that the Lesotho security forces are able effectively to discharge their legal and constitutional roles. All parties in the dispute, including the opposition parties, will co-operate with SADC in this regard.

This important agreement lays a firm basis for the return of Lesotho to normality.

It constitutes an undertaking by all political formations in that country that they will cease all activities directed at mobilising people to oppose the government of Lesotho on the basis that the elections of May 1998 were fatally flawed.

The government of South Africa is very pleased with the outcome of today's meeting in Maseru. We would like to congratulate all participants at this meeting for the constructive manner in which they approached the challenge of speedily resolving the problems facing the people of Lesotho. Our involvement in this matter came about as a result of the request to our government to assist, conveyed to us by His Majesty King Letsie III, the Prime Minister, the Hon Phakalitha Mosisili, and the three opposition parties, the BNP, the BCP and the MFP

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Again as the paper reported "drunken youths yesterday ram paged through the streets of the Lesotho capital, as opposition party supporters became frustrated with their leaders' reluctance to seize control of the country" Among other things, this forced the end to our attempts to end the mutiny through negotiations and to stop the drift towards armed seizure of force by the Lesotho Defence Force.

As part of this effort, as acting president of the Republic, we spoke to Colonel Motine of the Lesotho Defence Force to use his influence to end the mutiny, which he seemed to be leading. He agreed to our suggestion that normality in the defence force would be restored and that the troika would address any grievances the Lesotho Defence Force might have as part of the comprehensive settlement of the Lesotho problem.

This undertaking was not honoured. Subsequently, after a meeting in Maseru between the Minister of Defence, the Hon Joe Modise, and the mutineers, on September 12, again agreement was reached along the same terms as had been agreed with Colonel Motine.

Once more, this undertaking was not honoured, with the mutineers informing us that the commitment given to us by one of the mutineers, who acted as their spokesperson, had not been mandated by all the mutineers. Nevertheless, they promised further to discuss our proposals. Accordingly, we sent a delegation of senior officials of the government of South Africa on September 14 further to negotiate with the mutineers

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- all parties would be bound by the outcome of the commission, which was required to complete its work in a fortnight, in the light of the volatility of the situation in Lesotho. As a result of this agreement, it was further decided that:
- in an effort to ensure that peace and stability were maintained in the country, the ruling party, the LCD, would inform its supporters as to why the government of Lesotho had agreed to this inquiry when, in its view and that of its supporters, the LCD had been properly elected in elections that were substantially free and fair.
- for the same reason, the opposition parties would also address their followers, and especially the group that had been demonstrating in front of the royal palace, to inform them that the matter about which they were protesting was being attended to and therefore there was no need for them to continue this or any other political demonstration, pending the completion of its work by the commission; and,
- the Lesotho police and the Lesotho Defence Force would otherwise carry out their legal and constitutional duties without fear or favour.

His Majesty the King as well as the heads of the police and the defence force were informed of this outcome, which they supported.

The ruling party, the LCD, proceeded to honour the undertaking we have mentioned through a major public rally attended by tens of thousands of its supporters from all parts of the country.

On the contrary, the opposition parties failed completely to honour their own obligation. Whenever this matter was raised, as it was a number of times, the leaders of these parties claimed they had lost control of their followers and that, at best, all they could do was to implement the demands of these followers.

Similarly, especially the Lesotho police failed to carry out their own legal mandate and allowed a demonstration to continue despite the fact that this demonstration was illegal in terms of the laws of Lesotho.

This happened because the police were afraid that any attempt on their part to enforce the law would be opposed by force by the Lesotho Defence Force.

Because it could not complete its work in the time given, the commission, headed by the deputy president of the South African Constitutional Court, Justice Pius Langa, prepared an interim report whose contents were conveyed to the government of Lesotho, the opposition parties and His Majesty the King on August 26.

All participants in this process agreed that copies of the interim report would not be distributed to avoid anybody misusing this report further to destabilise the situation in Lesotho.

On the very day of the completion of the final report, September 9, a delegation of the SADC troika visited Maseru, among other things, to discuss with all the parties to the dispute how to handle the outcome of the report.

At the suggestion of the troika, it was agreed both by the government of Lesotho and the opposition parties that it would be proper that, before its distribution to themselves,

'On two occasions these mutinous soldiers decided to announce they had removed the government'

the report should first be handed to the troika heads of state to enable them, as guarantors, to make suggestions on how to respond to the report, at the same time as they would be handing the report over to the interested parties in Lesotho.

The troika delegation then proposed that this handing over and discussion should take place in Mauritius, during the course of the SADC summit scheduled to take place there on September 14, and that the opposition parties should send a delegation to Mauritius to participate in these discussions.

The government of Lesotho agreed to this proposal. After expressing their own disagreement, the opposition parties undertook that they would consider the matter further.

Subsequently they communicated with us to say they would attend the meeting in Mauritius. Further, arrangements had been made for the United Nations Development Programme to facilitate the travel arrangements of the opposition delegation to Mauritius.

Before they could proceed to Mauritius, the opposition parties once more contacted us, this time to inform us that, for reasons not clear at the time, they would no longer be travelling to Mauritius.

In their absence, it therefore became impossible to deal with the Lesotho situation during the course of the SADC summit.

During this period, shortly before the SADC summit, a mutiny within the Lesotho Defence Force started, ultimately resulting in the illegal removal of the entire command of this force by junior officers and privates of the Lesotho Defence Force.

This having been done, on two occasions these mutinous soldiers decided to announce that they had removed the elected government and taken over as the government of Lesotho. On both occasions, they changed their minds about the timing of the announcements. They then proceeded to close down the national radio broadcaster and to paralyse all government operations.

On September 20, when the troika delegation visited Lesotho to receive responses to the final Langa Commission report, it was met at the airport by the Lesotho military rather than the political leadership. It was clear that the military had taken over the country.

The military leadership informed us that they had acted to end the mutiny, which he seemed to be leading. He agreed to our suggestion that normality in the defence force would be restored and that the troika would address any grievances the Lesotho Defence Force might have as part of the comprehensive settlement of the Lesotho problem.

This undertaking was not honoured. Subsequently, after a meeting in Maseru between the Minister of Defence, the Hon Joe Modise, and the mutineers, on September 12 again agreement was reached along the same terms as had been agreed with Colonel Motinе.

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'Continuing investigations will establish exactly who was involved in unconstitutional activities'

On this occasion, the mutineers contemptuously rejected our efforts and made it plain that they would continue with their plans.

One thing that is clear from all this is that the refusal of the opposition parties to attend the meeting in Mauritius coincided with the period during which members of the Lesotho Defence Force began the illegal processes leading to a military takeover of the country.

Continuing investigations will establish exactly who was involved in the unconstitutional activities which subsequently necessitated the intervention by SADC military forces. Aware of the security situation in the country, Prime Minister Mosisili first communicated the need for this intervention on September 12, at which point, with our government under the leadership of acting president Dr M G Buthelezi, we requested time to resolve the question of the mutiny by peaceful means.

After a series of communications between the troika, on one hand, and the Lesotho government, His Majesty the King and the opposition parties, on the other, and on receipt of a written request by the prime minister of Lesotho, the SADC military intervention took place on September 22, all efforts to resolve the situation peacefully having failed.

The coup d'etat in Lesotho has been defeated, in keeping with the commitment of SADC to protect and entrench democracy in all our countries.

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One thing that is clear from all this is that the refusal of the opposition parties to attend the meeting in Mauritius coincided with the period during which members of the Lesotho Defence Force began the illegal processes leading to a military takeover of the country.

Continuing investigations will establish exactly who was involved in the unconstitutional activities which subsequently necessitated the intervention by SADC military forces. Aware of the security situation in the country, Prime Minister Mosisili first communicated the need for this intervention on September 12, at which point, with our government under the leadership of acting president Dr M G Buthelezi, we requested time to resolve the question of the mutiny by peaceful means.

After a series of communications between the troika, on one hand, and the Lesotho government, His Majesty the King and the opposition parties, on the other, and on receipt of a written request by the prime minister of Lesotho, the SADC military intervention took place on September 22, all efforts to resolve the situation peacefully having failed.

The coup d'etat in Lesotho has been defeated, in keeping with the commitment of SADC to protect and entrench democracy in all our countries.

Lesotho opposition hits at SA over deal

Star 3/10/98

(167)

Outstanding issues a major hurdle, but SA negotiators stand firm

Rival Lesotho political parties last night agreed that fresh elections would be held within 15 to 18 months, but were yet to agree on whether or not Prime Minister Pakhalitha Mosisili's government should remain in power until then, South Africa's Safety and Security Minister, Sydney Mufamadi, said

"These and other outstanding issues will be discussed in further negotiations on Monday," said Mufamadi, who chaired yesterday's multiparty talks in Maseru

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki sparked outrage from Lesotho opposition party leaders when he announced in an SABC television address last night that it had been agreed that Mosisili would continue to govern the country

Mufamadi came to Mbeki's defence, saying the Deputy President had assumed an agreement had been reached because no party had expressly rejected Mosisili's continuing to govern until the new elections

"There is no agreement on this issue. These and other outstanding issues will be discussed on Monday, Mufamadi said after the 11 hour meeting between government and opposition parties

Premature

Opposition coalition spokeswoman Mamelo Morrison said Mbeki had deceived the world, the South African public and the Basotho nation with a premature announcement

"What your deputy president said was a lie," she said "We have not come anywhere near agreement.

This has just put the whole negotiations into chaos "

Morrison said there was "tentative agreement" on some issues, including the holding of elections within 18 months, and that the Southern African Development Community would maintain a security presence in Lesotho

Sefate Democratic Union leader Bofihla Nkoebe called for South Africa's withdrawal as chair of the talks

He also called on the opposition to withdraw

Mufamadi, reading a joint statement signed by all parties, said a four-point agreement had been reached.

The parties agreed to

■ abide by and respect the outcome of the new elections,

■ TO PAGE 2

Lesotho opposition hits at SA

■ FROM PAGE 2

■ to restructure and fund the country's Independent Electoral Commission to ensure it was able to effectively discharge its mandate;

■ that Lesotho's winner-takes-all electoral system should be reviewed to ensure a greater inclusivity and participation in the political affairs of Lesotho,

■ to work together to create levels of security and stability that would ensure free and fair elections.

"Such a security environment will also assist the process of reconstruction in Lesotho," Mufamadi said

There was also agreement by the parties to work together to restore stability in the country



Thabo Mbeki ... Mufamadi came to his defence

and to desist from any action that might compromise the professionalism of the security forces.

Mufamadi said all other parties that contested the May 23 general elections would be consulted so that they could be involved in implementing yesterday's agreements

Retshilisitsoe Sekhonyane, leader of the Basotho National Party, said he was pleased that elections would be held within 15 to 18 months.

"It will be the right period for properly preparing for this election," he said after the meeting.

Other opposition leaders described the agreement on holding the new elections as a victory for the opposition – Sapa

■ SEE PAGE 11

King admits a checkmate

(167) LP 4/10/98

Royal turn-around by King Letsie III paves way for political agreement

By: SEKOLA SELLO

LESOTHO'S King Letsie III is expected to approve a deal brokered by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana aimed at ending the country's current political crisis

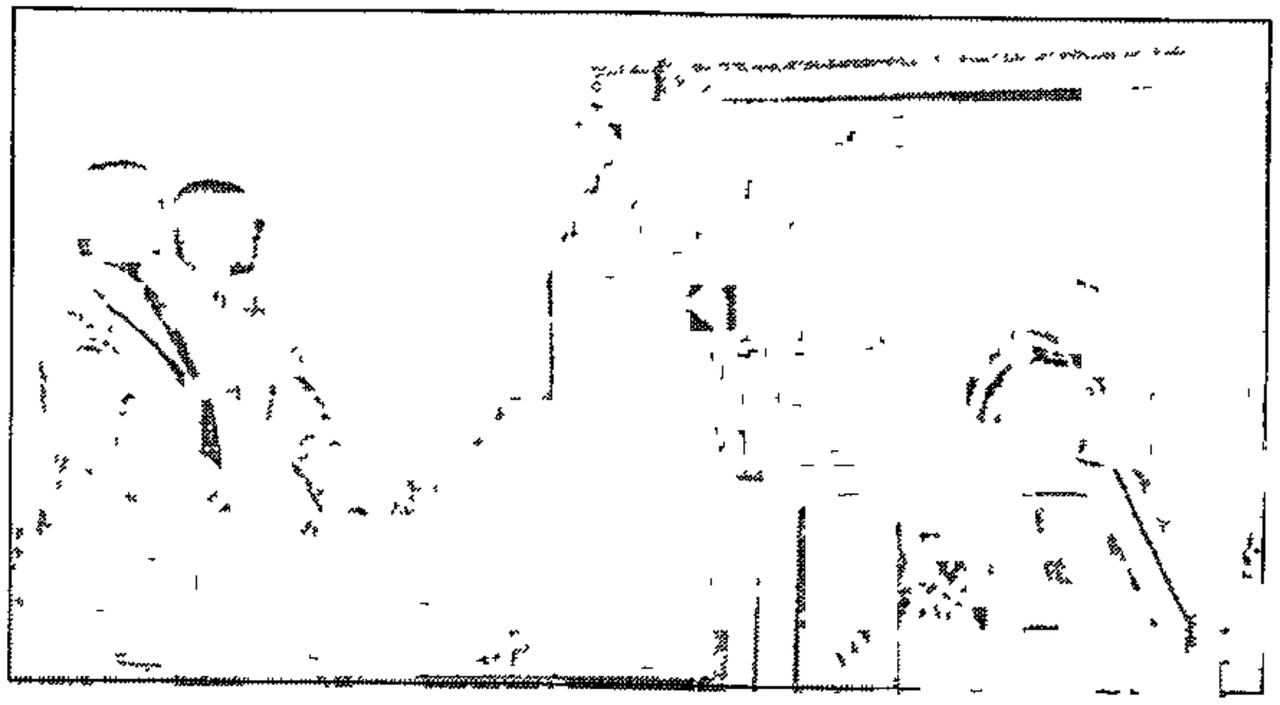
In terms of the deal expected to be sealed in Maseru tomorrow, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LDC) Government will stay in power until new elections are held within the next fifteen to eighteen months

Tomorrow's make-or-break meeting in the Lesotho capital will finetune the details of the deal

In a dramatic turn of events in the last 48 hours, King Letsie is said to have agreed that a government of national unity, as was initially demanded by the three main opposition parties, was a non starter

The monarch is now reported to consider such a forced coalition as "a government of national disunity" which would hamper returning the country to normality as speedily as possible

King Letsie's volte face is regarded in political circles as a spin-off of his recent talks with President Mandela in Cape Town last Tuesday South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe are known to have been opposed to a coalition government, a view which is also reputed to be shared by other members of the Southern African development community



FIRST MOVE . . . King Letsie III waves at his people during his coronation

Since Lesotho's political upheavals started three months ago Letsie has been accused by the LCD and other political observers as one of the main stumbling blocks to normalising the country's problems. Some even consider him to be the real problem.

Since Lesotho's political upheavals started three months ago King Letsie has been accused by the LCD and other political observers of being one of the main stumbling blocks to normalising the country's problems Some even consider him to be the real problem

As the SADC troika increased its shuttle diplomacy behind the scenes, Retshelisitsoe Sekhonyana and Molapo Qhobela of the Basotho National Party and the Basotho Congress Party – earlier regarded as hardliners – are now said to have also endorsed the proposal that the LCD stay in power

They have backed down from their earlier position that the LCD must dissolve and that King Letsie must head a caretaker government until new elections are held

Agreement on this contentious issue is likely to pave the way for returning Lesotho to stability and hopefully end about three decades of turmoil which culminated in the looting and destruction of Maseru two weeks ago

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki was on Friday night saved from what could have been a major diplomatic embarrassment after he announced on SABC TV that a deal had been struck between the warring parties in Lesotho

His announcement was premature

Some of the terms of the deal which was struck after several rounds of discussions in Mauritius and Botswana are the following

- ☐ New elections should be held within fifteen to eighteen months,
- ☐ All the parties must agree to a code of conduct leading to the elections,
- ☐ There must be a set of rules governing parties;
- ☐ Parties must ensure that they do not compromise the professionalism of the army and the police force by attempting to win their loyalty.

South Africa sent a high-powered delegation led by Safety and Security Minister Sidney Mufamadi to the talks His team included Rev Frank Chikane and Adv Mojanku Gumbi

South Africa's foreign affairs director general, Jacky Selebi, sounded an optimistic note when he said that the remaining issues would be resolved at tomorrow's meeting He said the major huddle had always been the question of the present government

"The troika is at one on the issue of recognising the LCD government There is a government in Lesotho and a new one can only come after the elections "

While the BNP and BCT now acknowledge the legitimacy of the present government, the LCD is also reported to be willing to consider introducing elements of proportional representation to the present "winner-takes-all" system of governance

The shift by the LCD and the possibility of amending the constitution to accommodate the concerns of the opposition could also help break the current deadlock in Lesotho politics.

Part of Lesotho's problems emanates from the fact that the opposition voice is not heard in parliament.

The combined opposition represents no less than thirty five percent of the electorate

Force will not solve Africa's problems

To reduce Lesotho politics to a fight between good and evil is to distort reality, writes **Steven Friedman**

BD 5/10/98 (167)

ANYONE who believes that columnists are influential did not read this page a fortnight ago Only hours after this column heaped praise on our foreign policy makers for refusing to seek military solutions to African conflicts, our troops crossed the Lesotho border The rest, as the cliché has it, is history

So does this mean that the policy of peaceful conflict resolution is now consigned to the dustheap of history? Not necessarily But political courage may be needed to revive it.

Repair work needs to start almost immediately, for Southern African Development Community generals seem eager to turn the bloc into a regional police force, hence their reported enthusiasm for intervention in Angola against rebel group Unita

Much of the criticism of our intervention in Lesotho has tried to turn events into a clear-cut morality play This is spurious and misleading

First, while some commentators have taken to assuming that the election was stolen from the opposition, this is hardly common cause According to the official results, the majority party won about 60% of the vote So more than 10% of the ballots would have to be fraudulent if the result was rigged As experience in our own 1994 elections showed, it takes substantial chicanery to alter an election result by one or two percent, let alone 10 — even in a small country such as Lesotho

There are also commentators and election specialists who insist, vehemently, that the official winners were the real victors So there is room for reasonable doubt that the poll was fatally rigged

Second, one needs only a cursory knowledge of Lesotho politics (such as that available to this writer) to know that to canonise the opposition and demonise the governing party is simplistic The election was not fought between an authoritarian government and an alliance of fervent democrats

The contenders were two factions of the former ruling party and opposition parties, one of whom once governed courtesy of the South African apartheid government's backing Indeed, one possible theme in the conflict is a desire by sections of the opposition to harness the monarch in their support failure to inform the king of the military incursion beforehand was prompted by a perception in some quarters that he leans towards the opposition, presumably because he is believed to see it as a route to a more active leadership role for himself

Lesotho politics is particularly arcane, with scores of hidden agendas and complexities lurking beneath the surface

This is relevant not because governing parties can do what they like, including calling in external militaries But Lesotho was not a political Garden of Eden which lost its innocence when the troops arrived. There is certainly no guarantee, for example, that annulling the result and holding another election would end the tension, particularly if Lesotho's politicians insist on an electoral system which virtually excludes losers from parliament

Third, while the troops were unable or unwilling to prevent the destruction of Maseru, they played no part in it So they may have been acting to prevent a perceived threat to order rather than to impose our will

Given all this, the implication in some commentaries that intervention was another case of the tired old tradition of governments pitching in to help other rulers regardless of their misdemeanours may be unfair It is possible that the troops were dispatched in the belief that they could impose order and open the way for a settlement

If so, the incursion was not a departure from the stated SA preference for inclusive settlements, but an attempt to secure one through military means

This does not mean that the charitable interpretation is accurate It merely means that it is possible It is important to recognise this not only in the interests of accuracy, but because the intervention was inappropriate even if the politicians meant well when they sent in the troops



An SANDF soldier examines weapons captured during clashes with rebels in Lesotho

Let us assume that the governing party won the election, that the opposition refused to accept the result and tried to draw the king into the conflict on their side, and that they planned to gain the power that the electorate denied them through a coup by a military which has always been an opposition preserve Even then, sending in troops was inappropriate and a step backwards from the potential foreign policy gains of the past few months

The reasons lie not in the oft-stated point that the decision-makers vastly underestimated likely resistance and that the operation was inept Even if military intelligence and strategy had been efficient, it is highly unlikely that it would have achieved its stated aim. securing Lesotho for a political settlement

Why? For precisely the reasons which caution against hasty moralising on the incursion — the complexity of Lesotho politics

The conflict has deep roots, the parties have complex agendas A solution, as last fortnight's column tried to show, can therefore be built only painstakingly To expect the problem to dissolve in the face of the presence of troops was naive. Indeed, as events in Lesotho show, using a sledgehammer in a situation which required delicacy can make a difficult situation far worse

But what if the Lesotho military did stage a coup while our troops remained on the sidelines? In human terms, we have no way of knowing that a coup would have cost Lesotho and its people more than the aftermath of the incursion did. In strategic terms, it would have settled nothing the conflict, and the need for us to continue working for a settlement, would have continued If a sponse to a coup became essenti the time-honoured tactic of closin the border might have prov more effective, and less damaging than sending in soldiers

Nor, to reiterate, do these points apply to Lesotho alone Most, if not all, African conflicts are the product of political patterns which have developed and hardened over years. They are the product of weak states — of leaders with shallow roots in their societies and low capacity to settle conflicts politically Their origins lie in the way African states were formed by, and developed after colonialism. They are not simple clashes between good and bad guys Therefore, they cannot be settled by military means That is why foreign incursions to settle internal African conflicts have invariably failed.

The African renaissance to which our leadership has committed itself will not emerge easily But it will not, and cannot, be enforced by troops

So the Lesotho incursion will, in its own terms, a failure. It may also have made it far harder for SA to play its intended role as a midwife to political settlements which will inevitably require much time, effort and delicacy if they are to be solved.

Is the damage fatal? Not if our leaders learn from their mistakes by recognising that the military route, however well-intentioned, does not work.

As noted above, a resolute refusal to support an adventure in Angola — where the chances that military action will solve anything are infinitely dimmer than in Lesotho — would be a start. So too would, at the very least, an announcement of a clear plan to withdraw from Lesotho

As difficult as it may be for politicians to admit errors, a clear statement that we will, in future, use our military only to protect our borders would also help to place our foreign policy back on track.

One mistake need not destroy our potential contribution to solving African conflicts However, the damage can be repaired only if the error is acknowledged.

□ *Steven Friedman is director of the Centre for Policy Studies*

Lesotho peace on the cards

By Mathatha Tsedu
Political Editor

LESOTHO today enters what could be the final stretch in efforts to secure peace, stability and economic regeneration when its government and political opponents reassemble to grapple with how to run the country in the period leading to fresh elections in about 18 months

South African Government sources were optimistic yesterday, following a breakthrough on Friday, that full agreement could be achieved today

"In fact, the opposition parties asked for an overnight postponement to look at the proposal, but due to other commitments from some of our delegation, we postponed it to Monday," one source said

"The atmosphere is quite constructive and overall a lot of progress was made"

The same source said the address to the South African nation by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki on Friday, in which he mistakenly said there had been agreement on the present Lesotho government continuing in office, had created a problem of mistrust

"As soon as (this was) pointed .. out we called all the parties together and explained how the mistake had occurred

"They all accepted the explanation and we should be able to move on tomorrow without problems," the source added

In terms of the Friday agreement, Lesotho will hold a general election within 15 to 18 months All parties agreed to abide by a the outcome of this election

They also agreed on the restructuring of the Independent Electoral Commission to ensure it was able to meet its mandate

The parties also agreed to review the electoral system to ensure "greater and inclusive participation" in political affairs

Agreement was also reached on cooperation to create "levels of security and stability which are necessary to ensure free and fair elections"

The parties will work together to restore stability and desist from any action that may compromise the professionalism of the security forces

Mbeki also said agreement had been reached that Southern African Development Community forces would remain in Lesotho until stability had been attained, but stressed this is not part of the agreement

South Africa will again chair today's talks where prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili will lead his Lesotho Congress for Democracy against the three main opposition parties — the Basotho Congress Party, the Basotho National Party and the Marematlou Freedom Party

Government of national unity

The opposition is pressing for the creation of a government of national unity to run Lesotho until the new election However, this would necessitate a constitutional amendment.

It is believed South Africa is pushing for a joint-rule mechanism, similar to the transitional executive council that was put in place in South Africa before the 1994 elections

Such a measure would only need a law to be passed by the present parliament, in which the opposition have only one of the 80 seats.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people gathered yesterday for the funeral of Lance-Corporal Owageng Mothupi who was killed in action during the SANDF military intervention in Lesotho two weeks ago Mothupi (34) from 44 Parachute Brigade in Thaba N'chu, was buried with full military honours at Dinokana in North West Province

Mothupi was the eighth soldier to be buried of the nine who were killed in action in Lesotho

● See picture on page 8

Lesotho parties to present supporters with SADC plan

MASERU — Lesotho political parties agreed to take a proposal from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the formation of a transitional structure for an election to their supporters

The proposed committee will comprise one or two members from each party taking part in the election, to be held within 15 to 18 months

"We will take it to the people .. and if they say yes to it we will also say yes," opposition alliance spokesman Vincent Malebo said after a seven-hour meeting in Maseru

Claire Pickard-Cambridge reports that the spokesman for five Lesotho opposition parties, Mamelo Morrison, said yesterday the bid to find a settlement would involve lengthy negotiations.

She described the talks earlier in the day as positive on a number of issues although the parties had not changed their basic demands. the opposition wanted a government of national unity until elections could be held, while the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy believed it had been elected and should not step down.

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy's deputy leader, Kelebone Maope, said his party did not in principle have problems with the proposal.

In terms of the proposal announced by SA Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, the transitional committee would help create conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections for all parties, including a code of conduct.

The committee would also ensure equal treatment for all political parties by the state-owned broadcasting and information services

It would also take decisions on all electoral matters, including the role of the police, military services, intelligence services, foreign affairs, and media, the committee said.

Meanwhile, the South African National Defence Force denied yesterday its soldiers attacked the royal palace in Maseru to remove opposition party supporters earlier in the day. Opposition parties earlier asked for an adjournment after the claims surfaced, but discussions continued —Sapa

SADC in bid to break deadlock in Lesotho

(167)
ARG 6/10/98

Maseru – Talks to normalise the political situation in Lesotho have deadlocked, but political parties have agreed to consider a compromise proposal from the Southern African Development Community Delegation (SADC).

The SADC delegation, led by Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, proposed that a transitional structure be established to level the playing fields before new elections are held in 15 to 18 months as agreed

Addressing a news conference in Maseru yesterday after a lengthy session of negotiations, Mr Mufamadi said the proposal was made "with a view to facilitating a movement towards settling the issue".

He emphasised that the proposal was an attempt by the SADC delegation to combine elements of the two positions suggested by the ruling party and the opposition alliance "in such a way that hopefully they could produce a good result"

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the Opposition Alliance of the Basotho National Party (BNP), the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) and Maremamatlou Freedom Party (MFP) agreed to take the SADC proposal to their constituencies for consultation before talks resume in about a week

The SADC's proposal came when it became evident that a way forward could not be found as both sides were not prepared to compromise.

The opposition alliance had insisted on their proposal for the formation of an interim government of national unity to run the country before new elections were held

The LCD rejected this notion as unconstitutional The SADC proposal is that a Lesotho transitional structure should have powers to access all information held by the government, adopt and enforce a code of conduct for political parties and to take decisions on all electoral matters, including the role of the police, army, finance department, foreign department and the media – Sapa

Negotiation politics vs armed might, page 10

'LDF soldiers are very well-armed'

KIM HELFRICH

JOHANNESBURG. While never one of Africa's largest armies,, the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) was exceptionally well-equipped with small arms

This appraisal was given at Makonyane Barracks outside Maseru yesterday by a senior officer in the SADC task force charged with stabilising the country

Lieutenant-Colonel Jorrie Jordaan, who is in command of a sector including Makonyane — where the joint SA/Botswana task force encountered fierce opposition when it entered the country last month — said there were in excess of two rifles and about 4/000 rounds of ammunition per soldier in the LDF

There may be up to 400 tons of ammunition at Makonyane and its headquarters base And there could well be about 5 000 rifles in the base, he said, not including pistols for officers, machine guns or specialist sniper rifles

South African engineers have already begun collecting all weapons and ammunition— including items damaged or destroyed in firefights — for inventory

Once the inventory is complete, the weaponry will be handed back to the LDF, said Operation Boleas commander Colonel Robbie Hartslief

LESOTHO PARTIES AGREE ON DOCUMENT CT 7/10/98

Opposition back plan (167)

MASERU: Lesotho opposition parties have approved the idea of a transitional structure aimed at laying the foundation for new elections within the next 18 months.

A TRANSITIONAL structure proposed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to deal with matters relating to new elections in Lesotho was a foundation for reconciliation, the country's opposition parties said yesterday

"It is a document with which we can start to look at what challenges face us as leaders of political parties in this country. It creates an opportunity to reconcile and work for the betterment of our nation," said opposition alliance spokesperson Mamelo Morrison

The alliance — the Basotho National Party (BNP), the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) and the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) — met yesterday to discuss the SADC's proposal

The proposal is aimed at creating and promoting conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections and to ensure equal opportunities for all parties prior to the elections, to be held within 15 to 18 months

In an interview, BNP leader Retshlisitsoe Sekhonyana said the recent political developments in the country challenged Lesotho's politicians to reconsider their narrow party-political interests and place those of the country first

"I think we have been thinking parochially for too long, as different political parties, but it's time this comes to an end We must now prioritise issues "

Sekhonyana said he was saddened by the fact that since the torching and looting of businesses in Maseru and other areas of Lesotho last month, the country's political leadership had not met to assess the damage and consider the reconstruction of the battered capital

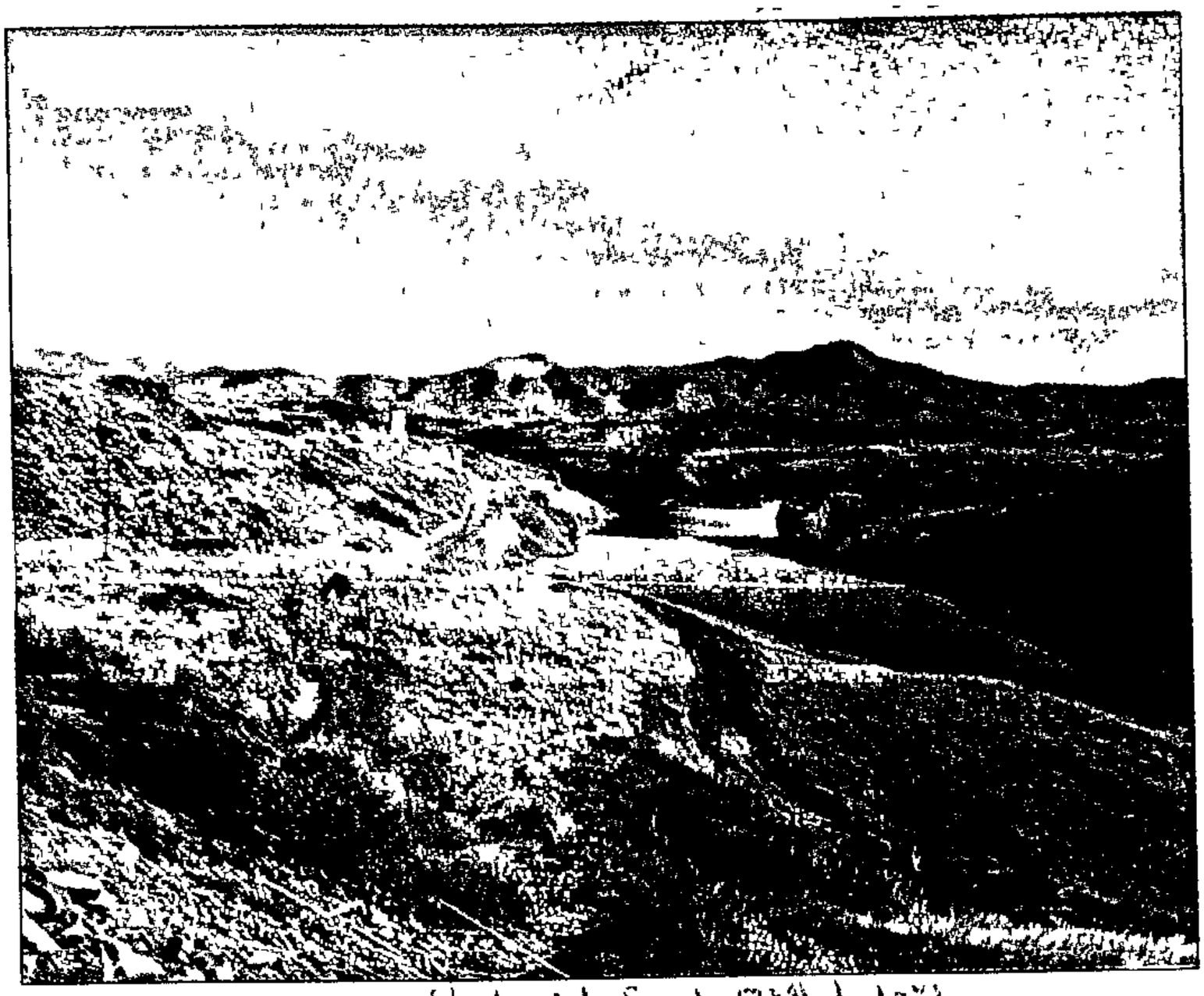
"If we were to be seen as having a political will as leaders to set aside our interests and work towards reconciliation, I believe this would send a positive message to investors," he said

Asked whether the SADC's proposal on a transitional electoral structure would improve relations between political parties, Sekhonyana said it would "enhance the spirit of co-operation between politicians for the sake of Lesotho"

The leadership of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) remained silent on the SADC's proposal but LCD supporters questioned Sekhonyana's conciliatory message

"We acknowledge that (Sekhonyana) appears to be pursuing a path of reconciliation The big question is what his motive is," said a senior LCD member

Today Lesotho's National Assembly is due to reconvene for the first time since major political upheaval hit the country last month — Sapa



LIFEBLOOD *The Lesotho Highlands Water Project, one of the biggest engineering projects of its kind in the world, pumps much-needed water to the heavily populated Gauteng area*

Lesotho's mammoth water project

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project is one of the largest engineering projects of this nature in the world and the largest in Africa. Its primary focus is to supply additional water to the Vaal River system and ensure that the delivery of this resource to the Gauteng industrial area is met.

Gauteng houses over 60 percent of the South Africa's population and about 70 percent of its industry. The drought in the 1980s in the Gauteng area highlighted the susceptibility of the region to water shortage. The project is set to be complete by about 2030 after having been constructed in five phases.

Phase 1a, which has been completed, saw the delivery of water from the mountains of Lesotho into the Ash river (close to Bethlehem in the Free State).

Phase 1b is being constructed with a new dam closer to Maseru in Lesotho which will feed water into Katse Dam. Mohale Dam will deliver water to Katse via a 33km tunnel which will augment the water being delivered to South Africa. Phase 1b is expected to be complete by 2003.

As part of the move to improve infrastructure, roads were built, including one spanning about 100km through the Maluti mountains. This Northern-Access Road is considered a near-miracle engineering feat, says George van der Merwe, the public relations officer for the Joint Permanent Technical Commission of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

The highest part of the road is 3 090m above sea level and is one of the highest mountain passes in South Africa. It won the SAICE prize (the premier civil engineering prize in South Africa) in 1991.

Van der Merwe says South Africa has moved away from supply-driven water policies of the previous government to demand-driven ones of the present government that ensure the end user does not waste the water.

Penalties will be incurred if the water used by industry and local council is lost through leakage and neglect. A series of water management initiatives will be instituted throughout South Africa in the near future. This could affect the future phases of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Discussions about the next phase are underway at government level between Lesotho and South Africa.

The DBSA has funded infrastructure, and monitored socio-environmental development in the project area. The bank has ensured that these projects are executed in a way that complies with environmental regulations. This is in line with the mode of operation of the World Bank. Numerous small labour-intensive projects were identified to create jobs for people in the area.

Van der Merwe says the rural society in the Maluti region of Lesotho (one of the poorest in the world) has benefited substantially from the project. Travel time has been reduced dramatically, which has spurred access to education and health facilities. It has also created opportunities in tourism, fishing industries and provided access to markets for the local population's products.

Counting the losses

A climate conducive to rebuilding the shattered economy of Lesotho must be the mountain kingdom's first priority. **Themba Molefe** explains why.

(167) Sowetan 7/10/98

DO-OR-DIE negotiations got under way in Maseru this week while Lesotho was still reeling from the turmoil of the past two weeks and stories of atrocities began to filter out

Sowetan has been told that at least 19 Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) soldiers died gruesomely when the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) joint forces entered Lesotho on September 22

Code-named Operation Boleas the joint forces involved in the operation were asked to intervene and restore law and order in the small mountain kingdom

But more than 60 South African and Lesotho soldiers were killed in the confrontation

Lesotho soldiers, labelled rebels, were allegedly burnt to death when the SADC forces raided the Katse barracks at Makoanyane outside Maseru

Parents of four soldiers said that their sons were killed mysteriously They claimed the soldiers were not shot but burnt to death – but they were unclear about the facts

They said when they arrived at Katse they found "a mix of ashes belonging to their sons" and were told that these were the soldiers who died in the mutiny at Thaba Tseka

The dead were described as "unknown" A soldier from Mohale's Hoek could only be identified by his feet

The question from a coalition of independent sources is Were these young men victims or rebels?

Meanwhile, non-governmental organisations and families are still trying to trace their next of kin mostly young soldiers killed at the Katse barracks Fear stills stalks many Basotho

A prominent Maseru businesswoman alleged that "their daughters" were raped by the invading forces But the SADC has dismissed claims that women had been randomly raped and abused

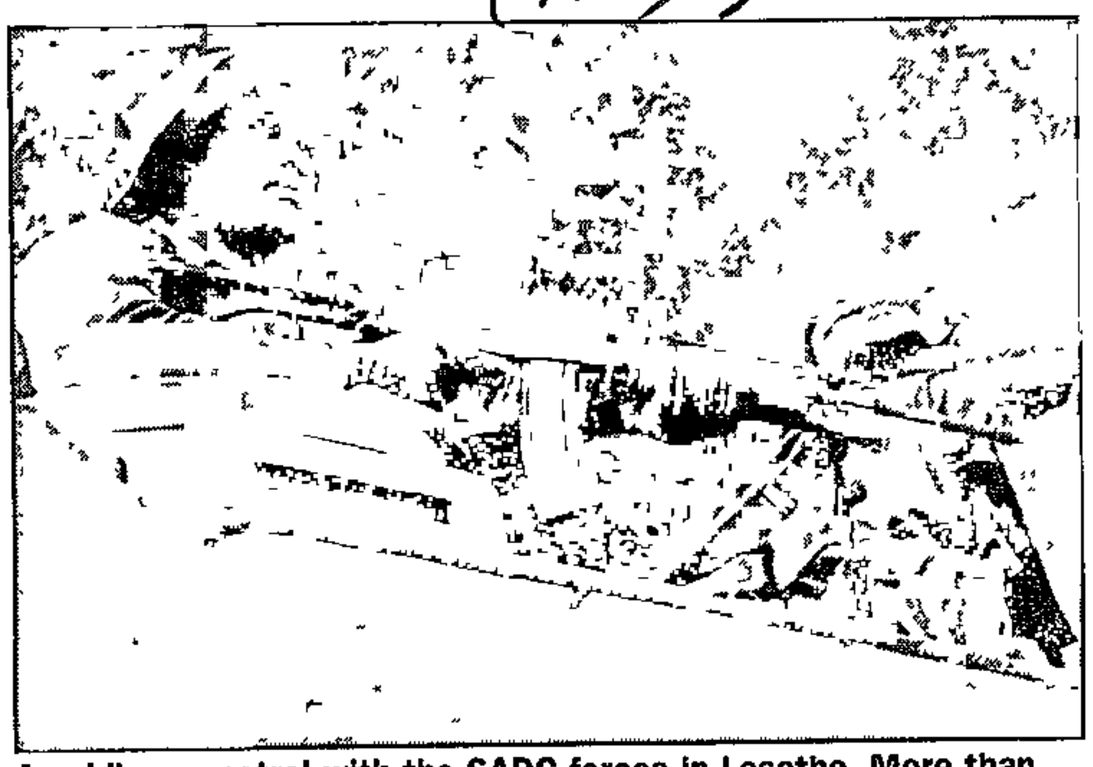
The Lesotho business community and human rights organisations lamented the fact that none of the soldiers who died during the incursion were given honourable state burials

They said the government has not even disclosed who they were, nor informed the public of how many Basotho soldiers were killed

Amnesty International has appealed for the Lesotho crisis to be demilitarised and human rights respected

The human rights body said it had received reports of killings, intimidation and house burnings by armed youths targeting supporters of the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) in Maseru and nearby villages

Bodies of opposition party supporters have reportedly been found in an open field north of Maseru and there are fears that arbitrary political violence will take place in other parts of the country



A soldier on patrol with the SADC forces in Lesotho. More than 60 South African and Lesotho soldiers have been killed in fighting in the kingdom in the last two weeks. PIC LEN KHUMALO

Amnesty International said about 150 soldiers detained at the LDF barracks in Maseru had been released, apparently unconditionally, after intervention by the Red Cross International Committee and the Lesotho Red Cross

As families in Lesotho continue to look for their loved ones, an official said third-force elements were spreading propaganda against the joint forces At the same time the role of King Letsie III, the paramount and traditional leader of Lesotho, is being questioned

Demonstrations by Basotho opposition parties first started outside his palace, demanding that the king take action after claims of fraud in the May 23 elections

The opposition alliance of the Basotho National Party, Basotho Congress Party and Marematlou Freedom Party challenged election results and demanded intervention by the king

Instead Lesotho was invaded by SADC forces, which led to large-scale anti-South African sentiment in the kingdom An explosion of rioting and looting of mostly business premises by angry Basotho nationals followed

Meanwhile, the business community has appealed to Lesotho's political leaders to recognise that the destruction of businesses has devastated its economy and that it must create, as a matter of priority, a climate for creating jobs that may have been lost in the mayhem

"The leaders must realise that without a long-lasting political solution there cannot exist in Lesotho a conducive climate for the private sector to economically and socially develop this country," the business community said

Monday's meeting between the LCD and opposition alliance could pave the way for a lasting solution to the issue

● **Keketso Lawrence** reports from Maseru that the talks deadlocked on who should rule the kingdom before next year's fresh poll but a South African proposal could end the impasse

South African Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, who chaired talks between the two sides, proposed that an interim structure be set up by a parliamentary Act and it should comprise one or two members from each party wishing to contest elections

Both sides agreed on Friday to hold elections in the next 15 to 18 months

However, Lesotho foreign affairs minister Tom Thabane said the proposal failed to clarify if the interim structure would take over from government, run parallel with it or operate as an extra-governmental body

"We have nothing against a proposal that enhances the participation of opposition parties in the electoral process, but if this structure has powers parallel to those of government, it is totally unacceptable," he said

The structure would have the powers to take decisions on all electoral matters and ensure conditions for a free and fair poll as well as decide on the roles played by the police, army, intelligence services and media in the vote

The government and the opposition alliance have been given an indefinite period to consider the proposal before talks are reconvened

Thabane said "(The government) will give Mufamadi our response on Wednesday (today) after we have consulted our legal team" – *Reuters*

Army chief berates soldiers about misconduct in Lesotho

(167) BD 8/10/98

MASERU — The chief of the SA army chided SA soldiers yesterday about displays of misconduct and poor discipline during the recent peacekeeping operation in Lesotho

"Wars are not fought only with rifles and Ratels The ability to maintain your stature is critical if the enemy is to be defeated completely," Lt-Gen Gilbert Ramano said

He was speaking after a two-hour meeting with commanders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention force at a joint operations centre at Bird's Nest in the Lesotho capital, Maseru

Ramano is part of an SA National Defence Force (SANDF) delegation, led by Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils, visiting Lesotho to be briefed on developments

Ramano warned soldiers against taking Ratel vehicles and driving them as it pleased them, fraternising with women, going to shebeens and "being shot with your own weapon"

He said the deployment of troops to Lesotho was "not to come here and make a film, but to help people who were in trouble and to stop the fire in a battered country".

The SA army would not tolerate any behaviour found to be contrary to its code of conduct Disciplinary action would be taken against any SA soldier found to have misbehaved during the mission, which started on September 22

Ramano ordered the commanders of the joint operation to "throw any SA soldier found to have misbehaved over the border".

However he also complimented the troops for their operational work and sent condolences to the families of their colleagues who died in skirmishes with rebel Lesotho soldiers

The SANDF confirmed on Sunday that a soldier was being held by military police after allegedly raping a woman in Lesotho. Another died in a fight in a Lesotho shebeen. Both incidents occurred at the weekend

The SANDF delegation was due yesterday afternoon to meet other SA troops deployed at Katse Dam and the Mokoanyane military base, before visiting Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili

Meanwhile, Lesotho's nine opposition parties declared their belief yesterday in the principle of a government of national unity to run Lesotho until fresh elections were held.

The declaration came in spite of an SADC proposal for the formation of a transitional structure to guide Lesotho to elections

After a meeting in Maseru, the parties appealed to SADC chairman President Nelson Mandela to give practical meaning to this declaration for the sake of peace, stability, reconciliation and reconstruction in Lesotho

They also called for the immediate withdrawal of SADC forces from their country

When asked whether yesterday's declaration meant they did not accept the SADC proposal, as detailed by SA Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi in talks between government and opposition parties in Maseru on Monday, the opposition parties replied that a transitional structure was different to a government of national unity

"This proposed transitional structure does not preclude the formation of the government of national unity," opposition alliance spokesman Mamello Morrison said yesterday

A report from Pretoria said that, according to the SA defence ministry, the first week of SA's military activities in Lesotho cost more than R8m

"The cost of the operation from September 22 to September 30 is R8,1m," spokesman Puso Tladi said

The figure includes elements such as fuel, food, salaries and allowances

Damages to equipment and hidden costs such as wear and tear were excluded

"The cost from October 1 will only be known at the end of the month, as the figures are being worked out on a monthly basis. That is how the system functions," Tladi said

"It is clear the regional task force lacked a well-defined entrance and exit policy when it became involved It is starting to look like we will be in Lesotho for months," said Greg Mills, the national director of the SA Institute for International Affairs in Johannesburg "One gets the impression they are making up a political mandate for the operation as they go along."

Human Sciences Research Council researcher Charl Schutte said it would take time to reinstate structures required to govern Lesotho efficiently "Our troops are being sucked deeper and deeper into the situation. If one wants to be realistic, it will take months before they can withdraw"

Director of the Institute for Conflict Resolution, Laurie Nathan, said cost was not a factor in SADC's involvement "There is no way that they will withdraw because of the costs It is a matter of pride and face-saving," he said from Cape Town —Sapa

Lesotho foray cost SA R8-million in first week

Star 8/10/98 (167)

The first week of SA's military activities in Lesotho cost more than R8-million, the Ministry of Defence said yesterday

"The cost of the operation from September 22 to September 30 is R8,1-million," spokesperson Puso Tladi said in Pretoria

The figure included costs such as fuel, food, salaries and allowances Damage to equipment and hidden costs such as wear and tear were excluded

"The cost from October 1 will only be known at the end of the month, as the figures are being worked out on a monthly basis – that is how the system functions," Tladi said

Meanwhile, experts warned that SA's military was being sucked into the effort to stabilise Lesotho, and would probably remain there for months They said this likelihood was underscored by an increase this week in the number of SA troops deployed in Lesotho

"It is clear that the regional task force lacked a well-defined entrance and exit policy when it became involved It is now starting to look like we will be in Lesotho for months," said Greg Mills, national director of the SA Institute for International Affairs in Johannesburg

Laurie Nathan, director of the Institute for Conflict Resolution, said cost was not a factor in the Southern African Development Community's involvement "It is a matter of pride and face-saving," he said

The SANDF on Tuesday said an extra 750 soldiers and 200 support staff were being moved into Lesotho yesterday This brings to 3 500 the number of South African soldiers deployed in the kingdom – more than four times the force's original size

SANDF spokesperson Lieutenant-Colonel Laverne Machiné said yesterday that only about 1 500 of the 3 500 were foot soldiers, with the rest being support staff

Military officers on Tuesday said thousands of weapons stolen by mutineers still had to be retrieved, while the volatile northern part of the country had still not been secured They said SADC troops would be playing a vital role in these tasks, and would also help to retrain Lesotho soldiers

Nathan said there was a danger the SADC troops would become an army of occupation

■ The Chief of the South African army, Lieutenant-General Gilbert Ramano, warned yesterday that disciplinary action would be taken against any soldier who misbehaved during the current Lesotho mission

Ramano was speaking after a meeting with commanders of the SADC intervention force in Maseru He was part of an SANDF delegation led by Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils

MPs in the Lesotho National Assembly yesterday criticised SADC proposals on governing mechanisms until new elections are held One MP, Pashu Mochesane, said the transitional committee suggested by SADC to prepare for the elections in 15 to 18 months was unconstitutional.

Lesotho could not set up a structure like SA's 1994 Transitional Executive Council because conditions in the kingdom were quite different, he said – Sapa

Peril looms for Kenyan economy

(163)

KENYA's beleaguered economy ran into more trouble in the first half of this year, and the outlook into early 1999 remains bleak, the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) said this week

Real gross domestic product growth fell to 1,5 percent in the year to June, down from 2,3 percent last year, below an estimated population growth of 2,5 percent, according to the data released

High interest rates and deteriorating infrastructure have strangled the economy this year, while bad weather has also hampered agricultural production, the central bank said

"Economic performance is expected to remain depressed into early 1999, mainly because of the problems in coffee and sugar production and the adverse effects of the recent bomb blast in Nairobi," the bank said

An attack on the United States embassy in Nairobi on August 7 killed over 250 people and caused extensive damage to local businesses

"The looming global recession is also expected to further erode prospects for economic recovery by reducing the demand and depressing the prices of the country's exports," the CBK said

The central bank issued its now customary appeal for tight fiscal policy as the key to revamping the economy

Appropriate measures

"Appropriate measures should therefore be implemented in order to avert any further decline in economic growth, which should initially focus on reducing public debt," it said in its monthly economic review for October

The Kenyan economy ran into trouble last year after the International Monetary Fund suspended a key loan on the grounds of official corruption and poor "governance", a decision which sent interest rates soaring

Although Finance Minister Simeon Nyachae promised to balance the books in his June budget, economists say that that target may already be out of reach – *Reuters*

Lesotho must pay for SA's intervention

(167) BD 9/10/98

PRETORIA — Lesotho would foot the bill for the military operation to restore order in the country, SA's defence ministry said yesterday.

It said reports that the first week of SA's involvement in the mission cost more than R8m gave the impression that SA taxpayers would have to bear the burden. In terms of a status of forces agreement, Lesotho would have to reimburse SA for expenses incurred.

"The final account, therefore, is not for the SA taxpayer but for the kingdom of Lesotho"

Ronnie Mamoepa, spokesman for Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, said yesterday the Lesotho government and opposition were ready to meet a Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegation on Monday to move the process of a negotiated settlement forward. The parties had indicated to the chairman of the SADC delegation, SA Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, that they were ready to meet to report back on an SADC proposal for the formation of a transitional structure.

Meanwhile, Lesotho's government threatened yesterday to dismiss public servants who had taken an active role in supporting opposition groups in the recent upheaval.

This means that Lesotho's estimated 10 000 public servants could be reduced by half as early as next week. "This is a simple matter because these people have violated the provisions of Lesotho's Public Service Act, which prohibits government employees to participate actively in politics," Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said.

Government ministers had been ordered to convene urgent meetings with their departmental staff to convey a message that the culprits should resign or they would be forced out. Some government employees had used government resources to further the objectives and aims of opposition parties, he said.

Opposition parties said it would be unconstitutional for the government to expel employees because of their political affiliation.

In a separate development, the office of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili denied allegations in the media from King Letsie's brother, Chief Seeio Seeio, that the royal palace in Maseru had been attacked by SADC troops. "Those who have placed the life of the king in danger were the men and women who have been accommodated at the palace from the beginning of August"

In another report, politicians said the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy and the kingdom's opposition parties would both hold rallies in Maseru on Sunday. The rallies would take place in the presence of about 3 200 soldiers from Botswana and SA.

A report from Maseru said thousands of pamphlets expressing anti-expatriate sentiments, especially against South Africans, were distributed in Maseru this week, warning non-Basotho to get out of the country immediately. No one has claimed responsibility for printing and distributing the one-page pamphlets. — Sapa-AFP.

Lesotho to pay millions for aid

(167)

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JOHANNESBURG· Lesotho will pay millions of rand to South Africa for its military intervention in the kingdom to help stave off a coup, the South African Defence Ministry said yesterday.

Over 3 500 South African and Botswanan soldiers are deployed in Lesotho after the government asked its neighbours to help quell a military revolt

"In terms of the status of forces agreement between South Africa and the kingdom of Lesotho, the receiving party, the kingdom of Lesotho, is responsible for the reimbursement of costs to South Africa," the Ministry of Defence said in a statement

The first eight days of the intervention by South Africa cost the impoverished kingdom of two million people about R8,1 million, the statement said

Charging would now begin on a monthly basis

Lesotho is facing massive costs since the troops entered Maseru on September 22

The intervention sparked a wave of theft and arson that razed Maseru's shopping districts before spreading to outlying towns and villages, scaring off investors and foreign businesses

Damage to Maseru alone has been estimated at R2 billion and Lesotho has begun appealing to foreign donors for financial aid to rebuild the capital

President Nelson Mandela has said the troops would be kept in Lesotho until the situation has normalised Some senior officers have said they could be there until Christmas

Opposition parties alleged that the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy had rigged the vote when it won 79 out of 80 constituencies

Both sides have agreed to a fresh election in the next 15 to 18 months, but have locked horns again over who will run the country until then — Reuter

Lesotho talks on a knife edge

M+G 9-15/10/98 (167)

Sechaba ka'Nkosi

South African government aides and senior members of the Basotho royal family were this week involved in intense behind-the-scenes negotiations with opposition leaders to avert an imminent breakdown of talks which resume next week

The shuttle diplomacy comes as cracks emerge in the opposition alliance between those who support a proposal by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) troika on Monday and those who want to reject it.

SADC mediators proposed the creation of a transitional executive of all political parties to administer processes relating to the new elections, to take place in the next 18 months, while the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) continues to govern

What is most worrying to the SADC troika — Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa — is a huge disinformation campaign against the SADC and its troops in Lesotho, allegedly conducted by those who reject the settlement

There are fears that this could lead to a bloodbath between SADC forces and rebel soldiers.

This week the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) deployed more troops in in the volatile areas of the north, following reports that the rebels were arming civilians in Teyateyaneng and Butha Buthe

The additional South African troops come from 7 Infantry Battalion, the unit many senior SANDF officers and military observers believe should have been used in the original incursion on September 22

7 Battalion, like 2 Battalion, is an integral part of the Rapid Deployment Force, and is highly trained in peacekeeping and counter-insurgency

But, for the original incursion, decision-makers sent in elements from 1 Battalion and other units considered to be "political showcase" units in the new SANDF

These units comprise a high proportion of former guerrillas from Umkhonto weSizwe and the Azanian People's Liberation Army, integrated with personnel from the old South African Defence Force and bantustan armies

Security analysts say the soldiers from 7 Battalion are also well equipped for counter-insurgency against Lesotho Defence Force rebels hiding in the mountains

Among rumours filtering through Maseru are claims that SADC forces are planning to storm the royal palace and flush out demonstrators, even if this means placing King Letsie III's life in danger, and that the SANDF has been handing out poisonous substances to civilians

Pretoria moved swiftly to reassure King Letsie III and to affirm its impartiality in the five-month-old debacle between the LCD and opposition parties On Wednesday the king's brother, Prince Seiso, met senior South African diplomatic aides in Maseru to discuss the situation and to seek an explanation about rumoured plans to storm the palace.

"It's a rumour we would not have taken seriously had it not been for the volatility of the situation," said the South African high commisioner to Lesotho, Japhet Ndlovu "We are dealing with a delicate process, which can be manipulated "

Despite the LCD's reluctant concession to hold another election on condition the opposition give up its demand for an all-inclusive government in the interim, sections of the opposition stuck to their guns and demanded further concessions

On Tuesday the youth council of the Basotho Congress Party and other groups resolved after two days of deliberations to mobilise for an indefinite stay-away if there is no progress on their demand.

Opposition leaders played down the threat of civil disobedience, dismissing it as another outburst from an angry youth But on Wednesday a pamphlet signed by eight opposition leaders was circulated in Maseru, declaring the opposition's demand for joint control of all processes of governance in the run-up to elections a precondition for further negotiations

Basotho National Party leader Chief Retselisitsoe Sekhonyana confirmed there were differences among opposition leaders on the SADC proposal. He warned, however, that the opposition would risk losing ground if it refused to participate in the proposed transitional arrangement.

SA's crippling arrogance, PAGE 6

SA's crippling arrogance

(167) (~~3616~~) M+G 9-15/10/98

The makers of South Africa's foreign policy need a long, hard think, suggests **William Boot**

M+G 9-15/10/98

The king of Lesotho is seldom permitted to make public utterances But sometimes his private observations are passed on by friends and advisers — like what he said when he returned from the recent Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit in Mauritius.

Lesotho, he said, had been sacrificed to the SADC, and more specifically to the imperative of better relations between two of the organisation's key players, South Africa's President Nelson Mandela and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe

Behind King Letsie III s gnomic observation lies a sequence of events that starts on September 9, with South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki about to make public the report of the Langa commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities in Lesotho's May 23 elections

In the event, Mbeki did not hand over the report to interest groupings Instead, at the insistence of his partners from Botswana and Zimbabwe in the SADC appointed troika of nations charged with guaranteeing democracy in the mountain kingdom, he pulled back at the last moment, saying the report would be referred to the SADC summit in Mauritius on September 13 and 14 It was deemed too explosive to release there and then.

By this stage Letsie had already been privy to the interim report of the Langa commission — which found "gross irregularities" in the elections and is believed to have called for the annulment of the election result which returned the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) to power with only one seat conceded to the opposition.

However, the report was not discussed in the official proceedings of the summit Mandela, as chair, announced (after Mbeki's protestations of its explosiveness) at the end that there had not been time to put it on the agenda. Odd. But not so odd when you consider that, as head of state, Letsie would have to have been present in plenaries on the subject.

However, sources close to the summit have confirmed that the report was indeed discussed — at the troika level and especially between the Zimbabwean and South African delegations

In the end it was the Zimbabwean perspective and the Zimbabwean solution to the problem of Lesotho which won the day, and which shaped the next, horrific chapters of Lesotho's tragic history

What was agreed was that the initial report of the Langa commission — which sources at the time confirmed merely fleshed out the contents of the interim report — would have to be rewritten Those sections which questioned the legitimacy of the LCD government and called for re-elections under an interim government of national unity would have to be excised.

Senior South African intelligence sources confirmed that there was substantial rewriting of the report in the days which followed, and the doctored report was made public nearly a week later The name of the actual rewriter is known to the *Mail & Guardian*

It is worth mentioning that on September 8, in the midst of a military insurrection which effectively rendered his government powerless, and with the release of the initial Langa commission report expected at any moment, Lesotho's Minister of Foreign Affairs Tom Thabane took time off to slip out of the country to "seek advice" from his close friend Mugabe The next day the report was withheld largely at Zimbabwean insistence

The point in rehashing this history is not merely to identify the bad guys. The questions raised are questions about South Africa's foreign policy in the context of regional relations.

Much has already been made of the about turn in South Africa's approach to conflict resolution in the Lesotho instance from a blanket insistence on negotiated settlements to a military intervention (cloaked though it might have been in the SADC blanket), complete with murder, rape and pillage.

It has also been noted often enough that the turnaround came just after a stand-off with Zimbabwe over that country's military adventures (supposedly on behalf of the SADC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo

But this is not really the point. The real about face in South African foreign policy came in this regard where the interim report had at least questioned the legitimacy of the LCD on the basis of election irregularities, the reworked version could not find that the will of the people had not been served in the elections

By the same token, when South African and Botswanan troops were sent into Lesotho, their stated aim was to reinstate the supposedly legitimate and elected LCD government. The intervention was avowedly made at the request of the head of government Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili — without reference to the head of state, the king.

In short, it was an embarrassingly familiar kind of African intervention, and one which South Africa has been vocal in criticising in the past; the kind of intervention which seeks, regardless of the moral right of a government to be in power, to prop it up in the face of the resistance of its own citizenry The fact of holding power is used as its own justification in the face of the usually legitimate opposition of the people

One only has to look at the way the Organisation of African Unity functions to keep the corrupt and the brutal in power — from Mobutu Sese Seko in the former Zaire to Laurent Kabila in the Congo to Sassou Nguesso in Congo (Brazzaville) — by systematically confusing power with legitimacy, lest their own credentials be examined too closely

Of course, South Africa's role in Lesotho has been nothing if not ambivalent. The initial intervention was made, sources say, on the basis of reports by Mosisili's government of large-scale weapons transfers to rebel soldiers inside the kingdom — and, although these justifications were *post facto* on the unsubstantiated basis that a coup had been effected (which, until the moment of the intervention, the South Africans had denied) It was, as this newspaper tellingly dubbed it, the Rambo nation approach.

It is still uncertain whether the military order was given with the informed knowledge or blessing of Mandela or Mbeki Intelligence sources have said that the order was given on the basis of a supposedly imminent (and possibly manufactured) military threat from the Lesotho insurgents

On the other hand, where Mandela and Mbeki have actually been involved — in brokering talks and forcing agreements for re-elections within 15 to 18 months — the approach has been markedly different.

Perhaps the most telling moment came last week when, in a televised address to the nation on the subject of an interim government for Lesotho, Mbeki said it had been agreed that a structure would be put in place representing all parties equally until the elections

The significance of this is twofold. it betrays another about turn on the part of the South Africans, a return to the interpretation which deems the elections irregular and therefore the government too, and it highlights the crippling arrogance of a South African foreign policy which assumes that because this is the agreement it had drafted, this would be put into place.

While Lesotho's LCD Parliament finds reasons to refuse to pass proposed re-elections into law, and while the LCD government refuses to buy into an interim government structure, citing earlier endorsements of its legitimacy in justification the South African policy makers might do well to use this time to do some pondering

'Exercise Blue Crane' postponed

Howard Barrell

South Africa is on the verge of postponing its biggest-ever joint military and police exercise with other countries in the region, scheduled for next month, because of problems caused by the incursion into Lesotho.

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has told other interested government departments it doubts it can afford the exercise, code-named "Blue Crane", because the Lesotho operation is a serious drain on its already squeezed budget.

The SANDF has also said that its command structures, currently taken up with dealing with Lesotho, may not be able to cope with the exercise

The resources of a number of other countries due to participate in the exercise, planned under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), are more seriously stretched than South Africa's. Angola's because of the war on its territory and its troop commitments in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana's because it has a contingent operating alongside South African forces in Lesotho; Zimbabwe's because of its economic crisis and intervention in the Congo

And the defence forces of Lesotho and the Congo, also SADC members, are in no condition to participate in the exercise

A Ministry of Defence representative confirmed that South Africa was discussing the postponement or cancellation of Blue Crane with individual SADC countries "in an attempt to reach consensus" before a decision was announced.

He would not comment on the reasons for the reconsideration of the exercise



Changing policy. Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi (right) faces up to Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili (left) PHOTOGRAPH: NADINE HUTTON

Ironically, Blue Crane — designed to develop SADC member states' capacity for peacekeeping — is under threat because of SADC countries' existing heavy commitments to peacekeeping and peace-enforcing operations in the region

On Wednesday, the South African defence ministry disclosed that the costs of the Lesotho operation over the nine days from September 22 to September 30 was R8,1 million.

Together with hidden costs, such as wear and tear and combat damage to helicopters and vehicles, this brings the cost of South Africa's involvement in Lesotho to nearly R1 million a day in the opening days of the operation.

Military observers were suggesting this week that Blue Crane might be held in May next year, rather than be scrapped altogether

Foreign diplomats based in South Africa confirmed this week that there was now confusion over when the exercise would be held, if at all.

Diplomatic sources said that a number of West European and North American countries — including France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States — had agreed some time ago to donate about R10-million to the costs of the operation.

As the SADC's largest economy and as the host of the exercise, South Africa was due to bankroll most of the remainder

"Postponement looks increasingly like the rational option," said one Western diplomat.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has been among those pressing the SANDF not to scrap Blue Crane altogether or to postpone it beyond May

Foreign affairs fears damage to South Africa's reputation among donors and SADC states.

The defence ministry representative said South Africa wanted to take the donor community along with any decision reached by SADC countries.

Blue Crane is designed to develop the capacity of the SADC's 14 member states to mount joint peacekeeping operations in the region.

It provides for the involvement of about 4 000 military personnel from SADC armies, navies and air forces, plus a civilian policing component, in keeping the peace in an imaginary trouble spot. Most of the personnel and hardware is due to come from South Africa.

Blue Crane is a follow-up to a smaller peacekeeping exercise involving about 1 000 personnel from SADC countries, code-named "Blue Hungwe", held in Zimbabwe last year

Blue Crane envisages more than 2 000 army troops in three or four battalion, most with mixed SADC memberships, performing at the SANDF's battle school at Lohatla in the Northern Cape, air force transports and helicopters practising moving personnel, equipment and supplies around at Lohatla, naval transport craft and warships mounting mock landings and blockades off South Africa's east coast; and a civilian policing component.

The civilian policing component appears to be the only element that is definitely going ahead as scheduled.

"We will be putting 30 policemen from various SADC countries through a United Nations-approved course as planned — whatever happens to the other components of the exercise," said Mark Malan of the Institute of Security Studies, which is running the course

Death toll rises to three after Lesotho party rally

ARG

Maseru – The death toll from a weekend of political violence in Lesotho rose to three today after two people died overnight in hospital, the state radio said.

A third person was reported in a critical condition

This followed yesterday's violent clashes between government supporters and youths thought to be opposition members at a rally held by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili.

One man was beaten to death after being wrested from police custody by an angry mob The other two died in hospital

Sunday's rally was the first since South African and Botswana troops poured into Lesotho two weeks ago to quell an army mutiny and weeks of opposition protests over alleged vote-rigging in the May general election

Witnesses said thousands of people attended the meeting, but that the rally ended abruptly when four armed youths were attacked

One of the youths had been caught by the crowd and beaten to death before police could intervene, he said

A senior South African army officer said his men had tried to save the youths from the mob

SA National Defence Force spokeswoman Laverne Machiné said "a small opposition element" had got out of control at the rally.

Lesotho Foreign Affairs Minister Tom Thabane said several shots had been fired in the crowd just before Mr Mosisili began his address

An opposition spokesman denied their supporters would have disrupted the government's rally.

The violence had been staged to convince South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe of the need to prolong their stay in Lesotho, opposition parties claimed

"This is a ploy by the LCD (Lesotho Congress for Democracy) to divert these governments' attention to the current political problems," said opposition alliance spokeswoman Mamello Morrison

Mr Thabane said Mr Mosisili was

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there to report on talks with opposition parties, aimed at resolving the stand-off over May election results

South African Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi will chair further talks between the two sides on Wednesday

In an accord brokered by Pretoria, both sides in Lesotho have agreed to hold a fresh poll within 18 months, but are deadlocked over who will run the country in the interim.

The Wednesday talks will aim to try to resolve that issue

■ Rifleman Lucas Magwazana, the ninth South African soldier to be killed in action during the Southern African Development Community military intervention, was buried with military honours at his home village of Ngqeleni, Eastern Cape, yesterday

erupts in mob violence

Man dies in Lesotho mob rampage

Government supporters attack alleged assassins at rally in Maseru, forcing SANDF troops to evacuate badly beaten men

(167) Star 12/10/98

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SACDRIU LIBRARY

By Rodney Victor and Sapa

Lesotho Premier Pakalitha Mosisili and several cabinet ministers were whisked to safety after violence erupted at a rally organised by the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) in Maseru yesterday

One man was beaten to death and at least four others were severely injured when government supporters turned on several people in the crowd who they had accused of attempting to assassinate Mosisili and Deputy Prime Minister Kelibone Maope

Thousands of people attended the first mass display of support for the government since troops from South Africa and Botswana, acting under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community, suppressed a mutiny last month

But violence erupted when a member of the crowd at the rally spotted a man with a gun and chased after him, a member of a foreign television crew filming the event said.

The man disarmed the alleged assassin and tried to shoot him, but missed and wounded two bystanders. The alleged assassin ran for the premier's tent, followed by the crowd, causing the tent to collapse in the chaos

The crowd beat the alleged assassin until he could no longer stand and left him lying on the ground, the television crew member said.

Workers re-erected the tent, and the premier returned, but before he could deliver his speech, according to Lesotho police, a suspicious-looking man was spotted trying to set off a bomb

Police arrested the man and put him in a police vehicle, but they were overpowered by the crowd, who pulled the man out of the van and beat him to death

"It was a frenzy They trashed his body to a pulp Women were stabbing at him with umbrellas The men were kicking and hitting them. They continued hitting him long after he was dead," the television producer said

He said groups then roamed the crowd and spotted other people they suspected They attacked them too, beating them severely

The premier abandoned the rally just before rain came pouring down, finally dispersing the angry crowd

SA National Defence Force spokesperson Lieutenant-Colonel Laverne Machiné said "a small opposition element" had got out of control at the LCD rally "They were very aggressive and ready to make trouble Some were injured and we had to evacuate one or two of the injured," she said

The SANDF had kept a low profile at both the LCD rally and at an opposition rally at Maseru's royal palace, which went off without incident, she said

Lesotho opposition spokesperson Mamello Morrison dismissed the reports of opposition supporters disrupting the LCD rally. "The LCD is trying to stall negotiations so that the South African troops remain here for ever They are wanting to show that there's no stability in the country, so they can continue to be accompanied to their offices by Casspirs," she said

Officials said last night that talks between the LCD and opposition parties scheduled for Wednesday would go ahead.

Parties commit to Lesotho talks

BD 13/10/98 (167)

John Dludlu and
Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

HOPES for a resolution to the Lesotho political crisis rose last night when all the main players in the conflict announced that they would attend tomorrow's multiparty talks.

Lesotho Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) would attend the talks, brokered by the SA-led Southern African Development Community (SADC) Vincent Malebo, spokesman for the Lesotho opposition alliance, said the opposition would attend the talks even if the government chose not to participate

Fears had been raised that the talks might be jeopardised because of violence at an LCD rally at the weekend at which one person was killed

Reuter reports that the death toll from the violence rose to three yesterday after two people died overnight in hospital The state radio said a third person was in a critical condition — a victim of Sunday's violent feud between government supporters and youths thought to be opposition members at a rally held by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili.

Sources close to the talks said the main item in tomorrow's talks would be the SADC's "middle position" between the LCD and the opposition coalition. The talks would cover who would run Lesotho in the run-up to the election in 18 months

The opposition wants a national unity government, while the LCD, which won the disputed May general election, is against the idea which it sees as tantamount to succumbing to an opposition-inspired coup

Though Thabane on Sunday called for the talks to be reviewed in the light of the weekend violence, he said yesterday the government looked forward to "fruitful discussions".

Opposition alliance supporters are backing tomorrow's talks, and that the SADC troops in the area be replaced by Lesotho soldiers.

SA action in Lesotho 'legal'

Lowveld 13/10/98 (167)

By Shadrack Gutto

THE legality and legitimacy of the diplomatic and armed intervention of the Southern African Development Community in Lesotho must be quite confusing to those who are not experts on the current theories, norms and practices of international law

Many commentators have argued that it was a war, an invasion, an aggression, an occupation and even an apartheid type of military adventure

It appears to the critical non-partisan observer that what happened in Lesotho was an armed intervention at the request of the recognised government of the day

Lesotho's government is entitled to do this under Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter

International law regards a recognised government of the day as the external expression of the state The government constituted by the ruling party, the Lesotho Congress of Democracy, was therefore legally competent to request external diplomatic and military assistance

The present constitutional arrangements in Lesotho do not bestow on the monarch, King Letsie III, such an executive function

It does not, however, follow automatically that the Lesotho government request had to be accommodated and acted upon by foreign governments

This is where legality and legitimacy intersect. Was it legal and legitimate for South Africa and its SADC partners to accede to the Lesotho government's request for intervention?

We need to consider not only what regional and international law arrangements provide, but also, and equally important, the self-interest of the intervening states

For South Africa, it is the fate of history that Lesotho is situated in its belly This is one of the consequences of the application of the international law of *uti possidetis* (retention of colonial borders)

Although the official South African position has so far not highlighted this fact, it would be naive not to view this fact of geographical and territorial connectedness as having played some role in the decision-making process

Any widespread chaos in Lesotho would necessarily translate into considerable problems inside South Africa, and vice versa

Whatever the other justifications are, it was a matter of preventive self-defence for South Africa

To demonstrate just how instability in Lesotho places serious responsibilities on South Africa, South Africa is now being looked on to contribute to the rebuilding of Maseru

The refugees who spilled over into the Free State were looked after by the local communities and the department of welfare. Of course, such assistance was quite in line with South Africa's international obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention as well as the 1969 Refugee Convention of the Organisation of African Unity

At sub-regional level there has been some confusion as to whether it was the SADC or the troika that authorised and managed the intervention To me, it matters little which of the two really authorised and managed the process. The troika is a creature and an informal organ of the SADC Whereas the SADC was initially divided on the Democratic Republic of Congo crisis, the institution is speaking with one voice on the Lesotho case

It may also be recalled that the Langa Commission of Inquiry, which preceded the military intervention, was also an external SADC "peaceful intervention" initiative

Armed peacekeeping

It is a pity that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the SADC appear not to have coordinated their efforts in responding to the Lesotho crisis, both at the levels of peaceful mediation and armed peacekeeping

The OAU's mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, like the SADC's organ for politics, defence and security, were conceived to deal with internal as well as inter-state conflicts

We now turn to examine whether or not the intervention in Lesotho was legal and legitimate in international law International law does not give the UN sovereignty over states The suggestion that nothing can be done by states without the authorisation of the UN is incorrect

Lesotho's crisis started as a purely internal matter until the Langa Commission was set up by agreement between the Basotho and SADC

Chapter Six of the UN Charter allows "parties to any dispute" to resort to peaceful means of resolving such disputes Whether or not Chapter Six applies to internal disputes is not very clear.

Whatever the case, the Lesotho dispute became internationalised by the Langa Commission's appointment Even without this, the regional governments, including Lesotho, had agreed in advance that any attempt at a military coup would be considered as a regional and not a purely internal matter

To this extent, Article 2(7) is relevant but it has to be read together with Article 33 and Articles 51 (inherent right to individual or collective self-defence before the UN Security Council has taken action) and 52 (power of regional arrangements to solve disputes through peaceful means before referring such disputes to the UN)

It is true that Article 53 requires "enforcement actions", which include economic blockades, to be taken only upon authorisation by the UN Security Council

But all these provisions must read together and not in isolation Read together, the UN Charter is more rather than less on the side of the Lesotho diplomatic and armed intervention



SADC soldiers guarding a government building in Maseru, Lesotho. PIC LEN KUMALO

What needs to be done now to complete the processes of legality is to submit a formal notification and report to the UN Security Council

It has been asked whether South Africa adhered to its own constitutional mandate by taking the leading role in the intervention

On balance, both the political leadership and the security services involved appear to have honoured the spirit and letter of the Constitution A few mistakes have been made, but these should not obscure the bigger picture

The Constitution says that South Africa aspires "to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations"

The Presidency conformed to Section 201(2) in authorising the deployment of the forces in Lesotho and to Section 201(3) by informing Parliament timeously

Lastly, in seeking more durable reforms to Lesotho's systems of governance and institutional arrangements, the parties involved should also study the report prepared by the UN Human Rights Mission that visited the country in December 1996

(Professor Gutto teaches at Wits University's law faculty)

SA action in Lesotho 'legal'

Sowetan 13/10/98 (967)

By Shadrack Gutto

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Lesotho pact on interim body closer

(167)

By Simon Zwane

Star 13/10/98

Support for an interim structure, to coexist with the Lesotho government before fresh elections are held in 2000 has emerged between opposing political parties ahead of talks which resume in Johannesburg tomorrow.

The parties have finished consulting on the Southern African Development Community-proposed structure, and the stage is now set for tough negotiating on the powers of the transitional structure

The parties, although agreeing to the proposal in principle, still differ on the influence the structure should have on government matters.

Political stability now depends on agreement being reached on the structure disagreement could plunge the country back into chaos.

The ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy would like to narrow the powers of the structure to matters pertaining to ensuring free and fair elections It believes that, as a properly elected government, it does not have to share power with any other party

It is willing to extend powers, as proposed by SADC, to the police, army, the intelligence services, finance, foreign affairs and the media – activities which will have a direct bearing on the polls.

But the opposition Basotho National Party, the Basutholand Congress Party and Marematlou Freedom Party want the powers of the structure extended to all matters of governance.

The opposition believes that, if it has to play a role in levelling the playing fields, it must be given a stake in all areas of governance

The parties have had a week to consult their constituencies about the proposed structure, and rallies were held on Sunday as part of the consultation process.

United Nations asked to spearhead team to assess reconstruction

BD 14/10/98 (167)

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — Lesotho Foreign Minister Tom Thabane has invited the United Nations Development Programme to spearhead a multilateral team to assess the damage caused by the recent rioting in Maseru, as well as the requirements for the reconstruction of the country.

The mission is similar to one undertaken in Rwanda after the civil war in that country

The World Bank's SA representative, Kam Chetty, said in Cape Town yesterday that the request was made in Washington last week The World Bank had agreed to participate in the task though this did not necessarily entail bank financing. "We'll have to assess the ability of Lesotho to finance the programme before looking at a financing package."

Bank officials stressed to Thabane that they would like to see a collaborative effort by all the multilateral, bilateral and other institutions to minimise disagreement about the findings to ensure that any reconstruction programme enjoyed the support of all parties and to co-ordinate any donor assistance

The aim was to be as inclusive as possible Regional sensitivity would be taken into account by channelling the invitation for the mission through the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). SA would also be consulted

All sides would be informed about the progress of the mission, said Chetty, who has participated over the past two days in a conference on reconstruction organised by the World Bank and the University of Cape Town's Centre for Conflict Resolution.

Earlier, World Institute for Economic Development research fellow Tony Addison decried the fact that the global economic recession would inevitably affect Africa's fragile economies "We need more international action — more concessional finance — to avoid the derailment of Africa's fragile recoveries and to prevent social crises arising from the economic shocks caused by falling commodity prices "

Addison described the debilitating effects of investor uncertainty which bedevilled societies emerging from prolonged conflict. In such societies, time was of the essence and opportunistic behaviour flourished. The nature of the political settlement also affected how quickly investor uncertainty declined

Lesotho settlement said to be imminent after reports of good progress

(167.) 14/10/98 Star

By Simon Zwane
Star Foreign Service

Significant progress has been made during behind-the-scenes talks to resolve Lesotho's political impasse, and a settlement is imminent when talks resume today.

Participants are so confident of a positive outcome that they are predicting that much of the time in the talks will be spent debating processes to be followed in implementing the Southern African Development Community's proposed transitional structure, and in preparing for fresh elections, rather that wrangling about the necessity for the interim structure.

After meeting with the kingdom's Queen Mother, MaMohato, in Durban yesterday, President Nelson Mandela said

Role-players confident of a positive outcome

he was convinced that "the political leaders and all other people involved (in the talks) will come to an understanding and resolve the problem".

Representatives of opposing political parties also met Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi behind closed doors in Johannesburg on Monday to prepare for today's meeting

Tom Thabane of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and Vincent Malebo from the opposition alliance are believed to have briefed Mufamadi on the consultation process they have been engaged in for the past week on the SADC compromise proposal

In the previous round of talks last Monday, SADC proposed the establishment of a transitional structure to cooperate with the government in running the landlocked country before fresh elections are held in 15 to 18 months.

Although the LCD had initially rejected the idea of a parallel structure to co-exist with the present government, it has now indicated its willingness to accept SADC's proposal.

"We must be seen to be responsible. We called them (SADC) in, we can't be seen to be rejecting their proposal out of hand," a source said.

The opposition alliance, consisting of the Basutoland Congress Party, Basotho National Party and Marematlou Freedom Party, will try to use the talks to secure wide-ranging powers for the proposed structure.

The alliance has been calling for the dissolution of the government and for its replacement by an interim coalition administration of national unity

Monarch at loggerheads with his government

During the meeting with the queen mother, Mandela is believed to have discussed the strained relations between King Letsie III and the government.

Mandela met the king last month and advised him to rise above the politics tearing the kingdom apart.

Letsie appears not to have heeded Mandela's advice and was said to be at loggerheads with the Lesotho government this week over an address he had to make to the nation.

The king was barred by the government from addressing the nation on the state-owned radio and television service when it became aware that the king had changed the text of his government-approved speech, which had already been recorded.

▶ More reports

Lesotho opponents set peace process in motion

(167) ARG 16/10/98

FOREIGN SERVICE

Maseru – Hopes for a negotiated settlement in Lesotho have been given a boost by a deal between opposition and government to set up a joint group to pave the way to elections in 18 months

This structure, which has no clear mandate or powers, is expected to be launched by the end of this month

Its job is to create and promote conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections within the set timeframe

Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi said here last night that the Southern African Development Community countries involved had been working hard with the parties on their dispute "It is a matter of pride that the parties have reached agreements which put them on the road to implementing all other agreements "

But Mr Mufamadi's sentiments were not shared by opposition members outside the UN building where the talks took place

They complained the fruits of their labour had been denied, as they had demanded some form of power-sharing with the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy

The tasks of the new body include restructuring the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) by December 31 this yea r and reviewing the electoral system by March 31 next year

ELECTION IN 18 MONTHS

Lesotho parties agree on transitional rule

CT 15/10/98

(167)

MASERU: After a day-long talks yesterday, political parties in Lesotho agreed to elections in 18 months' time and on an interim structure to run the country.

THE Lesotho government and opposition parties have reached agreement to establish a transitional structure to oversee preparations for the country' s coming elections, South African Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi announced last night.

At a press conference in Maseru, Mufamadi, who chaired yesterday's multi-party talks, said the structure would be established by October 31 and a technical committee would be appointed soon to establish the powers and functions of the structure

The agreement was reached after a day-long meeting between Lesotho' s political rivals on the issue of who would govern Lesotho in the run-up to the elections that are to take place within 18 months

The agreement to hold fresh elections was reached at earlier multiparty talks in Maseru

Mufamadi said the proposed transitional structure would seek to create and promote a climate in Lesotho that would be conducive to holding free and fair elections

In terms of the agreed timetable, the electoral system would be reviewed by October 31 next year

The country' s Independent Electoral Commission would be restructured by December 31 this year and a new code of conduct for political parties would be reviewed by the transitional structure and the IEC by March 31 next year

A Southern African Development Community commission appointed to investigate the country' s May 23 elections uncovered serious irregularities

The election, which saw the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party sweep to power in a landslide victory, sparked violent protest from opposition parties, who claimed the vote was rigged in favour of the LCD and demanded that King Letsie III intervene and annul the election

Mufamadi said all political parties agreed to work towards normalising the security situation in Lesotho to ensure that a free and fair election could take place.

"The (LCD) government undertakes to facilitate the implementation of agreements in pursuance of among others, the creation of the (transitional) structure, as well as the timetables as agreed to on Wednesday," Mufamadi said

Sources at the talks said the opposition alliance had conceded defeat on its demand for a government of national unity to govern in the run-up to the election, and had opted for signing the agreement on the transitional structure

This reportedly angered younger alliance members

Mufamadi congratulated the Basotho nation for mandating their political leaders to negotiate a deal to take the country out of its political impasse.

Opposition alliance concedes defeat on demand for a government of national unity.

"You did not disappoint UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, who implored you to work towards an agreement which would help Lesotho get out of the current political stalemate," Mufamadi said at the media conference

Earlier yesterday Annan sent a message to be read at the multiparty talks, urging rival political parties to work hard to resolve outstanding issues so that a climate conducive to free and fair elections could be created.

The UN was ready to provide any assistance to make the process of solving the country's political problems a success. — Sapa



Defending regional democracy

(167) Star 14/10/98

The media were blind to the values and sacrifices behind the Lesotho intervention, writes Fink Haysom

The South African public is entitled to know why members of the South African National Defence Force were deployed to Lesotho on 22 September 1998.

From the response of the media, the public would be forgiven for believing that the intervention was unrelated to any rational purpose

For reasons which are not clear, little or no credence was given to the publicly stated reason for the intervention. South Africa's obligation, through the Southern African Development Community, to oppose military coups d'etat in the region

The 700 South African soldiers were employed at the invitation of the lawful government of Lesotho, to assist in confronting a mutiny of low-ranking and non-commissioned officers in the Lesotho Defence Force.

The SADC intervention was not intended to force the government and the opposition parties to the negotiating table. Lesotho's political problems, at the end of the day, are for the people of Lesotho to resolve.

It is important to set the context of the mutiny At the time of the intervention, government buildings had been forcibly closed. Government vehicles had been seized Government ministers had been subjected to violent attacks. Fifty-eight senior officers of the LDF had been forcibly incarcerated.

The lawful government of Lesotho expressly invoked the SADC's anti-coup obligations when requesting SADC assistance. There are important considerations which inform the SADC's opposition to any military coups d'état or attempts by the military to usurp the function of government in any of its member states.

The public effect of such a policy is potent. It gives notice to ambitious elements in any of the military forces in the region that in no member state will the political aspirations of any military faction be tolerated.

South Africa's commitment to this policy is thus also a commitment to development in the region.

It was not up to South Africa to unilaterally decide that the lawful government of Lesotho was not a legitimate or democratically elected government.

South Africa must accept the verdict of the hundreds of respected international observers, and the respected Lesotho High Court. Nor did the Langa report justify withdrawing recognition from the Lesotho government.

Yet the public were treated to a host of imaginative and far-fetched explanations for the intervention: the idiosyncratic whim of Acting President Dr Buthelezi, or that the ministers were at play while the president was away; or in some obscure self-interest of the ruling party

In place of an explanation for the intervention, the public were treated to a simplistic "David and Goliath" contest.

There was an unseemly, unprincipled and – in regard to the South African opposition parties – a comic scramble to embrace Lesotho dissidents and opposition parties.

The fact that the Lesotho opposition appeared to support the mutineers and opposed any attempt to confront the mutiny was not questioned.

On the other hand, culpability for the looting and destruction of the essential business district of Maseru was swiftly attributed to the SANDF. It is no surprise then, that the difficulties faced by the SANDF received little appreciation

South Africa's participation in this intervention was nothing less than shouldering its part of SADC's commitment to long-term stability and democracy in the region.

If fulfilling this important obligation means abdicating the "high moral ground", as some editorials suggested, then we may need to revisit what exactly is meant by the "high moral ground"

Yet, in truth, maintaining the "high moral ground" means assuming concomitant responsibilities, and making difficult choices.

On this question it needs to be stressed that the decision to intervene was not lightly, nor quickly taken.

South African officials, including a minister of state, actually visited the mutineers in their barracks, urging them to reverse their action. There were also extensive consultations with regional players.

Alternatives to the intervention were certainly considered. In this regard a blockade on Lesotho would have had the effect of putting the mutineers in charge, and would have victimised the entire population.

This is not a call for "patriotic journalism" But in the unprofessional rush to fashionable and superficial judgment, important values and the sacrifices made by the members of the SANDF in defence of them have not been acknowledged.

Indeed, the general approach of much of the media has concertedly, and unfairly, served to trivialise them.

■ *Fink Haysom is a Legal Adviser in the Office of the President*

OPINION



Defending regional democracy

(167) Star 14/10/98

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Arrests result in setback for SADC's Lesotho peace deal

(167) BD 16/10/98

John Dludlu

MASERU — The Lesotho peace deal brokered by the Southern African Development Community has suffered a setback with the arrest of about 30 soldiers alleged to be involved in the recent mutiny in the mountain kingdom

Sapa reports that Lesotho opposition parties asked the SADC governments of SA, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe yesterday to intervene following the arrest of 30 soldiers who allegedly participated in a mutiny early in September.

Opposition alliance spokesman Vincent Malebo told Sapa the message had been conveyed to SA Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, who led the delegation to Lesotho for multiparty talks aimed at breaking the country's political impasse

Mufamadi's office confirmed he had been briefed on the new developments in Lesotho. Spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said the minister would address a press conference in Johannesburg today and would probably deal with the arrests then Lesotho army chief Tanki Mothae confirmed that an investigation into the alleged involvement of those arrested had been launched in Maseru.

Candi Ratabane Ramainoane reports that Malebo had called for the unconditional release of those arrested in the light of Wednesday's deal Malebo said the offence the soldiers were alleged to have committed was a consequence of the turmoil leading to the deal

In another development, junior members of Lesotho's opposition party alliance expressed anger at their leaders for signing an agreement on Wednesday on a transitional structure to oversee preparations for new elections.

Members of the alliance's technical committee — made up predominantly of party youth — accused opposition leaders of being ill-advised and premature in signing the SADC-brokered deal, which will create a structure to function in parallel with Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosilili's government.

By signing the transitional structure deal, the alliance has effectively abandoned its demand for a government of national unity to govern Lesotho in the run-up to the new elections

However, Malebo dismissed the criticisms, saying the technical committee had agreed that if opposition leaders failed in their bid for a government of national unity, they should fall back on the SADC proposal

Reuters reported yesterday that the Lesotho government, its foes in the opposition and ordinary citizens yesterday hailed an SADC-mediated peace deal on fresh polls, saying it would end turmoil in the country.

French food donations for Lesotho

By Muzi Mkhwanazi

EFFORTS to alleviate food shortages and poverty in Lesotho received a major boost at the weekend when the French government announced a food donation worth R300 000

In a statement released yesterday, French ambassador to Lesotho Mr Tristan d'Albis officially informed the authorities that his government had decided to provide emergency food assistance in the aftermath of the recent events in Lesotho.

The country has been gripped by unrest since May when opposition parties rejected the outcome of the country's general election, claiming that it had been rigged

The unrest led to the Southern African Development Community – led by South Africa and Botswana – sending soldiers into the mountain kingdom to quell any potential civil disorder

Lesotho parties urged to respect agreement

BD 20/10/98 (167)

John Dludlu and
Candi Ratabane Ramainoane

SA, which is leading the four-nation peace initiative in Lesotho, last night urged all political parties to respect the agreement which was brokered by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) last week

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad's remarks came after the Lesotho opposition alliance, which has been camping at the king's palace for two months, boycotted a meeting called by the government yesterday

Vincent Malebo, the spokesman for the alliance, said the parties had refused the invitation from Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili as they felt the purpose of the meeting fell out of the premier's scope of responsibilities as head of government and leader of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy

The meeting was called to brief all political parties on the political situation.

Malebo said the alliance regarded Mosisili as a partner to last week's deal and therefore he had no mandate to call such a meeting.

Pahad said all parties should respect last Wednesday's agreement as the accord offered the best chance for peace for Lesotho. In terms of the agreement, the second this month to be brokered by the SA-led SADC team, a transitional structure would be formed before the end of the month to facilitate preparations for a fresh election

Earlier the political parties agreed to hold a new election in 18 months.

Pahad's statement came as the government looked set to take a hardline stance by vowing to continue the arrest and prosecutions of soldiers alleged to be involved in last month's mutiny

Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said at the weekend the government would seek assistance from the SADC to expedite the military hearings against the alleged mutineers He also said public servants who had been actively engaged in political activity would be dealt with, a statement that has fuelled fears of victimisation within opposition ranks

In another development, the Lesotho High Court yesterday issued an interim order to enable three of the arrested soldiers to be given access to legal counsel The order was issued after an application by their wives

The three women, Mants'itile Rantuba, Tlalane Lehloba and 'Mamasa Makhele, expressed suspicion that their spouses were being denied access to legal counsel to conceal evidence of torture

Sapa reports that Lesotho army chief Tanki Mothae said the investigations against the soldiers were carried out by the military police and therefore lawyers were denied access As soon as the investigations were completed, the soldiers would be allowed to seek legal representation, he said

Malebo said the arrests were a deliberate effort by the government to erode the confidence and trust concerning last week's agreement He said the opposition was preparing for today's first meeting of multiparty technical teams to prepare for the formation of the transitional structure

Lesotho makes start on transitional body

MASERU· Talks aimed at setting up a transitional structure to prepare for fresh elections in Lesotho started here yesterday when a Southern African Development Community task team met representatives of the country's political parties

The technical committee, comprising members of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy and opposition parties, will be working towards establishing the structure by next weekend.

The parties have agreed that Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission should be restructured by December 31 A new code of conduct for political parties would be reviewed by the transitional structure and the IEC by March 31 next year

An SADC commission appointed to investigate the country's May 23 election uncovered serious irregularities —Sapa

ET 23/10/98

Schools to benefit from food scheme

MASERU: The United Nations World Food Programme will launch an emergency feeding programme for primary schools in the Maseru district from Monday, as food shortages loom in the wake of Lesotho's recent political turmoil

The programme, requested by the government of Lesotho, will benefit 18 000 children in 63 schools During the unrest the food reserves of many of schools were looted, and kitchen facilities damaged

The WFP is examining additional requests for emergency food relief in the country. —Sapa

A

Lesotho 'proves transformation of armed forces has worked'

(167)

By Ronnie Kasrils

Our country has buried, with full military honours eight South African soldiers who fell in battle on September 22 1998 – Day One of the Lesotho intervention

Any funeral is a sombre experience and military funerals even more so especially when the fallen are in the prime of their lives Some of our dead were black and others were white

Their home languages reflected the diversity of our people, and they were laid to rest as far afield as Simon's Town and Johannesburg, and in far flung rural villages of the old Transkei, North West Province and the Free State.

They were part of the first truly national defence force in our history, engaging an external force for the first time since its creation in 1994

In so doing they died bravely in the service of our country, serving shoulder to shoulder in a force that transcends differences of background, colour or creed

Their families saw that truth very clearly At funeral after funeral they put overwhelming grief aside to express pride in their loved ones, and respect for their choice of career as volunteer soldiers of the new defence force.

The Lesotho operation proved the transformation of our armed forces has worked, in spite of all the doubts about whether it was possible.

The historic importance of this should not be lost. A watershed has occurred in which the unity of the SANDF has been forged in the heat of battle and sealed by the blood of the fallen

Should we have intervened in Lesotho in the first place?

Let us be reminded that our assistance was urgently requested by an elected government on the basis of a SADC agreement to prevent military coups in our region

Before the SADC force moved into Lesotho the situation was becoming grimmer by the hour On September 11 the senior officers of the Lesotho Defence Force had been rounded up and imprisoned by mutineers The palace grounds had been occupied by a mob seeking to support the monarch

The lives of ministers were threatened, government vehicles hijacked the civil service disrupted, and the police cowed into submission In short, anarchy reigned and Lesotho was plunging into chaos

Now Lesotho is calm The rule of law has been restored and the democratic process is functioning South Africa has been spared the ghastly consequences of massive refugee influxes, turmoil and banditry along our borders with Lesotho

Every day brings new discoveries of weapons and massive munition caches which have nothing to do with the legitimate requirements of the small Lesotho Defence Force.

So far over 10 000 firearms have been found in various arsenals, including a recent discovery of 1 200 AK-47s Doubting Thomases should consider the consequences of a good number of these weapons landing in the hands of criminals in our own country had we not acted.

Civil war in Lesotho could easily have spread throughout South Africa among the many Basotho migrant labourers working here

Were there shortcomings?

There are always failures in battle drills in any operation It has been said that a battle proceeds as envisaged till the first shot has been fired – after that, anything can happen. But, in fact, remarkably little went wrong.

The military is following its usual procedure of dissecting the operation in detail to determine what went right and what went wrong, and what lessons are to be learned

There was certainly no justification for newspaper headlines such as "SANDF reputation in tatters' and so on. The Sergeant Major of the Army, J J Moorcroft, hit the nail on the head by saying the SANDF succeeded in its baptism of fire.

In the face of some desperate resistance, the SANDF soldiers were tasked to occupy key installations and disarm mutineers, using a minimum of force. This meant targets could not be "softened up" with artillery or aerial attacks.

Comments have been made about the "inadequate" size of the force, resulting in casualties on our side and the looting in part of Maseru The force was smaller than it might have been, but the toll would probably have been the same even if a larger force had been deployed An unexpected burst of automatic gunfire can exact a heavy toll, even though the overall operation is perfectly executed.

As regards the looting, our forces had to respond to other urgent priorities when our troops assigned to secure the Makhoanyane military base were pinned down by heavy fire Contrary to some reports, however, Maseru was not reduced to rubble In fact, the damage caused by looters was confined to a far smaller area of the CBD than portrayed – as any visit to Maseru will reveal. At least we can be thankful that property, rather than life, was destroyed

It is also easy to criticise the intelligence aspects But the gathering and evaluation of intelligence is an inexact science because it can be affected by unforeseen factors – particularly at the tactical level where events suddenly change.

It was alleged that a South African flag was hoisted above the palace by our troops This is untrue. Perhaps a reporter mistook a pro royalist banner – which was in evidence at the palace – for our flag which it resembles Then it might be malicious disinformation – and there has been ample proof of that.

Another allegation concerns the rape of a Basotho women. Initial investigation has failed to turn up any conclusive evidence and the charge does not seem to have been pursued.

There has been an isolated incident of drunkenness involving a group of soldiers who are now being court martialled. The disciplinary standard in general has been good.

Some commentators have rushed to judgement on the basis of remarks made by a handful of officers at the SA Army's annual infantry symposium. The symposium was not about Lesotho but about the transformation process. Inevitably, some spontaneous references were made about the Lesotho operation, but these were not based on personal experience and were not intended as final judgement.

The fog of war often clouds perception and has not been assisted by the alacrity with which credence was given to unsubstantiated allegations by, among others, our own opposition parties.

Professor Fink Haysom, presidential advisor, commented on the "unseemly, unprincipled and comic scramble to embrace Lesotho dissidents and opposition parties" who support the mutineers. (The Star, October 14 1998)

There are several things that need to be acknowledged Our honoured dead did not give their lives in vain. Our defence force has proved its loyalty, capability and fighting spirit, and deserves the appreciation of a grateful nation And South Africa has shown the courage to honour our commitment to serving the cause of peace, security and democracy in our region.

■ *Ronnie Kasrils is deputy Minister of Defence*

The Roll of Honour

Those who fell were:

Lance Corporal Sikhumbuzo Mafuta, 31, from Cofimvaba, Eastern Cape
Private Lucas Magwazana, 34, from Ngqeleni, Eastern Cape
Private Thale Mangogape, 34, from Thaba N'chu, Free State
Lance Corporal Owageng Mothupi, 23, from Zeerust, North West
Lance Corporal Sambonga Mtengwane, 28, from Bizana, Eastern Cape
Captain Johan Nel, 27, from Krugersdorp
Corporal Jerome Sax, 25, from Cape Town
Private Tumisang Tshweu, 29, from the Rustenburg, North West

Maintaining troops in Lesotho costing SA millions

Star 24/10/98 (167)

By THAMI NGIDI

The South African National Defence Force's operation in Lesotho is costing more than R1-million a day, putting severe pressure on SA's defence budget, according to high-ranking SANDF officers

Several senior officers said this week there was dissatisfaction and concern within the SANDF, not only over the lack of planning and unprofessional execution of the Lesotho operation, but also over the budgetary implications of the ongoing engagement

While attending an Institute for Security Studies conference in Pretoria this week, one senior officer said he feared for the economic and political consequences of such a drain on national finances It was estimated that more than R8-million a week is being spent on maintaining troops in Lesotho

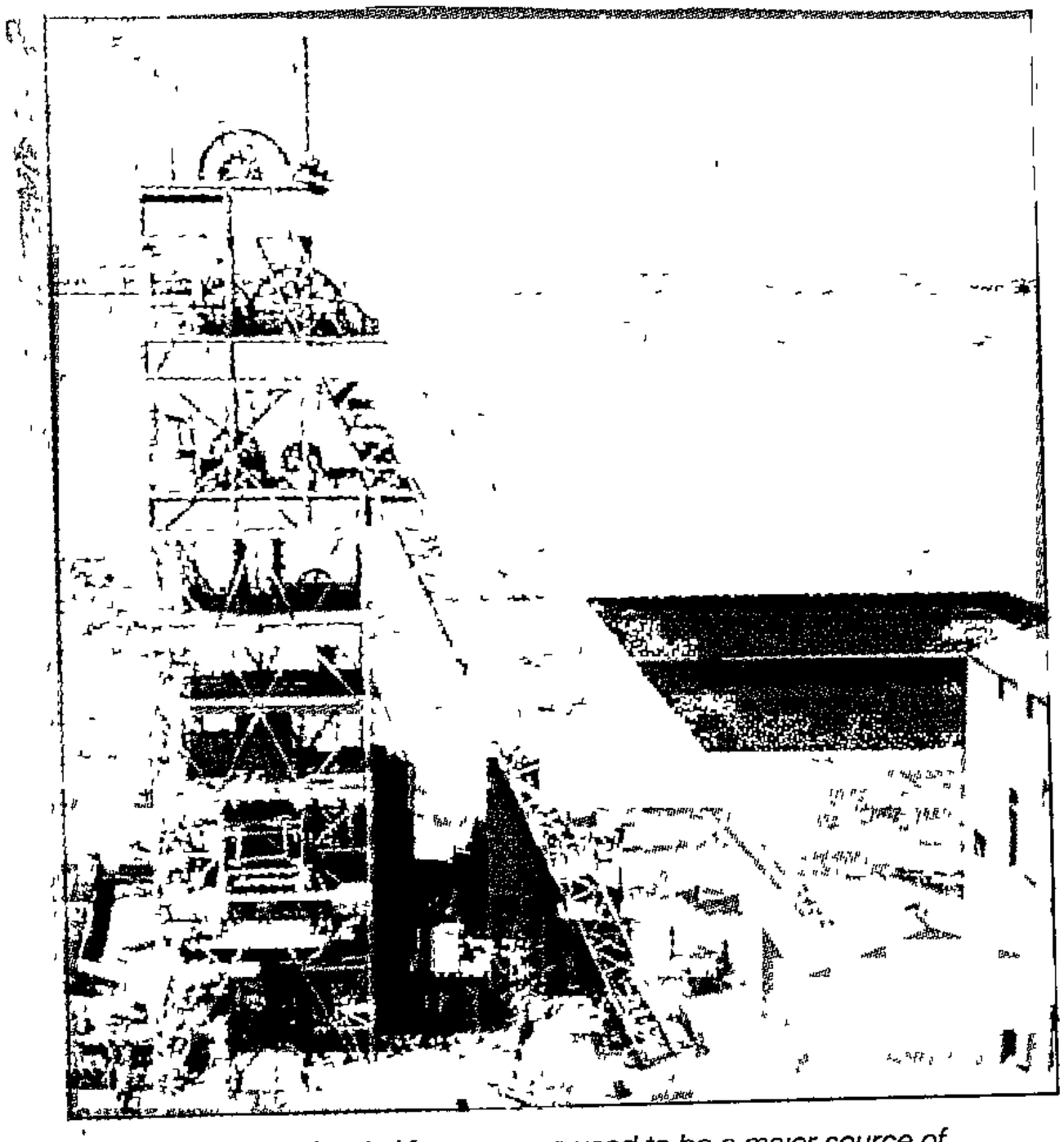
And while Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils was full of praise for Operation Boleas, a large number of high-ranking SANDF officers labelled the mission a failure

Praising the actions of SANDF soldiers on the battlefield, Kasrils said "Lesotho was the first baptism of fire for the new SANDF, and our men came out with shining colours"

But while many military personnel agreed with the explanation given during debriefings on Lesotho, an equal number have expressed their unhappiness with the lack of planning, unreliable intelligence and unprofessional execution of duties

One officer said the foray into the mountain kingdom would serve as a point of unity for SA's previously fragmented forces and provide a lesson for future peace-time engagements

Senior SANDF officers said the operation into Lesotho had underestimated the reaction of the Basotho



HARD TIMES . . . *South African mines used to be a major source of employment for Basotho men – but things have changed, with the rising tide of retrenchments on the mines adding to Lesotho's economic troubles*

Mine retrenchments add to Lesotho's woes

(167) CP 25/10/98

AS Lesotho counts its economic losses after the destruction in Maseru recently, the massive retrenchment of Basotho miners in South Africa is adding to the problems

Employment on South African mines has been on a steady downward spiral This has posed a challenge to Lesotho's established pattern of migrant labour, the mainstay of the economy For many families it is the only income

The number of Basotho employed in the mines has dropped significantly from its peak of 127 386 in 1990.

While other states like Botswana that have supplied migrant labour to South Africa are working on ways to create other jobs for mineworkers, Lesotho is showing no such initiative

However, some relief is at hand after lobbying efforts by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa Anglogold in September 1998 became the first company to contribute about R6,3 million to a retrenchment fund The NUM has pledged to raise at least R60 million for the fund, with the bulk of the money coming from the mining houses

An offshoot of the union, the Mineworkers Development Agency, (MDA) is being particularly helpful Set up to minimise the effects of retrenchments following a strike in 1987 that led to 40 000 mineworkers being laid off, it says it will help workers from neighbouring countries who have lost their jobs.

Its message is reinforced by NUM, which says it will continue to encourage the employment of people from surrounding countries

The MDA is helping to promote re-training in areas such as carpentry, poultry farming, and plumbing while also raising money for equipment and basic business management training.

In South Africa a programme of micro-loans has been launched through agencies such as the Get Ahead Foundation Great North Corporation Rural Finance Facility and Start Up Fund

A conference was held by NUM specifically to deal with mine employment – but solutions have notbeen found and there have been another 12 000 job losses.

"This has led to more pressure and a need to create alternative employment for these people, not only in SA but also in the rural areas of the neighbouring states, where these workers come from We see a need for co-operation," said NUM General Secretary Gwede Mantashe – Africa Information Afrique

SA cannot justify Lesotho invasion

Sowetan 26/10/98

By John Seller

WHAT assumptions led the South African Government to intervene in Lesotho? Did the Government appreciate that its initiative marked a radical shift from the established norms of international intervention – with implications for possible subsequent interventions by this Government and other African regimes in and outside of the Southern African Development Community?

If it did, did it decide that the Lesotho intervention merited this deviation either as a singular act, or as a first step in a longer-term policy in which military force would play a more immediate role?

Was there a link for some of the senior people with the impending decision to purchase billions of rand in new defence systems for the South African National Defence Force?

Despite the repeated resort to the SADC umbrella by Government leaders the intervention did not meet the established principles of international law about interventions by one or more states in the domestic affairs of another state

Regional initiatives

The SADC policy on regional initiatives aimed at containing internal efforts to overthrow a representative government is still no more than a draft document so that the 1998 SA-Botswana-Zimbabwe guarantee of Lesotho stability stands without any formal SADC legitimation

Pretoria's tacit acknowledgment of this lack of legitimacy lies in the phrase customary international law," now bandied about by Foreign Affairs officials – conveniently not mentioning that the backbone of contemporary international law is intended to constrain such arbitrary interventions!

Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi's consultation with SADC counterparts was itself partial and informal Only a handful of SADC heads of state spoke with him by phone in the several days before he made the commitment to intervention Ironically, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, who must have been gratified by the Government s decision, apparently did not speak to Buthelezi

At least as important, in the absence of any functioning SADC military staff to provide policy and operational advice to the region's heads of government the best assumption is that those who spoke to Buthelezi at most consulted informally with their own military chiefs or gave their pro forma endorsement without even this input

Subsequent actions

The SANDF appraisal of the intervention was blunt but naive The commanding officer of the SANDF contingent Colonel Robbie Hartslief said that the intervention could serve as a model for subsequent actions in the region and beyond

At about the same time SADC chiefs of staff meeting in Luanda concluded that military interventions in Angola the Democratic Republic of Congo and perhaps elsewhere were both appropriate and feasible

And with blatant candour, Lieutenant General Deon Ferreira said that the intervention had nothing to do with peace keeping "It was, and still is a military intervention operation requested by the government of Lesotho"

The international perspective was very different reflected in a *Washington Post* story by its Johannesburg-based correspondent, Lynne Duke 'Up in Arms in Southern Africa conflicts spur



Two dead South African National Defence Force (SANDF) soldiers lie in the back of an armoured personnel carrier. SA troops came under unexpected fire from forces loyal to the Lesotho opposition (probably the Lesotho army). The SANDF were attempting to take a Lesotho military base north of Maseru when they were ambushed

PIC JOAO SILVA

military intervention by half of region's states" That was followed by an editorial expressing dismay at the South African policy shift.

The resort to military intervention also sidetracked, at least temporarily, concerted international training and funding for peace-keeping activities with next month's "Operation Blue Crane" postponed indefinitely

How could the Government have made the decision to intervene without taking into account these critical international reactions?

Buthelezi has made it clear that he believed there was no time for further negotiation, economic coercion, and threats of force, because Lesotho government leaders property and lives were at risk.

As laudable as this motive might be in moral terms, it assumes South African interests are so intertwined with those of the Lesotho regime that no other South African interest, whether involving future relationships with opposition parties or international reactions toward intervention count as much

Of course set against the dilatory posture of North American and European governments about Yugoslav repression of Kosovo Albanians this approach has a refreshing clarity to it even though its focus was on a small number of government leaders and officials

Nothing has been said by Pretoria about the critical international reaction to the Lesotho intervention Buthelezi says that he consulted Jackie Selebi the new Foreign Affairs Director General who led the successful international conference to end land mine use and had been South Africa s ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva

He, as much as anyone in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, must appreciate the weight given in international law to constraints on military intervention Whatever Selebi's contribution, it is hard to believe that senior ministry official Abdul Minty, with his long involvement with international organisations would have supported the case for military intervention if asked

It seems likely that the decision was made informally within the Government among a cadre of senior African National Congress activists who might generally be characterised as "hawks", with no resort to formal planning or coordinative mechanisms and perhaps very little put into writing

Policy made this way needs not be either ineffective or undemocratic After all the ministers and deputy-ministers consulted by Buthelezi are ultimately responsible to the public

Officials, whatever their competence and insight, have no political responsibility

Even if the Government achieves its goal of enhanced political stability in Lesotho, it will be more expensive in cost and lives, risky to its international standing and inevitably ambiguous in its political consequences, to use the Lesotho intervention as a prototype for similar interventions – perhaps in Swaziland or, far worse in Angola or the DRC

Genuine mechanism

First steps must be taken to build a genuine SADC mechanism for regional security planning and policymaking Otherwise, the present empty shell of SADC mechanisms will be either ignored or co-opted by regional leaders even less concerned about the cost of military intervention

A parallel urgent priority must focus on strengthening existing coordinative mechanisms within and between the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office given the hints of inadequate coordination in the final planning for the Lesotho intervention

The public explanations by Mbeki Buthelezi and Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo were useful if inevitably a self serving version of the messy reality of decision making

They should be resorted to more often, especially in international negotiations where resorting to force might become the sole option

The public should never be surprised that such an option is being considered, even though the details of planning and timing must remain secret

(Dr John Seller is a political scientist who writes on domestic and foreign policy issues)

Parties seal deal on new Lesotho poll

(167)

ARG 29/10/98

Maseru – The Lesotho government and opposition parties have agreed on a mechanism to facilitate fresh polls in 18 months to end political turmoil.

Under a South African-led initiative, the government of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and opposition parties agreed to pass legislation by the end of this month that will pave the way for new polls

"A bill has been agreed upon which should be passed in parliament not later than October 31," Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi told reporters after chairing the talks between the government and opposition parties

"Everything possible and necessary must be made to ensure that the act is in place within the specified time the parties agreed," Mr Mufamadi said.

Under the bill, an interim political authority would be set up to "create and promote conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections", he said.

The authority will comprise two representatives from each of Lesotho's 12 political parties

According to its terms, it will seek equal treatment of all political parties in the election, eliminate impediments to legitimate political activity, and prevent any election-related intimidation – Reuters

'Straw men' come under fire in debate

Of course debate will continue, but remember: the SADC forces acted after a request from

THE reply by SA Institute of International Affairs national director Greg Mills to my response to his article on the legality of the Lesotho intervention (Business Day, November 26) sets up a series of straw men to attack, rather than dealing with the facts

The first straw man is to state that I did not address all the issues he raised My reply was explicitly confined to his argument that the intervention was illegal

Moreover, it was not necessary to dispute his interpretation of those parts of international law that apply to unsolicited military interventions By definition, they do not apply when a country voluntarily requests military assistance from another, and Mills never disputes the fact that Lesotho requested assistance

While Mills appears to abandon his previous argument that Lesotho acted illegally in making the request, he raises a second straw man, namely that the assistance was not used correctly He argues that the Lesotho Defence Act allows Lesotho to use military assistance only under its own command But the act states quite the contrary — in section 15, it even allows Lesotho troops to be placed under the command of the assisting force

In any event, the terms and conditions of the assistance, as required by section 7 of the same act, were agreed in the status of forces agreement concluded between SA and Lesotho And the agreement does exist

Mills's argument on legality has, on these two questions alone, dissipated completely

Mills accuses me of dismissing the option of a blockade, saying it could have been imposed with "the support of the Lesotho government" I happen to disagree with him about the merits of a blockade However, it is yet another straw man the Lesotho government did not support a blockade and certainly did not request it.

The fourth straw man is that I did not answer "as to why precise contingencies normally associated with such military intervention (such as prior notification of international agencies) were not carried out".

This was in fact answered the contingencies he mentions do not apply when the intervention is at the request of the host government That is why there has been no criticism of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) action by the very international agencies that supposedly should have been notified — a fact he does not dispute.

Mills's final straw man is to argue that I contradict the president and others who motivated the intervention in terms of the SADC agreement to stop coups The SADC position on coups indeed constituted the underlying political rationale for the intervention and Lesotho explicitly relied on this commitment in its request for assistance.

In purely legal terms, however, there was no need to rely on regional agreements, or the international law on unsolicited military intervention, since the SADC acted in terms of a request by the lawful Lesotho government

Finally, Mills accuses me of "playing the man rather than the ball", although he fails to give any examples But I made no personal criticism at all other than to disagree with some of his arguments. If anyone "plays the man", it is him when he derogatorily labels me a "spin doctor", apparently implying that my arguments need not be taken seriously

Although there is no doubt that much remains to be learnt about peacekeeping operations, I believe that the subsequent negotiated settlement has fully vindicated the SADC decision to intervene

Of course, debate will continue, but it will serve the cause of serious debate to stick to the facts and avoid the straw men

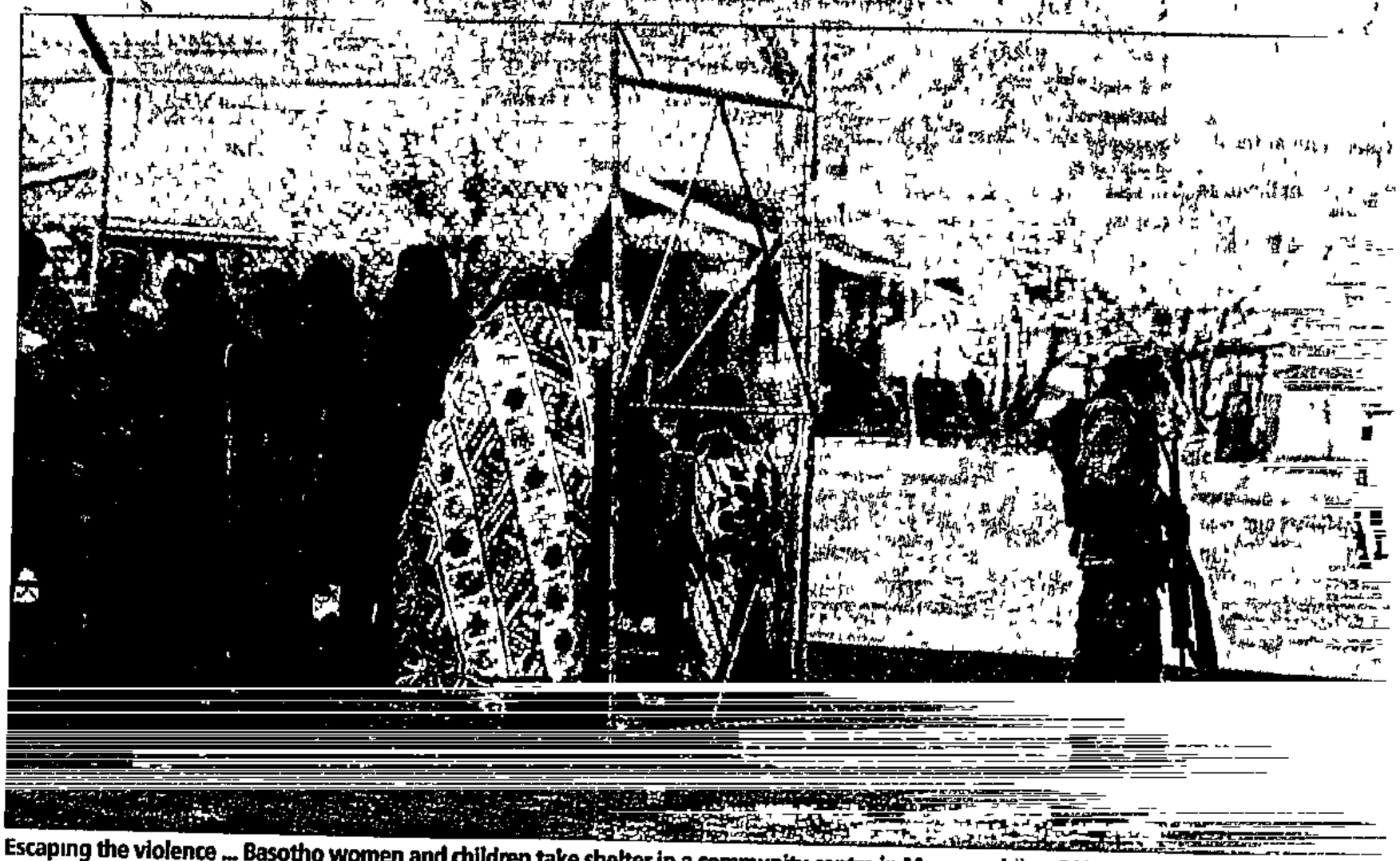
□ *Hofmeyr is parliamentary adviser to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki*

On Lesotho intervention

Lawful Lesotho government, writes Willie Hofmeyr

INSIDE

There are signs of recovery in the tiny mountain kingdom aft subsequent invasion by SADC troops, writes ***Simon Zwane*** *of th*



Escaping the violence ... Basotho women and children take shelter in a community centre in Maseru while a SADC soldier stands guard.

Troubled Lesoth simmers in wake of

Star 4/12/98 (167

Soft rains fell, women ululated and school children ran out of classes waving their hands as a motorcade of diplomats glided through the narrow streets of Maseru

It was Sunday September 20 and South Africa's Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi accompanied by diplomats from Zimbabwe and Botswana were arriving to hand over the much awaited report of the Langa Commission into allegations of election fraud

For the Basotho who had witnessed political instability and a two-month protest against the outcome of the May elections, the rain raised hopes for peace and stability in keeping with the country's slogan of *Khotso Pula Nala* (peace rain and prosperity)

But 48 hours later, when clouds of smoke covered the skies above the kingdom's capital as citizens went on the rampage looting and burning business premises in protest against the intervention of the Southern African Development Community troops in suppressing a coup, these hopes began to evaporate

Fear of poverty, starvation and protracted instability gripped law abiding citizens who did not take part in the plunder and political observers alike

But rays of hope have recently begun to re-emerge, more than 75 days later SADC forces are now gradually pulling out and an Interim Political Authority (IPA), constituted by 12 political parties which contested the May polls, has been established to prepare for fresh elections in 15 months.

The economy is also showing signs of recovery, with 67% of businesses which suffered losses during the rampage having restarted their operations, according to assessment done by the Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the Association of Lesotho Employers.

Steps have also been taken to free the airwaves, with the granting of a broadcasting licence to two privately owned radio stations Broadcasting in the kingdom has until this month been monopolised by the state owned Radio Lesotho, which functions as the government's lap dog and is reluctant to broadcast views opposing the regime.

But there are a number of hurdles which still need to be negotiated before the Basotho's ideal for *Khotso Pula Nala* is realised

The first challenge is presented by the conflicting approaches by the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy and the opposition alliance (the Basotho National Party, Basotholand Congress Party and Marematlou Freedom Party) over what the IPA should do about the country's discredited Independent Electoral Commission

The opposition would like to reconstitute the body it believes mishandled the May polls, but the ruling party believes that the electoral body needs to be revamped It argues that reconstituting the body would violate the constitution and that the body should serve its six year term because the commission did not find it to be incompetent

Sehoai Santo, a political analyst with the National University of Lesotho, believes that the position of the ruling party is unhelpful.

He says reconstituting the IEC is the key issue for the IPA

"The credibility of the IEC has suffered because of all the circumstances which brought us to the current situation The security situation and victimisation of civil servants also remain as crucial issues to be addressed before lasting peace can be achieved.

After being reinstated in power by the SADC forces, the government has unleashed punitive victor's justice on its political opponents.

About 36 members of the Lesotho Defence Force have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the mutiny.

Houses of opposition leaders have been searched and opposition youth leaders live in fear of possible arrest.

Santo says a breakthrough in addressing these issues was achieved when the ruling party and the opposition alliance agreed on the formation of a security committee, to be part of the IPA.

"One hopes that once they start working together in the IPA and security committee, the crucial issue of trust (between the parties) which is still lacking, will start to come through.

"Hopefully that process will yield dividends," he asserts.

Another complicating factor for talks in the IPA is the death of BNP leader Chief Retsilisitsoe Sekhonyana.

An able strategist and adept negotiator, Sekhonyana had not only managed to bring the opposition alliance to the negotiating table but, through his willingness to compromise, was also instrumental in securing agreement on the holding of fresh elections and the ment of the IPA.

Sekhonyana was the speak of the need for what he a transitional authority political situation in the reached boiling point on 22, two days after the release Langa commission report.

His death, Santo argues, therefore affect the cohesion strategic planning of the With his strategic thinking ibility lost, the alliance tempted to adopt political ship in dealing with difficult tions.

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c tiny mountain kingdom after the elections fiasco and
*, writes **Simon Zwane** of the Independent Foreign Service*



centre in Maseru while a SADC soldier stands guard

led Lesotho n wake of coup

Star 4/12/98 (167)

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Sekhonyana was the first to speak of the need for what he called a transitional authority before the political situation in the country reached boiling point on September 22, two days after the release of the Langa commission report.

His death, Santo argues, will therefore affect the cohesion and strategic planning of the alliance. With his strategic thinking and flexibility lost, the alliance could be tempted to adopt political brinkmanship in dealing with difficult situations.

First signs of this were seen when the chairperson of the alliance, Vincent Malebo, announced they were pulling out of talks on the establishment of the IPA last month.

The announcement was made on the same week that Sekhonyana died in hospital and the other opposition leader, Molapo Qhobela, was recovering from a stroke in a Johannesburg hospital.

At Sekhonyana's funeral, one of his lieutenants, Likhooana Jonathan, provided further evidence that some elements within the alliance had reservations about the IPA as a workable alternative to their demand for the resignation of the present government and its replacement by a government of national unity.

He believes the body will not deliver lasting peace as "a man convinced against his will is still of his opinion"

Cheer is in short supply

Maseru – For thousands of Basotho who have lost their jobs and face the prospect of further losses as a result of the looting and destruction spree on September 22, Christmas will be a dour affair.

Sounds of Christmas carols, a common feature in many central business districts at this time of the year, cannot be heard along Kingsway Road, Maseru s burnt out business hub, this year

More than 1 045 businesses, employing close to 6 000 people, were destroyed when a trail of destruction, spreading to outlying areas such as Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek, was unleashed on the tiny city.

An assessment commissioned by the Lesotho Chamber of Business and Commerce and the Association of Lesotho employers found that damage amounting to R97-million was done to premises Stock theft resulting in losses estimated at more than R164-million was incurred

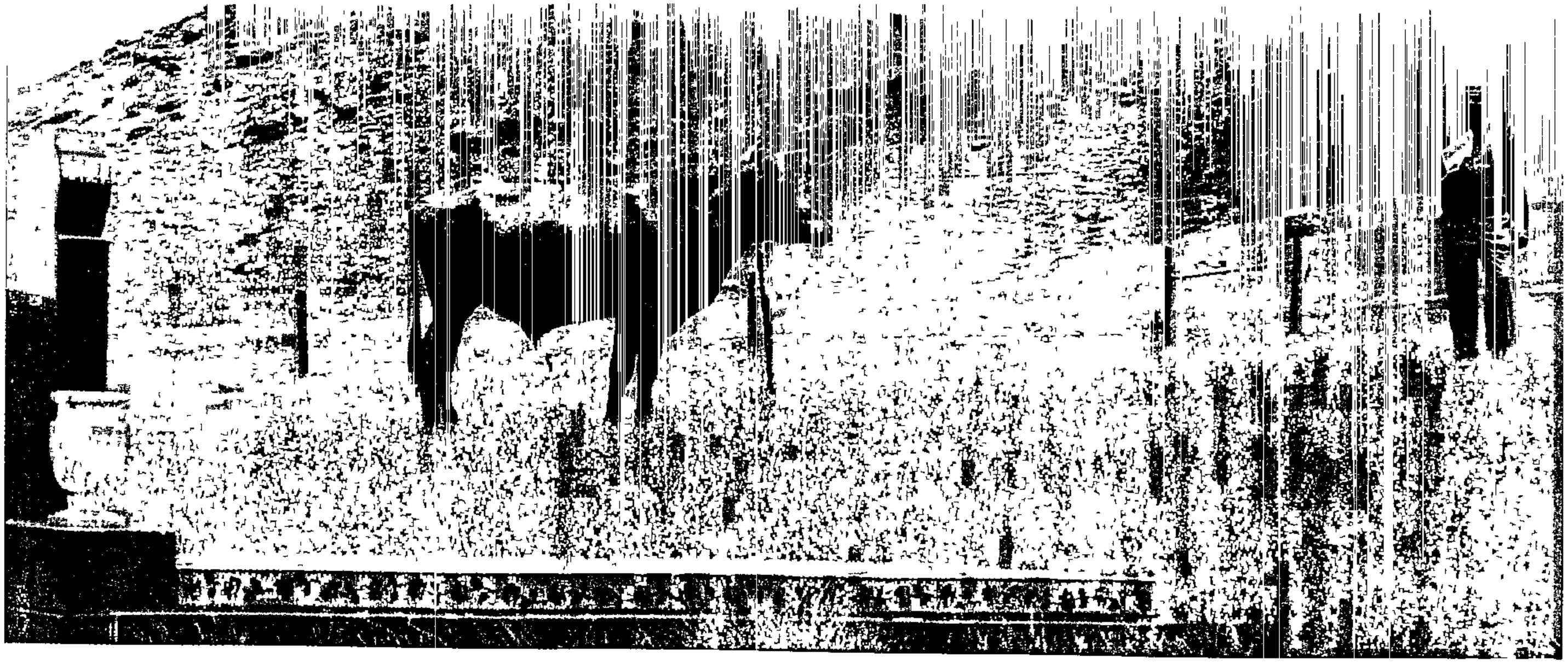
About 1 179 employees did not receive their salaries in September and 1 506 were retrenched in November

The assessment report expressed the fear that loss of income to the private sector because of decreased demand, and loss of public sector income (from rates and rent) could lead to a spiral of further job losses, higher unemployment and increased poverty. But many business people are resuming operations

The report has found that 397 businesses had restarted their operations in November Woolworths, Oxford Furnitures, Fraser's Blanket Wholesalers and a host of other privately owned business have resumed operations, while OK Bazaars is also expected to reopen soon. "At this stage it is still uncertain how many of the larger companies will actually be able to restart," the report said.

"While local businesses will be forced through necessity to make some effort to recover, and some will see opportunities to fill gaps left by closed businesses, South African companies may simply decide that the risks are too high."

Insurance cover was another issue impeding quick recovery Some insurance companies were reportedly refusing to pay on the grounds that the destruction caused had occurred during a war



Grave issue ... Chief Jerry Moshoeshoe of Mpherane district in the Eastern Cape stands next to an ox and grave-stone near the Lesotho border. The area has been hit by cross-border stock theft, resulting in the killing of three South African farmers who had apparently gone into Lesotho in an effort to retrieve stolen livestock. Police and community leaders have warned that a "full-scale" war might break out unless SA authorities beefed up security in the region

Conflict over cattle on Lesotho border 'becoming full-scale war'

(167) Star 18/12/98

By Phalane Motale
Mount Fletcher

Cross-border raids by South African and Basotho farmers becoming increasingly violent, resulting in over 70 deaths this year

Police and community leaders along Lesotho's southern border with the Eastern Cape have warned that "a full scale war" could break out on the border between Lesotho and the Eastern Cape unless the South African Government stepped up security in the area.

Stock theft related clashes between South African farmers and Basotho nationals in the Maluti and Mount Fletcher areas have resulted in more than 70 deaths so far this year.

Captain Nicholson Mlatha, Commander of the SAPS stock-theft unit in the area, described the situation as "volatile and explosive"

At least three South African farmers were killed during a cross-border attack to retrieve stolen cattle at the weekend.

Mlatha warned that more South Africans could become the victims of the skirmishes because the Lesotho Defence Force often violated international laws by shooting people on South African soil.

"In May this year four South Africans who went to retrieve their livestock were shot dead on South African soil by members of the Lesotho security forces," he said

He said Lesotho security forces were deployed within communities in Lesotho making easy targets of South Africans who crossed the border illegally

His views were supported by Chief Jerry Moshoeshoe of the Mpherane district, who is the co-chairperson of the South Africa-Lesotho liaison committee – a structure which was recently formed by stakeholders from both countries to monitor and advise on the situation.

Moshoeshoe claims that more than three farmers may have been killed at the weekend.

He said he had information that some members of the attacked group were still missing, and this means they could have been captured by Basotho

While Mlatha acknowledged that the two-way theft of livestock by South African and Basotho farmers was common, he said the phenomenon had taken a violent turn since 1994.

"Problems worsened in 1994 when more and more Basotho livestock crossed the border and grazed on South African soil.

"South Africans captured the animals, but later handed them over to their lawful owners," he said.

Mlatha said when more livestock regularly strayed into South Africa, the farmers decided to charge the Basotho for the illegal grazing.

He said the situation got of hand when the Basotho farmers allegedly crossed the border to retrieve their livestock, but refused to pay the fines imposed by the South Africans.

"To make matters worse, they even took livestock which belonged to the South Africans," he said.

South African and Basotho farmers decided to make their cross-border raids without police assistance, which resulted in the deaths of several members of the groups.

Mlatha recounted a string of killings of both South Africans and Basotho, and blamed organised-crime syndicates for the ongoing theft and killings. He also blamed the Government for inadequate resources, and bad conditions for those who do border patrols.

"If the Government does not intervene soon, the situation could soon turn into a full-scale war, especially if one considers that more than 70 SA and Basotho nationals have already died this year," said Mlatha.

SANDF to probe deaths of 3 soldiers found in Drakensberg

By Norman Chandler
Defence Correspondent

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has opened an inquiry into the deaths of three soldiers whose bodies have been found in the southern Drakensberg in the north-east Cape.

The soldiers were not part of the SANDF contingent serving with the SADC forces in Lesotho.

The deaths are also not related to the killing of three Mount Fletcher farmers who died during a firefight between 28 farmers and a Lesotho Defence Force patrol on the Lesotho side of the border last Saturday, the SANDF said yesterday.

The bodies of the soldiers, whose identities have not yet been released, were found by a helicopter crew 10 days ago after an extensive search when they failed to report back on a regular basis to their headquarters at Group 46 in Umtata.

Post-mortems carried out on the men had indicated that the soldiers died of exposure and that they had not suffered any wounds.

Incursion into Lesotho has cost taxpayers many millions

(167)

Discussions have started on how to share the cost of keeping the peace

24/12/98

By Norman Chandler
Defence Correspondent

The Lesotho armed incursion by South African and Botswana troops has cost taxpayers millions of rands, it was revealed yesterday.

So far, the cost has reached more than R30-million and is steadily rising as troops of the Southern African Development Community joint task force prepare to patrol the kingdom during the Christmas and New Year period

A total withdrawal of troops is not expected to take place until well into next year.

Discussions are now taking place between SADC, South Africa's departments of foreign affairs and defence, the Lesotho government and the Botswana government over dividing up the costs of the operation.

Disclosing details of the costs involved in the first 70 days of the action, the Ministry of Defence said the army alone had incurred expenditure of R23,6-million for the period between September 22 and November 30, while the South African Air Force's costs were R5-million and those of the SA Medical Health Services amounted to just more than R1,3-million.

Calculations of the costs incurred between December 1 and today are not yet available Colonel Puso Tladi, the ministry spokesperson, said costs included medical attention to soldiers from the Botswana Defence Force as well as injuries suffered by Lesotho Defence Force troops who were involved in a mutiny and an attempted coup which resulted in the incursion taking place

No sign of pullout from mountain kingdom

Personnel expenditure, such as salaries and special payments, had totalled R6-million, with administration costs for all three arms of the service reaching R5-million.

Feeding the troops had so far topped a whopping R10-million, with the cost of maintaining equipment and providing fuel for aircraft totalling more than R2-million.

Professional services, which covers legal, specialised medical attention and other assistance required for an exercise of this type, totals about R3,6-million

Hospitalisation of Botswana troops at 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein has cost R48 352, and R119 342 for Lesotho soldiers .

LESOTHO GENERAL

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Meeting the cost of Lesotho

POLITICAL STAFF AKG 23/11/98 (167)

Most of the extra R298-million which Finance Minister Trevor Manuel gave to the SANDF in his adjustments to this year's Budget yesterday will cover the cost of South Africa's incursion into Lesotho.

Other adjustments were.

■ An increased deficit of R2,2-billion, to a total of R25,9-billion, caused mainly by debt servicing costs.

■ An extra R1-billion for national government departments, including R100-million for the Independent Electoral Commission and bonuses of R195-million for SA Revenue Services staff.

■ The new Offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions gets R4,5-million

■ The Rail Commuter Corporation gets an extra R100million.

■ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission gets another R30-million.

■ The provinces get an extra R1,2-billion, of which R1-billion is for debt repayments and the rest for school text books.

SANDF critical of Lesotho foray

IN A brutally frank post-mortem on its foray into Lesotho, the South African National Defence Force claimed yesterday that the Government lacked a clear national security policy, and revealed that the units involved had not been combat ready

It also disclosed that the incursion, codenamed Operation Boleas, had cost R24 million to date

In a briefing to a joint sitting of Parliament's foreign affairs and defence portfolio committees in Cape Town, SANDF spokesmen also said the psychological and media war had been lost "at all levels", and blamed the Department of Foreign Affairs for a "lack" of operational coordination

"The weakness of Operation Boleas includes too short a time for proper planning in the absence of a contingency plan, and too short a time for deployment drills," the SANDF's joint operations chief, Lieutenant-General Deon Ferreira, told the committee

The briefing came as the first South African troops to be withdrawn from Lesotho crossed into home territory, and as Lesotho's national assembly debated the second reading of a Bill to set up an interim political authority including government and opposition representatives

SANDF chief General Siphiwe Nyanda told the committee that Operation Boleas – a Southern African Development Community operation carried out with the Botswana defence force – had cost the army over R24 million from September 22 to date

These costs included more than R6,2 million for personnel allowances, R1,3 for civilian transportation, and R2,7 million for air support services

Ferreira said the operation had depleted the army's already strained budget

Too little time had been allowed for planning, preparation and rehearsals by the soldiers involved, and the right people were not informed in time

"This resulted in insufficient support for the operation," he said

Participating units were not combat ready and stock level planning for operational reserves was not done, resulting in a strain on supplies

Nyanda said the troops were also keen to know from SADC what to do with confiscated Lesotho Defence Force weapons and ammunition, and how they should disarm the country's civilian population.

He said that despite all the problems they had experienced, the SADC troops had done "exceedingly well" in restoring law and order in Lesotho

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad, who is scheduled to address the National Assembly on Lesotho this afternoon, said the intervention had brought about a political agreement among Lesotho's rival political parties

An interim political authority could now prepare for fresh elections in the country, due within 18 months.

"But there is need for us to be vigilant of elements which may want to destabilise the mountain kingdom again," he told the committee.

Brigadier-General Solly Shoke, a member of the recently established Civilian Military Operations Centre, warned there were still many challenges before Lesotho could return to normality

These included illegal weapons in civilian hands, especially the youth, and the Lesotho government's lack of confidence in the country's security structures

The civil service was also overpoliticised

Shoke said although the situation in Lesotho was relatively stable, and that there was no immediate military threat, the number of illegal weapons in the wrong hands posed a security threat not only to Lesotho, but also to South Africa

Reacting to the briefing, the Democratic Party said it had failed to answer the question whether the action was necessary in the first place

"The briefing was not informed about any attempts to apply sanctions, which might have achieved stability without military intervention," DP spokesman Mr Douglas Gibson said after the meeting

The first of 800 South African troops to be withdrawn from duty in Lesotho left Maseru yesterday – *Sapa*

'SIX COUPS SINCE 1970'

Pahad lauds Lesotho intervention

DEPUTY FOREIGN Minister Aziz Pahad yesterday defended the intervention by the SADC in Lesotho and described the latest measures to stabilise that country, reports **ANDRE KOOPMAN** of the Parliamentary Bureau.

CT 4/11/98 (167)

DEPUTY Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad told the National Assembly that the government's decision to intervene in Lesotho was justified He also said that charges that SA soldiers had embarked on an orgy of rape, murder and looting during the mission were unsubstantiated

"Within weeks of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention and despite the prophets of doom and gloom, the Lesotho Parliament passed the Interim Political Authority Bill," he reported

In terms of this bill an Interim Authority — composed of two members each of the 12 political parties — will be established to prepare for the holding of general elections within 18 months. Its task will be to create and promote conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections and levelling the playing field for all political parties.

"This bill is a triumph for stability and democracy and it confirmed our view that unless the coup in Lesotho was ended and the security situation normalised, it would be impossible to deal with the political problems," Pahad said.

"The events of 1998 were no aberration. I wish to remind those who have short or selective memories that since 1970 there have been six coups in Lesotho.

"When the 1994 coup took place, the SADC strongly condemned it, and gave warning that in the post-Cold War period, we would act collectively to ensure that no coups against democratically elected governments would be tolerated.

Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa were mandated to act on behalf of the SADC to restore the democratically elected government. After intensive negotiations and the threat of military intervention by SADC forces, the democratically elected government was restored to power and the soldiers returned to their barracks, he said

At that time it was clear that the army and police were highly politicised and hostile to the government led by the Basotho Congress Party and that long-term stability and democracy demanded that, with the assistance of SADC, steps be taken to create a professional army and police force, Pahad said.

In 1996 a new Defence Act was passed in an attempt to create such a professional army Before this process could be fully implemented, junior officers carried out another coup in September.

Boy Geldenhuys (NP), said the intervention had caused South Africa's "image as a peace broker immeasurable harm".

Stanley Mogoba of the PAC said the government handled an "awkward situation with tolerance and care".

Intervention in Lesotho defended

Wyndham Hartley (167)

CAPE TOWN — Government and opposition parties clashed again yesterday when Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad briefed the National Assembly on developments in Lesotho since the SA Development Community-led military intervention in the kingdom in September BD 4/11/98

Pahad again lashed out at opposition parties for their criticism of the intervention, and told the assembled MPs that the operation had allowed Lesotho's parliament to approve the Interim Political Authority Bill, which will set in place a shared authority for the country "despite the prophets of doom and gloom"

"This bill is a triumph for stability and democracy, and it confirmed our view that unless the coup in Lesotho was ended and the security situation normalised, it would be impossible to deal with the political problems," Pahad said

African National Congress (ANC) MP Tony Yengeni said the Democratic Party (DP) had supported cross-border raids into Lesotho by the National Party (NP) apartheid government, which had killed innocent people NP MP Boy Geldenhuys said negotiations for "the interim authority should have come before the military intervention", as a means to resolve the political impasse in Lesotho.

DP leader Tony Leon charged that it was outrageous for ANC politicians who were out of the country at the time of the intervention to accuse opposition MPs, who at least were home then, of being unpatriotic

He said government was to blame because it had failed to take the opposition parties into its confidence He said he had found out about the invasion from the radio It then took days for government to tell opposition parties what was going on

SA soldiers bitter about pay for Lesotho action

BD 9/10/11/98 (167)

SA NATIONAL Defence Force soldiers who were part of the Lesotho military intervention are bitter about their payment for restoring order to the kingdom.

Speaking from 111 Infantry Battalion headquarters in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, at the weekend, the soldiers said they were paid only R627 for the 11 days they spent in Lesotho. "We risked our lives fighting for politicians and settling their scores, but we get peanuts in return," said one "The government claims there is not enough money while the politicians drive around with the most expensive vehicles and live in luxury," he said.

Lt Braam Benecke, who was the 111 Infantry Battalion commander in Lesotho, said his unit was the most successful during the invasion as all 132 soldiers returned home without being injured or killed, without losing any of their firearms and without having any accidents. "I am very proud of the unit If we need to return to Lesotho I would take the same soldiers again "

But all was not glory for the soldiers An army corporal, Mthetheleli Mafane, told how the Basotho people accused Southern African Development Community soldiers of being murders and troublemakers "Most Basotho people did not like us, they even accused us of shooting their brothers and relatives," he said

"We went to Lesotho for peace, not war We did not only leave behind burnt down shops, but also hope and stability for the Basotho people " — AENS.

Troika's mission to Lesotho a lesson in conflict resolution

(167) PD 12/11/98

The Southern African Development Community's intervention in Lesotho has thrown up some lessons for the organisation's conflict resolution structures, writes associate editor John Dludlu

THE military intervention of the Southern African Development Community in Lesotho has generated so much criticism that it is difficult for anyone inside the SADC or Pretoria, its chair, to publicly defend it, let alone draw lessons from it

Public outcry within the media and from the Lesotho opposition alliance appears to have also silenced a rigorous inquiry into the exercise

Instead, the intervention, which is now generally known as "SA's invasion", has produced instant military analysts — today, it is accepted as fact that the campaign was a military bungle despite defensive statements from government

It is true the intervention was botched up in military terms It is also undisputed that the extended SADC troika — comprising SA, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and lately Mozambique — lost the propaganda war to the Lesotho opposition alliance and the SA opposition parties There is no reason why the forces did not explain their mission on the radio when they moved in.

The emotive nature of the public debate that followed the intervention of SADC forces — SA and Botswana troops took part, while Zimbabwe stood ready — ensured that one crucial dimension to the saga was lost· that is, what lessons does the intervention bring for the SADC's conflict resolution capacity

Unlike the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where three SADC countries (Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola) have sent troops to help Laurent Kabila's government against rebels, with an unclear SADC mandate, the intervention in Lesotho enjoyed a unified SADC mandate Apart from criticism from legal and academic circles, no SADC member state has publicly questioned it, says Horst Brammer, who heads the SADC desk in SA's foreign affairs department

The mandate of the SADC troika arose from the 1994 SADC intervention in Lesotho by the same troika presidents when King Letsie III ousted Ntsu Mokhehle, then prime minister, and dissolved government

The three SADC leaders then became guarantors of peace in



MUFAMADI

Lesotho Naturally, when trouble erupted again after the Lesotho opposition had disputed the May election outcome, it seemed logical for the troika to seek a solution.

The dispute did not look like it could be resolved internally as the political parties — the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, on the one hand, and the opposition alliance, on the other — could not see eye to eye and the country's constitution confined Letsie to being a virtual spectator in the crisis.

Interestingly, the intervention also saw Zimbabwe and SA, now widely seen to be rivals for the region's leadership, acting jointly. Though Zimbabwe did not commit soldiers to Lesotho, it publicly supported SA.

Brammer says the crisis also strengthened the case for an SADC conflict resolution structure. Unfortunately, disagreements over the status and its relationship to the SADC of the "organ for security and politics" have made it impossible for it to function Differences, which emerged last year chiefly between SA's President Mandela, the SADC's chair, and Zimbabwean counterpart Robert Mugabe, the organ's chair, on whether the structure has to operate at summit level — that is, hold a separate summit from that of the SADC — have yet to be resolved

Three presidents — Mozambican Joaquim Chissano, Malawian Bakili Muluzi and Namibian Sam Nujoma — were asked earlier this year to suggest a solution.

That the "organ" was not discussed at the recent SADC Mauritius summit has strengthened the belief that the differences are seen as personal in some quarters, though the two men have repeatedly denied this. Mandela's retirement should allow a new leader to resolve the matter without personality clashes

In the meantime, foreign ministers from the three-nation task team have suggested that the "organ" should be reduced to, say five countries, out of the 14 SADC members, which will rotate in trouble shooting The "organ" will remain an integral SADC institution with no veto power, say informed officials

Apart from resolving the problem of dual summiteering, a five-nation outfit will have more flexibility to act What is instructive about the Lesotho intervention and the above proposal on the "organ" is how effective a streamlined conflict resolution structure could be.

Of course, this should not mean that the five countries should be permanently saddled with the financial burden of trouble-shooting If the need for SADC-wide military reinforcements should arise, other member states should comply.

Another lesson from Lesotho is that military intervention should not mean an end to diplomatic efforts Soon after the return of stability, Sydney Mufamadi, Mandela's Safety and Security Minister who led the SADC's extended troika, insisted on talks each time there were setbacks in the peace process.

If pursued, this dual strategy should ensure that the SADC's future conflict resolution structure is not used to advance blind solidarity among leaders — never mind how they came into power. This should ensure that legitimate concerns find outlets for expression and sovereignty of members is respected.



HANNES THIART

and President Mandela after talks at Genadendal yesterday

Mufamadi seeks to break Lesotho logjam

Talks tackle row over detainees

(167) ARG 20/11/98

FOREIGN SERVICE

Johannesburg – Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi will meet Lesotho opposition parties today to try to resolve a dispute over arrested army mutineers and other dissidents which is delaying moves towards new elections.

This follows a meeting with the Lesotho government in Pretoria on Wednesday to discuss the issue

The row is stalling the launch of a multi-party interim authority to prepare for new elections by April 2000

In Maseru today, Mr Mufamadi will meet representatives of the opposition alliance, who this week refused to attend a meeting at the offices of the SA High Commission in Maseru to form a joint committee to create the Interim Political Authority (IPA)

They insisted the SA Government should first make the Lesotho government withdraw security measures against their supporters in the wake of the military intervention

Opposition alliance spokeswoman Mamello Morrison said six opposition youth leaders were "in exile" in South Africa after the Lesotho government had issued warrants for their arrest. Another might have died in policy custody.

She alleged civil servants sympathetic to the opposition were being victimised, 36 soldiers were still being held at the maximum security prison for mutiny and 13 others were charged with a range of offences including attempted murder

"Over 200 employees of the Maseru City Council have been fired without their benefits, and we are aware that plans are going ahead to fire some staff from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which owns Radio and TV Lesotho, along with the Lesotho News Agency," she said

"The IPA is our structure We fought for it and we cannot jettison it now. We want it in place, but we are not willing to have it unless all procedures agreed for its setup have been complied with "

A senior Government source said South Africa was trying to persuade both sides to be flexible on the issue

It was trying to convince the Lesotho government that it should find ways of eliciting the support of the opposition in creating stability and normality in Lesotho, but was also trying to persuade the opposition that at some point the "culture of impunity" for crimes had to end, the source said

Lesotho premier thanks SADC

(167) CT 20/11/98

ROGER FRIEDMAN and BENNY GOOL
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS TEAM

LESOTHO'S Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili met President Nelson Mandela at Genadendal yesterday, primarily to convey his government's gratitude for South Africa's recent military intervention to restore law and order in the kingdom.

Mosisili said he wanted to thank the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in general, and the governments and people of South Africa and Botswana in particular

-He also briefed Mandela on the process in Lesotho to establish a multi-party interim political authority (IPA), which will pave the way for democratic elections within 18 months

An upbeat Mosisili told journalists after the meeting "All that remains is to launch the IPA and leave it to complete its assignment"

In response to a question, however, the prime minister conceded that the IPA had already run into problems

He dismissed opposition alliance demands that suspected defence force mutineers be unconditionally released from detention as a precondition for their participation in the IPA "I cannot imagine that any responsible leader would say that law-breakers should not be brought to book That is unthinkable," he said

Said Mosisili: "As a government and as the ruling party, our view is that absolutely nothing should be allowed to derail the process"

Mandela was questioned about the transfer to Pretoria of KwaZulu-Natal attorney-general Tim McNally, and the resignation from Parliament next year of Transport Minister Mac Maharaj

The president said McNally, who is unhappy about being transferred to the Pretoria office of National Director of Prosecutions, Bulelani Ngcuka, had made certain proposals that could facilitate an early settlement of the matter

Mandela also dismissed the idea that Maharaj's decision was because he did not get on with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, saying that their relationship was in fact very good

Insurers refuse to cover Lesotho riot damage

(167)

Lack of funds, council laws set to delay Maseru's reconstruction

Star 20/11/98

By Raphael Banda

Insurers have repudiated 80% of claims arising from the destruction of the Lesotho capital Maseru during rioting two months ago.

The repudiations, together with the Maseru council's insistence that developers now build multistorey buildings, threaten to delay the reconstruction of the devastated city.

Lesotho's two main insurance companies, Alliance Insurance and Lesotho National Insurance Group (LNIG), have rejected most claims for damages which resulted from rioting after Southern African Development Community troops invaded the country in September.

Damage was estimated at about R2-billion, many of the businesses hit being owned by South Africans

The LNIG has told policyholders they were not covered for damage caused by war, invasion, the act of a foreign enemy, civil war or popular uprising

About 70 claims were received, LNIG officials said.

In addition, landowners and developers are angry at the Maseru City Council's order that rebuilding efforts be halted because they do not fit in with the city's development plans.

The authorities have applied for a High Court interdict against those proceeding with their own rebuilding plans

The council decided to implement the Maseru Development Plan, approved in 1991 – which seeks to turn Maseru into a modern city with multistorey buildings But landowners argue that there is no legislation in place for the implementation of the plan

A source said furniture chainstore Ellerines was taking the council to court after it was ordered to stop trading from a store that had been rebuilt.

The Lesotho Crisis Committee, which includes members of the local chamber of commerce, is set to meet with council officials today to discuss the interdict Business leaders said they wanted to impress upon the authorities the financial constraints facing businesses.

Meanwhile, a team from the World Bank has visited Maseru to assess damage and see how it can assist

"The evaluation has been completed and a report, including proposals on reconstruction, has been submitted to the government of Lesotho and is currently awaiting their reaction," said Ian du Toit of the company Group Five, which has been involved in evaluating damage to buildings in Maseru and other border towns

Lesotho dams project is of huge benefit to its citizens

Star 21/11/98 (167)

Graeme Addison has it all wrong In his article "A case of dam it and be damned" (*Saturday Star,* November 7) he contends the military intervention in Lesotho had to do with protecting Katse Dam from sabotage.

Our military intervention had nothing to do with water It had everything to do with meeting our obligations to a friendly ally facing a coup, restoring peace and order, and helping to restore discipline in the Lesotho Defence Force The reference to "wars over water" is misplaced and malicious

South Africa does not need to go to Lesotho to get Orange River water. We could in fact wait for it to run across the border and pump it into a canal across the Free State. But it makes more sense to tap the water where it can flow down to the Vaal under gravity, than to ask Eskom to burn coal to generate electricity to pump it uphill Thus South Africa saves money The royalties, which will make a substantial contribution to Lesotho's income, are calculated on the basis of savings made

In reality there is very good co-operation between South Africa and the government of Lesotho on water matters

Addison should come clean about his interest – he is now national administrator of the Southern African Rivers Association, a pressure group linked to the International Rivers Network, which is co-ordinating anti-dam campaigns worldwide.

Seasonal rain

Addison is one of the implacable opponents of dams who seem to have lost touch with reality To them all dams are bad news They overlook a very significant characteristic of our part of the globe we experience seasonal rain, causing occasional floods during one season Unless the floodwater is stored for use during the drier periods, there is no way that normal life and economic growth can be sustained Those responsible for resource development should carefully select the dam sites and ensure that negative impacts are minimised and mitigated

To present me as "an avid promoter of big dams" takes no account of the fact that I follow a policy of major restraint over dams, and my objectives have always favoured small and micro-schemes. Look at the hundreds of schemes throughout South Africa which, in less than five years, have brought water to nearly 3 million people.

In the case of the Katse Dam, leading environmentalists have stated that never before in Africa had so much attention been given to the natural environmental aspects The negative social impacts of the Katse Dam have been grossly overemphasised by opponents of the project, while a myriad positive impacts are comfortably ignored

Only 26 households were involuntarily resettled Another 41 households voluntarily requested to be resettled All have certified that they are completely satisfied after resettlement All the families are being assisted

Thousands of other households were marginally affected, but all will be provided with an upgraded water supply and better access roads The development has also brought new opportunities in tourism and trading

Katse Dam will not impoverish Lesotho, but will ensure constant revenue that, because of conditions set by the World Bank, will provide money for development projects throughout Lesotho Thus 9 000 job opportunities have been created, apart from the 23 000 man-years of jobs provided by Phase 1A of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

Addison is correct when he says there is growing world opposition to large dams The supply-side option is always easiest, and it is definitely not unknown for potential dam developers to cook the books

When I became the minister responsible for the LHWP, I insisted on a complete review of all aspects Policy was changed to ensure that people affected would be better off

Our policy requires thorough investigation into water conservation programmes



Thorough investigation precedes approval for any new big dam project in South Africa, writes **PROFESSOR KADER ASMAL**, Minister of Water Affairs

prior to approval for the building of new dams

As chairperson of the World Commission on Dams, I have indicated that I require a consensus report on the issues Members of the commission have been carefully selected to represent various interest groups

Perhaps the best proof of the soundness of policies and decision-making was the outcome of the recent attempts by pressure groups to postpone implementation of Phase 1B of the LHWP

The protests were not "brushed aside", as Addison suggests An independent group from the World Bank Inspectorate critically reviewed the LHWP designs of the environmental programmes as well as the water con-

River catchment. The outcome was overwhelming approval of the programmes and a commendation on their advanced status

Addison is quite wrong when he says dam builders have no ideas for the future. We have just formed a Directorate· Water Conservation with the specific brief to further these approaches In addition, the National Water Conservation Campaign is busy with demand management through tariffs, creative and informative billing; schools education programmes, and also water conservation (Working for Water Programme) Apart from creating jobs and fostering indigenous growth, it seeks to increase catchment runoff by eradicating high-water-use vegetation

Addison is equally wrong when he says we have ignored sustainability The National Water Policy and the National Water Act have as their cornerstones equity of access to water, and sustainable use of water. The revolutionary concept of a reserve – as far as I know unique in water laws of the world – guarantees that water for basic human needs and for the maintenance of ecological functioning will receive first priority in making allocations The resource classification system and resource quality objectives will recognise that certain rivers – wild and scenic – will require and receive special levels of protection.

Consultations

The policy and the legislation were the result of extensive consultations The act also requires us to consult with the public on just about everything we intend to do – particularly in respect of the National Water Resource Strategy, in which we must *inter alia* set out our actions intended to meet future water needs, which will include details of plans for dams.

Environmental impact assessments (including social issues) are required by the Environmental Conservation Act, which requirement is reinforced in the Water Act.

Addison's suggested desalination of seawater is possible, but it's very expensive, because of the high power requirements.

It has been estimated that a plant to supply about half of the Cape Town metropole's needs would need a 50% extension to Koeberg nuclear power station It was not considered acceptable because of the environmental impacts (In the end, Cape Town embarked on a water demand management campaign)

A final note may amuse your readers. Graeme Addison is organiser of the proposed Vaal River Rodeo next year He is telling the world that "due to the major water transfer schemes from the Tugela and Lesotho, the Vaal has become one of the most reliable watersports rivers in the country – sufficient water flow can be assured to ensure wild water action"

Dams and schemes ensure not just wild-water rafting but also fundamental activities – industry, farming, to say nothing of the



SA National Defence Force members in Lesotho earlier this year. Picture TREVOR SAMSON

Lesotho intervention raises multiple issues

BD 26/11/98 (169)

SA should admit to blunder, writes **Greg Mills**

WILLIE Hofmeyr is accurate when he admits that "issues of serious debate (over the Southern African Development Community intervention in Lesotho) remain" (SA met letter and spirit of law, November 20) Yet he fails to clarify a number of questions raised by my article (Business Day, October 28) on the subject of the questionable legality and modus operandi of the SA military intervention into the mountain kingdom

First, Hofmeyr attempts to rationalise the intervention on the basis not of the various United Nations articles covering such action, but rather as a result of an international obligation arising out of a request from the Lesotho defence minister in terms of provisions within the kingdom's Defence Act for, as he puts it, "foreign military aid"

As he fails to spell this out, one can only guess that he is referring to section 7 of the Lesotho Defence Act dealing with "attachments and secondments to other military forces", which states "The minister may accept for duty members of other military forces on such terms and conditions as the minister may determine "

Yet this SADC force was hardly attached to the Lesotho Defence Force, and certainly not under its command

Second, although we seem to concur that something needed to be done about the situation in Lesotho, it is on the means that we disagree

Hofmeyr dismisses the option of using a blockade to forestall an apparently imminent military coup in Lesotho on the grounds that this would have been considered as "an act of aggression in international law"

Presumably if this act had been carried out with the support of the Lesotho government and led to the peaceful resolution of the conflict, then it could hardly have been considered "aggressive"

In the light of the intelligence failure which led to troops being sent in under orders to use blanks and not live ammunition, one should question, too, the nature and breadth of the consultative process leading to the dismissal of the blockade alternative which "would probably have worsened instability in Lesotho"

Third, he fails to provide the necessary answers as to why precise contingencies normally associated with such military intervention (such as prior notification to international agencies) were not carried out

He does claim that prior agreement on the status of forces and rules of engagement was concluded with the Lesotho government, though this assertion is not shared by other government officials within the relevant SA ministries. Who should we believe?

Fourth, he contradicts those within his own party who have stated that the action was made on the basis of prior agreement between SADC members and not as the result of a request for assistance President Nelson Mandela himself is reported as saying that the troops were acting under an agreement among African nations not to allow coups to take place (Business Day, September 25) Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi is also reported (Business Day, September 22) as stating that "the position in the SADC on coups is well known — they are not tolerated"

Finally, one would have expected better of Hofmeyr than to play the man rather than the ball — through a tactic perhaps to be anticipated of a spin doctor representing a government which has already attempted to deflect criticism of the intervention by labelling it "treacherous" A more honest response from government could have been to admit its mistakes and to take steps to ensure these would not be repeated. He notes that "in strong contrast to Mills and some other SA academics and institutes which hold similar views " the international community has shown support and understanding for SA's position

One wonders whether this sentiment is shared by those Lesotho citizens whose properties and livelihoods have been destroyed by the violence of a hastily planned and poorly executed military action?

□ *Mills is national director of the SA Institute of International Affairs He writes in his personal capacity*

Threat to Lesotho dam project

ET (BR) 26/11/98 (167)

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

Johannesburg — The World Bank has delayed signing, and effectively threatened to withdraw, a loan agreement to provide finance for phase 1b of the $1,5 billion Lesotho Highlands Water Project until compensation claims by highland villagers and project governance issues are resolved, sources close to the project said yesterday

But Bank and project officials said there was no chance of the Bank pulling out of the project

The R10 billion development carries water from the Lesotho Highlands into the Vaal river system to supply Gauteng

Phase 1b of the project entails the construction of a second dam and additional tunnels to increase the water supply from 18m³ a second to 30m³ a second at a projected cost of $1,5 billion

The $45 million World Bank loan was approved in June this year Well-informed sources said the Bank had presented a list of additional conditions before the loan could be signed

These included the appointment of Bank-approved personnel to development teams in the highlands, the submission of a plan to ensure the compensation of all villagers affected by the project and the construction of new housing for villagers whose houses were damaged or destroyed in phase 1a of the project

The list of additional conditions contradicts numerous statements by the South African government over the past months that outstanding compensation claims have been attended to.

The Bank's ultimatum is the second in just more than two years It previously threatened to withdraw its support unless the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority attended to the backlog of compensation claims

Although the $45 million loan is trivial in relation to the total size of the project, it indicates to other investors the soundness of the project

Fani Zulu, a World Bank spokesman, said yesterday that there were outstanding issues to be resolved but "we are definitely going ahead"

George van der Merwe, a spokesman for the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority, which manages South Africa's funding of the project, said a signing of the loan was expected within weeks

Lesotho parties walk out

BD 20/11/99(167)

MASERU — Fourteen of the 24 members of Lesotho's Interim Political Authority walked out of a meeting in Maseru yesterday morning The members blamed the deteriorating security situation in the country for the walkout

They claimed Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili's government was neglecting the security problem

Alliance spokesman Vincent Malebo said he wanted SA Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi to arrange mediation by the Southern African Development Community on security

Those who walked out included members of the Sefate Democratic Union, and Lesotho Labour, United Democratic, Basotho National, MaremaTlou Freedom, Basotholand Congress and Lesotho Education parties

"It's only a matter of hours before the remaining members of other parties suspend their participation in the interim authority," Malebo said

He said he spoke to Mosisili about the condition of detained Lesotho soldiers, who are appearing before a court martial for their alleged involvement in a mutiny in September last year, but the prime minister was not interested in the matter

Malebo claimed that several members of the opposition alliance had been arrested and more arrests could follow

He said the walkout was also prompted by the absence of ministers from the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy

"LCD members have not been attending the IPA meeting for a while Maybe we can pardon (them) for nonattendance during preparations for the funeral of the late prime minister, Dr Ntsu Mokhehle But now that he was buried last week, we don't understand their reason for not coming to the meeting.

"Their next excuse will be that . as ministers they have been in meetings at the government complex, but this is not helpful to the deteriorating security situation We cannot conclude anything without the participation of LCD members," Malebo said

Comment from the ruling party was not immediately available because of a cabinet meeting — Sapa

14 defy Lesotho's interim authority

FOURTEEN of the 24 members of Lesotho's Interim Political Authority yesterday morning walked out of an IPA meeting in Maseru, citing the deteriorating security situation in the country as the reason

They claimed prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili's government was neglecting the security problem

Alliance spokesman Mr Vincent Malebo said he wanted South Africa's Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufamadi to arrange mediation by the Southern African Development Community over the security situation

Those who walked out included members of the Sefate Democratic Union, Lesotho Labour Party, United Democratic Party, Basotho National Party, MaremaTlou Freedom Party, Basotholand Congress Party and Lesotho Education Party

"It's only a matter of hours before the remaining members of other parties suspend their participation in the IPA," Malebo said

He said he spoke to Mosisili about the condition of detained Lesotho soldiers, who are appearing before a court martial for their alleged involvement in a mutiny in September last year

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"LCD members have not been attending the IPA meeting for a while Maybe we can pardon for non-attendance during preparations for the funeral Dr Ntsu Mokhehle

Comment from the LCD was not available because of a cabinet meeting — *Sapa*

Lesotho simmers once again

(167) M+G 22-28/1/99

Sechaba ka'Nkosi
reports that Lesotho's fragile peace is at stake



Making a stand: Opposition supporters demonstrate outside Maseru Maximum prison, where the trial of 50 soldiers charged with mutiny is taking place. PHOTOGRAPH: NADINE HUTTON

Lesotho is teetering on the brink of another crisis as relations among political parties in the Independent Political Authority (IPA) reached an all-time low this week.

The impasse between the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and opposition parties has cast doubts about the country s ability to hold a meaningful general election within 18 months from November — the period agreed to last year under the auspices of the South African led troika.

Last September, the South African and Botswana defence forces inter vened after junior Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) officers forced their superiors to resign The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Pakalitha Mosisili, has since charged 50 soldiers with mutiny

Their trial, which is being held at Maseru Maximum prison, has sparked the latest political crisis. This week prominent human rights lawyers and the opposition used it to highlight abuses in the country and expose continuing differences between the army's top brass and its junior ranks.

Violence was narrowly averted on Tuesday when supporters of the trialists and defence force personnel faced each other during ongoing demonstrations outside the prison. Unconfirmed reports claim two people were injured — one seriously — when LDF members fired shots to disperse a crowd outside the prison gates.

The judge attorney at the tribunal and a former chief justice of Lesotho Brendan Cullinan acknowledged there were reports of continuing intimidation of the members of the prosecution team by armed youths in Maseru. Some are alleged to have received death threats

This week the country's fragile peace talks suffered a severe blow when the opposition announced it was suspending its participation in the IPA because of the deteriorating security situation in the country

Sources say the step is in line with a multi pronged strategy aimed at mobilising public sympathy and junior officers behind the accused, and thereby challenging the government's insistence that the court martial should be seen as separate from the political upheaval that erupted in the country last year

Attorneys representing the accused unexpectedly announced their withdrawal from the case on Monday objecting to the trial being held in a prison — and therefore in a restricted area — and the prosecuting authorities' refusal to recognise the trial as political.

The defence argued that the attitude of the military authorities since the tribunal began in December has been a political witch-hunt aimed at removing certain officers from the army

Minutes after the attorneys' withdrawal, the accused burst out of the building to toyi-toyi outside, denouncing the tribunal and claiming they cannot be charged by the chief of the LDF whom they had ousted, and who therefore had a conflict of interest.

They attempted to take over the prison and in the confusion one of the suspected coup ringleaders escaped.

The final offensive against the LCD say sources is being planned by the youth sections of the opposition parties led by the influential Basotholand National Party (BNP) This includes mobilising members of the opposition to return to King Letsie III's palace to stage vigils until their demands are met.

This could draw the country back to where it was in September when Mosisili s regime was so overwhelmed by popular demonstrations that it effectively ceased to operate at the time.

The discontent now follows suspicions that the government has embarked on an all-out offensive to use the trial to crush its opponents and undermine the IPA ahead of the proposed election.

A few days after the IPA was established, the only opposition member of Parliament, Mothepu Mothae of the BNP was temporarily suspended on suspicion of having been part of opposition demonstrations against the government.

Permanent secretaries — equivalent to director generals in South Africa — suspected of sympathising with the opposition have been served notices advising them that their employment with the government is no longer secured.

On Tuesday security forces temporary closed down the BNP's headquarters. No reasons were offered by the authorities for the move

There have also been reports of security forces interfering with meetings organised by opposition parties.

Says Vincent Malebu of the opposition alliance "This is jtist but one of many tactics of the LCD to intimidate us from participating freely in Basotho politics."

Since its inception seven weeks ago, the IPA has received neither funds nor offices from the government and is unable to perform its key functions IPA chair Deborah Raditapole said it exists in name only

Although Raditapole conceded that the IPA was the only structure in which the opposition could influence politics, she said the LCD government had refused to grant the authority any resources to implement its mandate despite numerous appeals by its members

"The government agreed to help in setting up the IPA Yet up till now, we do not have any funds, support structure or offices. In 18 months, we are still expected to recommend on policy matters such as the security situation and technicalities such as guidelines on the Independent Electoral Commission. As things stand right now that looks utterly impossible," says Raditapole.

It has now emerged that the army s top brass and the LCD allegedly ignored advice from senior aides in the troika to refrain from prosecuting the alleged coup plotters until political negotiations with the opposition were in motion.

However, sources say the army and the government decided to go ahead to send a warning to other officers who may be tempted to overthrow the senior ranks and replace them with their own preferences.

The LCD and the army's top brass are said to be determined to use the tribunal to stamp their authority over the army

The opposition, on the other hand, is using the trial to highlight its frustrations with the IPA, following the government s refusal to see the authority off the ground nearly two months after it was inaugurated.

Amnesty hits at 'inhumane' Lesotho

(167)

ARG 22/11/99

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – Amnesty International has condemned Lesotho authorities for failing to address "inhumane" conditions at a maximum security prison in Maseru where 50 soldiers are held over the September mutiny

The international secretariat yesterday challenged the credibility of the court martial established to try the soldiers, saying its composition did not meet international standards for independence and impartiality

But sources in the Lesotho Defence Force said senior officials in the military were angry at what they perceived as Amnesty International's double standards

They said the deteriorating jail conditions "were not yesterday's creation or of the making of the defence force" and that the question should be posed to the Department of Justice and the government

The sources said that although senior officials were sympathetic to the plight of the soldiers, because of the unbearable condition of jails, Amnesty International should be careful not to vilify the military, which had nothing to do with prison conditions

The protest by the imprisoned soldiers earlier this week, which saw them refusing to return to their cells, was suppressed by the combined Lesotho, South Africa and Botswana military forces

After an inspection, a court-martial judge noted that the cells were infested by scorpions and other insects,and lacked ventilation, light, proper bedding and adequate sanitation facilities He concluded that the prison conditions were inhumane

Amnesty said its delegation found similar conditions when it interviewed 33 detained soldiers in October – Reuters

Lesotho opposition makes fresh calls for removal of troops

(167) BD 22/1/99

John Dludlu,
Candi Ratabane Ramainoane and Reuter

DIVISIONS among Lesotho's political parties continued to deepen yesterday as the opposition alliance returned to the country's interim political authority with fresh calls for the withdrawal of foreign troops

Following this week's walkout by opposition representatives in the authority — the multiparty body tasked with preparing the country for a new election — the alliance returned with a list of demands, including the withdrawal of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) troops

However, Foreign Minister Tom Thabane said the government would not accede to the opposition demand that the SADC troops — made up of SA and Botswana soldiers — should be withdrawn "They (opposition) are messing up the country and the (soldiers) are helping us put together the country", he said, accusing the opposition of wanting to make the country ungovernable

A regular meeting of government and the SADC troops is due next week

The SADC troops were deployed at the request of the Lesotho government last September after fears of an imminent coup amid demonstrations by supporters of the opposition The demonstrations at the king's palace followed complaints that the election in May last year was rigged

Vincent Malebo, an opposition spokesman, made clear yesterday that the return did not mean the alliance was now happy

The withdrawal by opposition representatives from the authority, which coincided with the resumption of the trial of alleged mutineers this week, was aimed at registering their complaints that the Lesotho government was taking the authority for granted

The demands by the opposition included the passage of the budget and provision of facilities to enable them to carry out their duties in the authority

However, sharp differences exist on the scale of remuneration for the interim authority while the opposition wants to be paid the same salaries as government ministers, the government, arguing that these parties are not elected, said they should be paid salaries equal to those of nominated senators

Meanwhile, Amnesty International warned yesterday that inhumane conditions at a Lesotho prison, where 50 soldiers charged with mutiny are jailed, were exacerbating tension in the southern African kingdom

"Amnesty International is concerned at the failure of the Lesotho authorities to take steps to improve the inhumane condition where 50 soldiers, facing court martial and possible death sentences, have been held for up to three months," the human rights body said

"These unresolved issues are leading to increased tensions in Lesotho and the possibility of further human rights violations," it said

There was drama on Monday when soldiers seized guns from their military guard in prison and took hostages in protest against prison conditions and the holding of their court martial within the prison complex

Separately, wives of the 50 soldiers accused of trying to topple the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy last September, have made an urgent court application for the trial to be moved elsewhere The trial, under the country's Defence Act, was due to resume today following the withdrawal of defence lawyers in protest against the trial being held in the prison

NE



FREE FOR ALL *Looters grab what they can as they strip bare shops and businesses in Lesotho's capital Maseru on September 23 last year. Insurance companies, as well as the SA and Lesotho governments, now face compensation claims for about R2,5bn*
PHOTO REUTERS

Lesotho businesses to sue for R2,5bn in riot damage

ET(BR) 25/1/99 (167)

TERRY BELL

Maseru — The South African and Lesotho governments and several insurance companies are about to face compensation claims worth about R2,5 billion.

"The first summonses will go out within the next two to three weeks," said lawyer Steve Buys, the convenor of the legal team representing nearly 300 business people whose premises were looted, burned and otherwise destroyed during the riots in Maseru last September. The claims will be heard in the Lesotho High Court.

The Lesotho National Insurance Group's General Insurance Company, one of the two local insurance companies involved, has repudiated all claims. The other, the Insurance Company Alliance, has paid out all political riot claims Underwriters Lloyds of London have also agreed to pay out those businesses insured against political riot.

But this affects only a minority of the businesses because coverage for political riots only became available in Lesotho last year, just months before large sections of the central business district were gutted by mobs

"Very few people had added this provision to their policies," said Buys, "but then there are many who were underinsured or not insured at all."

This group, which includes several Basotho street traders, will claim compensation for negligence from both the Lesotho and South African governments

Among those preparing to claim from insurance companies is one large store that was burned down two days after the rioting when a petrol bomb was thrown through a window.

"This, we think, should be covered by the arson provision in the policy," said Buys

But the insurance companies have lumped together all businesses damaged during the week after the South African-led military intervention as casualties of "political riot", which is defined as a riot with a political motivation or having a political goal.

"That's not the point. It's the amounts involved that has got the insurance companies running for cover," said one businessman who has begun rebuilding and restocking his store using borrowed money

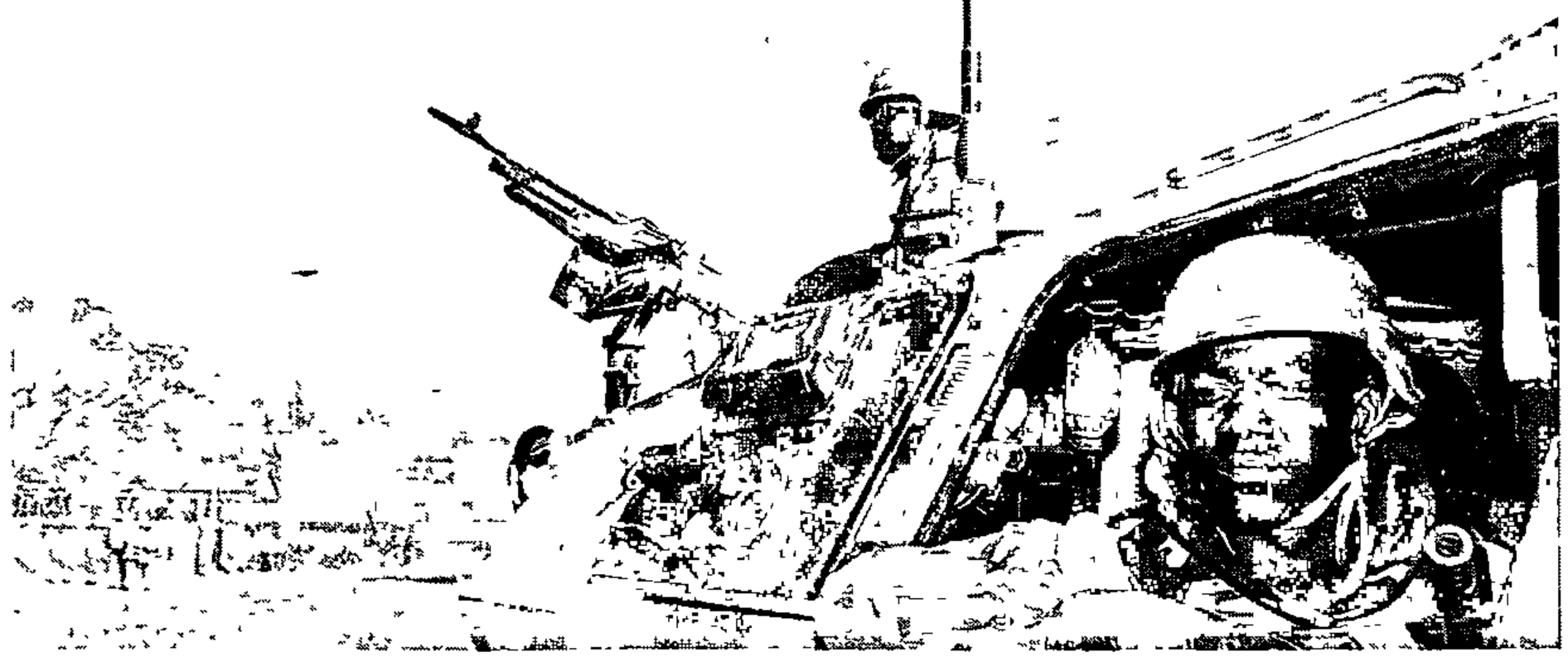
Buys, who tends to speak for the "crisis committee", which appears to be an extended Maseru chamber of commerce, including local insurance brokers, is confident the argument on political riot can be won.

Buys said the cases should also establish culpability. He and crisis committee members said the Lesotho and South African governments could be shown to have been negligent in their duty to protect property

Amnesty issue is dividing Lesotho politics

Debate is raging in Lesotho about whether military mutineers standing trial should be granted amnesty, writes associate editor John Dludlu

(167) BD 5/2/99



SA soldiers were part of an SADC contingent invited to intervene to restore order by an embattled Lesotho government

IT IS very tempting to say that now Lesotho has stabilised after last year's political storm, the country should be placed on the road to reconciliation by granting amnesty to the 50 alleged military mutineers standing trial

In fact the recent commencement of the trial of the soldiers, accused of participating in the mutiny last September, has ignited the debate on whether amnesty cannot help Lesotho make a fresh start

The mutiny occurred when junior officers held their seniors hostage and forced them to resign This took place in a highly charged political atmosphere following weeks of protests against the outcome of last year's general election

The opposition political alliance, which lost the May election, was complaining that the polls had been rigged The crisis was resolved in a deal brokered by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in terms of which an interim political authority was set up to prepare for a new election

The authority includes representatives of all political parties that contested the May election which an independent commission ruled had widespread irregularities

It is both within and outside this authority, that the debate for and against amnesty for the alleged mutineers is raging

Vincent Malebo, a representative of the opposition alliance in the authority, says if Lesotho is to be saved from becoming a Sierra Leone, then the trial — under the Lesotho Defence Act — should end and the soldiers be released

Malebo and his colleagues are advocating a blanket amnesty that would cover all acts committed last year by everyone

These include the contravention of the country's secrecy laws by disclosing the location of an army base to foreign troops, he says, referring to the troops deployed by the SADC at the invitation of the then embattled Lesotho government.

The amnesty calls enjoy wide support in Lesotho Khoabane Theko, the principal chief of Thaba Bosiu, supports the idea. personally, he feels the move is fundamental to securing long-term stability He suggests blanket amnesty, including civilians, be granted and warns of dire consequences to stability if the present trial continues to its conclusion

It is believed that although there were plans to make further arrests for crime committed over the same period, the government has not pursued them after advice from fellow SADC governments who were concerned about possible repercussions

Sehoai Santho, a political analyst in Lesotho, raises another problem about the trial "We are concerned that the trial is proceeding in such a manner that it is brutalising the inmates "

Last month, the trialists took their guards hostage in protest against inhumane prison conditions Attempts to have the trial's venue shifted from the prison grounds have not succeeded to date

Naturally, the ruling party vehemently opposes amnesty Kelebone Maope, the deputy prime minister, says "This is the time to create a new culture in Lesotho For some time (now), there has been a culture of impunity "

Both arguments are sound, but do not resolve the problems What has complicated matters is the growing perception that the trial will not be fair This is worsened by the political recriminations

The trial appears to manifest deeper problems, including indiscipline and political bias, within law enforcement agencies Last year's was not the first mutiny Rebel police officers held senior security officials hostage in 1995 to press their demands for improved service terms and then demanded immunity for their acts In 1994, skirmishes broke out within the army over a demand by one faction for a pay rise.

The government's record on mutinies is already tarnished — some of the previous mutineers are still languishing in jail without being tried, which is a violation of human rights, says Santho

So what is the solution? Santho says there are several options, including a commission of inquiry While this can help provide a fresh start, it is unlikely to satisfy the government

Santho says the best option would be to complete the trial and then for the new government to look at granting amnesty

Sadly, this could be undermined by political recriminations This climate is also slowing down the work of the interim authority on security issues

To strengthen the authority, the "middle ground", community and political moderates, have to prevail against the extremists

It is not all bad, though Santho says that a recent bid by Tom Thabane, the foreign minister, to get a seat on the ruling party's executive has failed This is good for the authority since Thabane is among the hardliners who believe all the wrongdoers should be prosecuted

Presuming that amnesty is accepted as the viable route to lasting peace and reconciliation, its timing will be important If it occurs nearer the time of the election — a date is yet to be set but it could even be next year — it could be seen as buying votes for the government

So when is the right time to do it, if at all? Now is certainly not. Granting amnesty now would only fuel perceptions of a culture of impunity in Lesotho and not advance the cause of reconciliation

Delaying it until after the election could pollute the post-election political environment, especially if nothing is done to improve public perceptions of fairness in the trial now It may also entrench existing bitterness

However, given the options available, this in fact may be the only time to do it as it would hopefully tie in with a more positive post-election political mood The SADC should ensure that confidence in the judicial system is restored to enable the trial to continue without being seen as biased

After the election, hopefully under a new electoral dispensation, a judicial commission of inquiry to look into last year's crisis could then be appointed Its brief should also be to probe the clashes and mutinies in law enforcement agencies over the years, and politicians' roles in this, as well as the politicisation of law enforcement agencies

Tempting though it may be to grant amnesty now, it is unlikely to alleviate the fundamental problems

Lesotho: 'SADC troops stay put'

(167)

By Jimmy Seepe
Political Reporter

THE Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday rejected calls by opposition parties in Lesotho for the forces of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) stationed in that country to leave

Lesotho opposition parties, who formed an opposition alliance last year following their rejection of the outcome of the 1998 elections, have made fresh attempts to try to gather international support to force SADC troops – including South Africa's – out of the country

The SADC troops, consisting of the SA National Defence Force and the Botswana Defence Force, went to Lesotho to quell a rebellion against the Lesotho government The SADC was asked to intervene by the Lesotho government

Spokeswoman for the Lesotho opposition parties Ms Mamelo Morrison claimed in a radio interview that the SADC troops were now involved in drug smuggling and other criminal activities

She said the alliance planned to seek the help of the United Nations and had written to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan asking that the world body intervene

SANDF operational spokeswoman Ms Laverne Machine said the defence force had still not received any formal complaint of charges levelled against the troops by the opposition parties "We take the allegations seriously, but can only act and investigate them once we have received a formal charge and complaint"

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Mr Marco Boni told *Sowetan* yesterday that there were no plans at this stage to have South African and Botswana troops moved out of Lesotho

He said the Government's position was very clear that it would not leave Lesotho until a decision had been taken by the SADC to do so

He said SADC troops had achieved their purpose of stabilising the country

This in turn was making it possible for free and fair elections to take place

IN BRIEF

Lesotho tells SA investors it is safe to come back

(167) BD 1/4/99

Nicola Jenvey

DURBAN — The Lesotho government brought out its begging bowl to SA investors yesterday, attempting to rebuild the confidence destroyed last year when the mountain kingdom erupted into violence

The riots in Maseru in September reportedly cost SA business about R2bn

At a business breakfast yesterday, three national ministers, the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) CEO and a senior official in the ministry of industry, trade and marketing appealed to SA investors to consider "the unfortunate orgy of looting and torching" as history

"The government is putting measures into place to downsize and re-educate the army and using natural attrition to rid the military of those forces which will not embrace the new democracy," Lesotho Natural Resources Minister Monyane Moleleki said However, he said the country could not tackle unemployment — "solved by past regimes" by flooding the army with school leavers — without investment

LNDC CEO Sophia Mohapi said the political will to transform Lesotho into a middle-income economy in 20 years required foreign investment

Industry, trade and marketing minister Mpho Malie said Lesotho had instituted measures to create an investor-friendly business climate

The investor package includes a 15% corporate tax for manufacturing companies with no withholding or secondary tax on dividends, accelerated plant and machinery depreciation, declining water and electricity tariffs as a direct spin-off from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and the provision of factory shells to reduce the initial capital investment

Mohapi said these initiatives have translated into 18 000 people gaining employment in LNDC-assisted companies and an average 2 500 jobs a year being created in the past five years Manufacturing output has risen 15% a year over the period

Total exports in 1993 amounted to R420m with manufactured goods accounting for R350m By 1997 this had risen to a total of R900m with R620m coming from the manufacturing sector

The SA Customs Union remained the major market with 49% in 1997 (1993 46%) followed by North America under the generalised systems of preferences scheme with 37% (33%), Europe under the Lomé Convention with 9% (19%) and the rest of the world 4% (2%)

LESOTHO

(167)
FM 9/4/99

BECKONING FOREIGNERS

Radical plans for growth

Seven months after foreign troops and local rioters laid waste to Lesotho's urban centres, the country has set its sights on a radical agenda to revitalise its battered economy

The violence that followed the intervention by SA and Botswana troops destroyed 1 045 businesses employing 6 000 people in all Damage is estimated at between R500m and R1bn

The scale of the damage has forced the Lesotho government to consider policies traditionally considered taboo The multi-billion-rand reconstruction programme includes some radical proposals, many designed to attract foreign investment

"We are committed to investment, which is our lifeline to economic growth and prosperity I have an open door policy and will do everything in my power to assist businessmen," says Industry, Trade & Marketing Minister Mpho Malie

But it may be an uphill battle to lure foreign investment, other than that related to the Lesotho Highlands Water Development Project (LHWDP), which provides SA with water The reason is that the country carries a relatively high political risk

A report by the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) says Lesotho will find it difficult to attract new investment unless government and the opposition parties begin to display a willingness to resolve the political impasse Lesotho's crisis was sparked by opposition parties disputing the May 1998 national elections

The EIU also points out that Asian investors, who dominate the country's manufacturing sector, may be hesitant about returning to Lesotho until the political situation becomes clearer

Asian and SA investors have played a key role in building Lesotho's manufacturing sector, which during the 10 years to 1998 grew 14-fold to represent about 18% of Lesotho's economic output as measured by gross domestic product The growth was fuelled by an export boom of ready-made garments and footwear

The EIU report adds that Asian investors, and indeed the Lesotho government, are likely to take their cue from the large SA retailers whose return to Lesotho would be an important sign that businesses are willing to risk the market once again SA retail chains such as OK Bazaars and Frasers dominate the retail sector

Lesotho does offer an attractive package of investment incentives, including a 15% corporate tax rate for manufacturing companies, no secondary or withholding taxes on dividends, free repatriation of profits, preferential access to developed markets through the EU's preferential trade accord, the Lome Convention, US textile quotas and the Generalised System of Preferences, double taxation agreements with Germany, SA and Mauritius, and the exemption of sales tax on imported machinery and equipment for manufacturing industries A 50% skills training grant is available

Cheap power is being offered as another incentive, says National Resources Minister Monyane Moleketi With the recent inception of the Muela hydropower plant — part of the LHWDP — Lesotho now has about 50 MW of surplus generating capacity "We can sell this into the Southern African Power Pool grid, but are also looking seriously at following Eskom's example of offering cheap power as a further investment incentive," says Moleketi

Malie says government is talking to several SA companies about relocating to Lesotho "Keen interest is also being shown by offshore investors — negotiations have started with a British knitwear concern and a German denim manufacturer," he says

In addition, there are plans to sell off 52 State enterprises as government privatises the telecommunications, electricity and water corporations Malie argues that transforming Lesotho into a "middle-income country within the next 20 years" will require a vibrant economy in which the private sector plays a leading role

One step in this direction would be to allow freehold title for foreign and local investors in industrial zones To achieve this, government would have to change Lesotho's traditional 99-year leasehold land tenure system, particularly for private investors in industrial and CBD areas

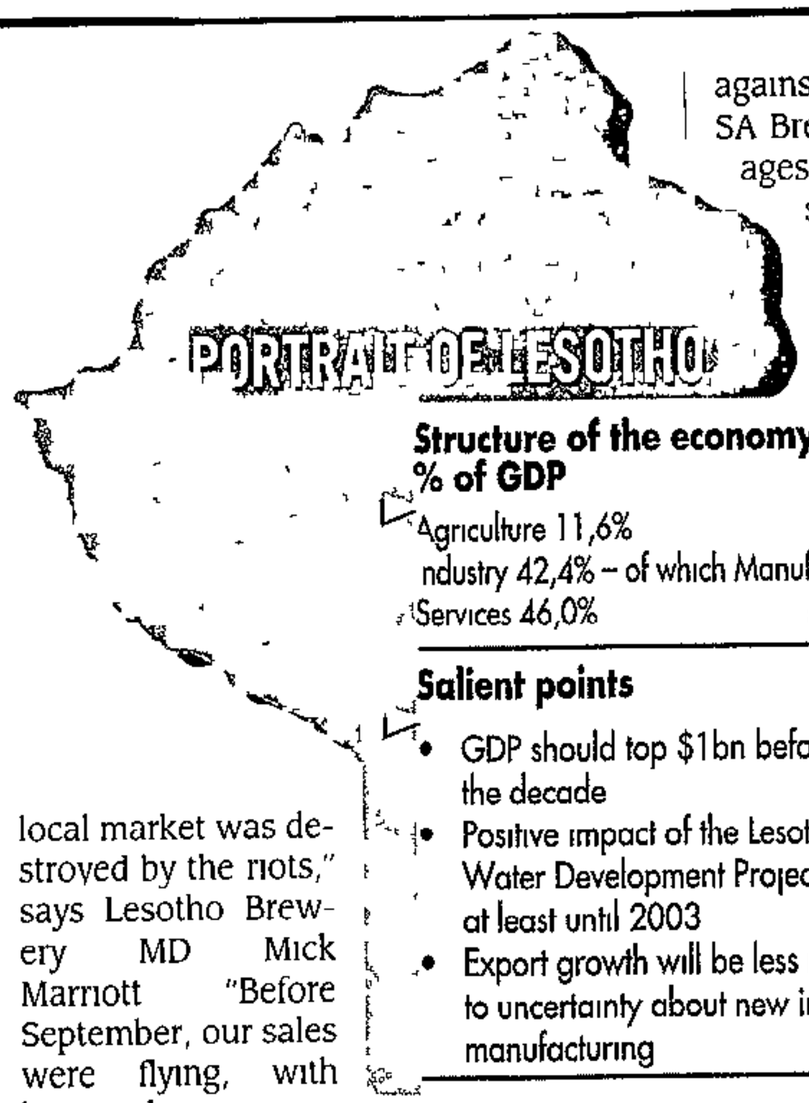
Commercial farmers will be invited to invest in new irrigation schemes "We are looking at building four medium-sized to large (50 m height) irrigation dams We will invite commercial farmers (also from SA) to invest here, while new hydropower plants would form part of the proposed schemes," says Moleketi

But local businessmen are showing signs of impatience with promises "The local market was destroyed by the riots," says Lesotho Brewery MD Mick Marriott "Before September, our sales were flying, with beer sales growing at 10%/year and soft drinks at 25% Now we expect to end the year to end-December with no growth This follows the destruction of 128 soft-drink outlets Fortunately, we have a valid R8,5m claim against the looting of one of our depots" SA Breweries, as 39% equity holder, manages the Lesotho operation Marriott says recovery of the market depends on when business infrastructure will be rebuilt "Without employment there is no money in the country," he adds

Labour & Employment Minister Notsi Molopo estimates the unemployment rate at 40%-45% Government aims to reduce this by kickstarting big infrastructural projects, including a R500m national roads programme and rebuilding Maseru's CBD Overhauling Lesotho's roads and building new ones will help to achieve another objective — to develop Lesotho's untapped tourist potential

But whether Lesotho succeeds in rebuilding its economy depends on the country's political leadership, opposition parties included

Arnold van Huyssteen



Structure of the economy (1997) % of GDP

Agriculture 11,6%
Industry 42,4% – of which Manufacturing 17,3%,
Services 46,0%

SOURCE WORLD BANK

Salient points

- GDP should top $1bn before the end of the decade
- Positive impact of the Lesotho Highlands Water Development Project will continue at least until 2003
- Export growth will be less robust owing to uncertainty about new investment in manufacturing

SOURCE EIU

Lesotho: a bubble that burst

(167) BD 19/5/99

As SADC troops are finally set to leave the kingdom, **Rocky Williams** looks at the history of their intervention

THE Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) intervention in Lesotho drew to a close at the weekend Whether durable political, economic and social stability can be established in the kingdom in the future is dependent on many variables, not least of which is the creation of stable public-military relations

Indeed, it is the latter factor, the military security equation, that prompted the Lesotho government to request SADC forces to intervene in the first place Undoubtedly the Lesotho episode, whether seen as an intervention occasioned by increasing levels of violence and rumours of a possible coup d'etat or, to some, as a blatant intervention by a regional hegemony in the sovereign affairs of a small kingdom — will continue to vex political scientists and defence analysts alike

Suffice to say that the reality lies, as always, between many different perspectives

Let us examine some of the key features that have characterised the Lesotho operation The first were those circumstances which led to the request for intervention

The history of military involvement in Lesotho politics goes back to 1970 when Lebua Jonathan lost the elections and declared a national state of emergency

Throughout this period the Lesotho armed forces acted as the guarantors of one-party rule until 1986 when they staged a coup (with generous SA assistance)

Notwithstanding a return to multiparty rule in 1993, King Letsie attempted to stage a coup in 1994 — only to have it overturned by the intervention of the "troika" (SA, Botswana and Zimbabwe) and through the mass protest mounted by the Basotho opposition

The armed forces that entered into the political upheaval in August last year were highly politicised and rived with internal divisions Their refusal to act against the growing state of anarchy within Maseru, the detention of 28 Lesotho Defence Force officers in September and the forced resignation of the defence force commander indicated this

Most worrying was the central role being played by junior officers in this process — a phenomenon not dissimilar to the junior officer revolts and coups in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Gambia from the 1970s onwards

If a coup was not in the making then it was certainly likely that the armed forces were on the verge of fragmenting with all the attendant disruption this would occasion It was under these circumstances that the Lesotho government requested the SADC to intervene

The second set of circumstances that merits discussion is the role played by the SADC The intervention is portrayed, mistakenly, as an SA intervention This is a crude approach which equates the number of military personnel deployed, mostly South African, with SA's alleged political intentions in the country

The sobering reality, however, is that the SADC troika (and not simply SA) had been mandated to deal with continuing political crises in Lesotho since 1994 and had jointly done the necessary contingency planning towards this end even before SA's 1994 elections



Southern African Development Community forces are being withdrawn from Lesotho ahead of schedule.

The third set of circumstances is the intervention itself The objectives of both SA's and Botswana's defence forces in Lesotho were made difficult by the swiftly deteriorating security situation, the rapidity of the decision to deploy forces, the initial attempts to adhere to doctrines of minimum force and by the determination of some of the Lesotho Defence Force personnel to resist the intervention (the latter begging the need for the development of a much more robust psychological intelligence function within the intelligence services)

It was also bedevilled by the relative novelty of these types of operations for SA forces in peace enforcement operations

Serious introspection and post mortems have been and are being done by the Department of Defence to remedy mistakes made in this arena

But, generally, the forces acquitted themselves well In fact, so well that the SADC withdrawal is taking place ahead of schedule and SADC forces have avoided becoming involved in an interminable and intractable conflict along the lines of west African force Ecomog in Liberia and Sierra Leone

The fourth aspect of the intervention is the level of consultation that occurred domestically prior to and in the immediate days following the decision to intervene Clearly it is difficult to canvass all public, political and governmental opinion prior to a sudden decision to intervene in a rapidly worsening crisis

If possible, some type of preparatory public debate is needed in certain exercises such as peace-keeping

Where a greater element of surprise is required, it would certainly be prudent to inform all key governmental departments and the chairs of the relevant parliamentary committees prior to initiating such operations The latter is important given their centrality in overseeing and providing the finances for operations

Fifthly, it needs to be said that SA's approach to conflict resolution has undergone considerable development recently Cabinet recently approved a white paper on peace missions which highlighted the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict and not simply their symptoms — an exceedingly broad statement which has profound practical and resource implications

It is clear that military intervention, in itself, cannot bring stability It will be only by addressing issues of governance, political tolerance, human rights, underdevelopment and weak public-military relations that the foundations of lasting peace can be established

These will require the identification, allocation and development of a wide range of non-military resources to ensure that such goals are accomplished Military capabilities will continue to play a role in such scenarios, but they will be subordinate to the broader civilian thrust of conflict resolution

Unless the SADC addresses itself to these issues any number of military interventions in Lesotho will be of limited use And, most importantly, no peace process will succeed unless it is owned by the Basotho themselves. It is here that the greatest challenge to peace in Lesotho remains

Williams is the director of operations policy in the SA defence ministry

Official faces charges over R12m bribes

BD 29/7/99 #(167)

International companies named in case against former boss of Lesotho Highlands Water Project

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — The Lesotho government yesterday charged its former top official at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, Masupha Sole, with taking R12m in bribes from a dozen international companies over 10 years

The case has taken two years of extensive investigation to put together, and involved close co-operation between the governments of Lesotho and SA, with the assistance of Swiss and French authorities

Companies allegedly involved include Impregilio of Italy, Dumez International of France, Acres International of Canada, Swedish-Swiss ABB and the Highlands Water Venture consortium, which includes Germany's Hochtief and SA's Concor and Group Five

In SA the water affairs and forestry department, through its representatives on the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, has been closely involved in the investigation from the outset

The R10bn international project to bring water to Gauteng from Lesotho is managed by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority and overseen by the governments of Lesotho and SA.

Sole, seconded from the Lesotho government as CEO of the authority, appeared in the Maseru Magistrate's Court yesterday on 14 charges of bribery and fraud Sole also faces a charge of perjury the charge sheet states that Sole denied "under oath" in November 1996 in the Lesotho High Court in a civil case that he had bank accounts in SA or overseas

However, according to Lesotho's director of public prosecution, Sole "well knew" that he had bank accounts in both SA and overseas — in Geneva and Zurich

Sole, who is out on R200 000 bail, was not asked to plead and the case was postponed to August 31 He has also had to surrender his passport

Sole, the charge sheet states, "did unlawfully, intentionally and corruptly accept bribe moneys, over the period February 1988 to December 1998, from Lesotho Highlands Water Project contractors"

The 12 groups named, plus the alleged bribe amounts paid to Sole, are Impregilio (Italy) — $250 000, Spie Batignoles (French) — Ff 738 630, Sogreah (French) — Ff 84 000, LHPC Chantiers (International consortium) — R392 967, ED Zueblin (German) — DM 819 862; LHPC (international consortium) — DM 105 639, Highlands Water Venture (international consortium including SA's Concor and Group Five) — $733 404, Diwi Consulting (Germany) — DM 4 500, ABB (Swedish/Swiss) — Ff 250 000, Lahmeyer Consulting Engineers (German) — DM 16 000, Acres International (Canadian) — C$ 279 539, and, Dumez International (French) — Ff 509 905,62

In SA rands the total allegedly paid in bribes to Sole was R12,012m

In a joint statement yesterday, the Lesotho and SA authorities responsible for the Highlands project welcomed the move "to press criminal charges against Sole"

A source closely involved in the inquiry said "While bribery on huge projects is not unusual, it is the alleged involvement in this case of leading European and North American companies which makes it so troubling "

The source said the charges against Sole "related mainly to his abuse of his position of trust to demand bribes to ensure favourable contract decisions" For instance, Sole allegedly abused the claims procedure, demanding bribes to take decisions in favour of contractors involved in projects worth hundreds of millions of rands

"Because the claims are often very technical and very complicated there is tremendous scope for manipulation," the source said. "Sole, as CEO, was very well placed to influence the outcome of such claims "

Suspicions raised: Page 3

CEO's 'flashy' lifestyle raised suspicion of Lesotho authorities

Former water project chief charged with taking R12m in bribes from firms

(167) BD 29/7/99

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — What drew the Lesotho authorities attention to Masupha Ephraim Sole was his "flashy" lifestyle in particular his love for fast cars and expensive houses according to sources

Sole, who was charged yesterday with taking R12m in bribes from a dozen international companies was appointed the first CEO of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority in October 1986

The job of the authority is to manage the R10bn international project — overseen by the SA and Lesotho governments — to bring water to Gauteng from Lesotho

A civil engineer by trade Sole managed to hang on to his job for exactly nine years until his dismissal in October 1995 following an internal disciplinary hearing against him by his own organisation

According to yesterday's charge sheet Sole — whose age is given as "about" 51 — accepted bribes over a 10-year period, three of which were after his dismissal

The internal inquiry was conducted only after Sole was first suspended in December 1994

He was subsequently found guilty on several charges of misconduct after "irregularities in the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority were increasingly being connected to him"

Sole unsuccessfully applied to the courts to have the findings and his dismissal set aside

It was then that the development authority first turned to the courts and brought a civil case against him for an amount of R9m — described as "an income over and above his legitimate remuneration" The R12m involved in the alleged bribery case is "a separate issue"

Sole "strenuously" opposed the civil action and according to documents in the possession of Business Day "showed an extreme reluctance to allow his employer access to his bank accounts"

He also denied "under oath" that he had any bank accounts outside Lesotho.

However the development authority eventually succeeded in gaining access to his bank accounts in Maseru which led to the discovery of various bank accounts in SA and Switzerland

Judgment in the four year-old civil case is pending

"In the course of the review of his bank accounts, certain payments were identified which raised serious questions about his activities while he was CEO" one source said

"It was these transactions that, when followed back to its source in Switzerland and France, pointed to direct payments from the contractors concerned."

The criminal charges he said, had less to do with the award of contracts than with Sole using his position to take decisions on his own on, among others, high-value claims in favour of certain contractors.

According to one of the charges, Sole even undertook an unauthorised visit to Paris in June-July 1991 where he allegedly discussed details of various claims with some of the companies

On his return to Maseru, according to the charge sheet, Sole fraudulently claimed he had attended an "international conference on large dams", in Vienna, Austria, on behalf of his organisation

World Bank backs crackdown

Foreign firms positively linked to bribery charges will be blacklisted

(167)

BD 30/7/(167)99

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — The dozen international companies linked to bribery charges against a former boss of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project could be barred from World Bank-financed projects around the world

Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Ronnie Kasrils said yesterday that he and his Lesotho counterpart, Monyane Moleleki, were working closely together on the case.

"We view the allegations extremely seriously," Kasrils said Instructions had been issued to the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, which manages the water project, "to recover the amounts concerned if the allegations are proven"

If so, "the follow-up action will have to be looked at in terms of international conventions and guidelines concerning the penalisation of contractors found guilty of bribery", Kasrils said

The Lesotho government this week charged its former top official at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, Masupha Sole, with taking R12m in bribes from a dozen international companies over 10 years.

Meanwhile, SA's Concor and Group Five yesterday denied any knowledge of a $733 404 bribe allegedly paid to Sole by an international consortium of which they were part.

Both companies claimed they were "minority shareholders" in the seven-member Highlands Water Venture and said they knew nothing about the alleged bribe until yesterday

The companies named in Sole's charge sheet include well-known European and North American firms such as Impregilo of Italy, Dumez International of France, Acres International of Canada and Swedish-Swiss ABB

Kasrils said the ambassadors of countries with firms involved as well as representatives of the World Bank and other donor agencies had been briefed about the bribery case before it came to court — "and to seek their support in dealing firmly with corruption".

The Canadian high commission and Italian and French embassies declined to comment on the matter yesterday

Because of the World Bank's $150m involvement in the R10bn international project to take water to Gauteng from Lesotho, the bank is obliged to apply its operational regulations — including those on fraud and corruption — to contractors linked to the project

The bank's procurement guidelines state: "The bank will declare a firm ineligible, either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, to be awarded a bank-financed contract if it at any time determines that the firm has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, a bank-financed contract."

It is the job of the bank's so-called sanctions committee, which meets regularly to review the findings of investigations, to debar firms. It also regularly publishes a comprehensive list of debarred firms — the World Bank Listing of Ineligible Firms.

According to a source, the World Bank will wait until the outcome of the Maseru court case against Sole before contemplating action against any of the companies named on the charge sheet. Some of them are still involved in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

Kasrils said the conduct of companies which had been named and were still involved in the project was being "closely scrutinised on an ongoing basis". He said "despite the court case, the project is on target and on budget, and consumers will not be affected".

The governments of Lesotho and SA, responsible for overseeing the project, were not prepared to tolerate bribery and corruption. "We are deadly serious about rooting out any form of corruption," Kasrils said.

Another source, elaborating on the charges against Sole, said this week they related mainly to allegations that he used his position of trust to demand bribes to ensure favourable contract decisions It was alleged that he had abused the complex claims procedure, demanding bribes to take decisions in favour of firms involved in contracts worth hundreds of millions of rands

Sole was charged on 14 counts of bribery and fraud, and one of perjury, relating to incidents between February and December in 1998 The case was postponed to August 31.

Sole is on bail of R200 000

Comment: Page 13

Bribery case highlights failings

BD 2/8/99 (167)

The developed world's support for the anticorruption fight is being tested, writes **David Greybe**

THE multimillion-rand bribery and corruption case involving a former boss of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project could test the industrialised world's resolve to curb the offering of bribes by international business

A dozen well-known European and north American firms have been linked to charges of bribery and corruption against the Lesotho government's former top official at the R10bn water project Companies allegedly involved include Impregilio of Italy, Dumez International of France, Acres International of Canada, Swedish-Swiss ABB and Germany's Hochtief

The governments of industrial countries have come under increasing fire for a perceived lack of balance in dealing with corruption They are accused of failing to act decisively against "bribe givers" based in their countries, while calling for anticorruption campaigns in developing countries

The Lesotho bribery case and a new anticorruption convention signed by the world's richest nations could test the resolve of industrialised nations to clamp down on domestic bribe givers

In December 1997 the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions was signed by representatives of the 29 member governments of the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD)

They are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK and the US Five nonmembers also signed the convention. Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile and the Slovak Republic

The convention called on each of the 34 countries to enact legislation last year "to criminalise foreign bribery"

However, the organisation's deputy secretary-general, Joanna Shelton, announced in June that only 15 of the 34 signatories had so far "passed national legislation and deposited their instruments with the OECD"

Three of the countries that have not yet complied with the convention — France, Italy and Switzerland — have domestic companies linked to the Lesotho bribery case.

According to Frank Vogl, vice-chairman of Transparency International (which monitors corruption throughout the world), too often "discussions on how to combat corruption have focused more sharply on the recipients of bribes than on those who pay them"

"Those who pay bribes are sometimes depicted as innocent parties, forced by ruthless officials to provide kickbacks and do special favours in return for business," Vogl wrote in June last year in the International Monetary Fund's influential quarterly magazine Finance and Development

"The reality is that both parties to corrupt practices conspire to defraud the public, to undermine fair trade, to waste resources, to frustrate development, and often to increase human suffering," he said

Vogl welcomed the OECD anticorruption convention as "a first step toward the development of a comprehensive set of curbs on businesses paying bribes in international commerce". But, he added, "it is only a first step The convention does not cover every aspect of international bribery and its coverage of some areas is vague " In addition, its success would depend on "the manner in which it is monitored"

Vogl said OECD ministers had decided on a strategy based on "soft law", as part of a broad international anticorruption approach In the OECD context, he said, "soft law" means a recommendation for action by governments, as distinct from "hard law", which is a binding treaty obligation.

The ministers recommended, for example, that member countries (and the wider international community) should take steps to end tax deductibility for illicit payments and to tighten accounting requirements

"Although these actions may be taken most effectively outside the convention, it is clear that only a holistic approach to the question of curbing corruption by corporations engaged in international business holds any prospect of success," Vogl wrote.

According to Stiaan van der Merwe, CEO of Transparency International SA, "Cross-border bribery of officials by international businesses is the most obvious form of corruption" However, "the issue is a lot more complex and bigger than some people in the industrialised world are prepared to admit and, therefore, to deal with".

He said "The problem of international bribery and corruption will not disappear if we 'clean up' the public sector in the developing world "

In the Lesotho Highlands Water Project bribery case, for example, "the more important question at the end of the day will be. did the various governments and role players involved in the project from day one know about instances of bribery and corruption?"

"Hopefully, the court case will shed light on this," Van der Merwe said

Lesotho project firms 'linked to scandals'

BD 5/8/99 (167)

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — Six of the dozen international companies implicated in the multimillion-rand Lesotho Highlands Water Project bribery case have been linked to other dam-building scandals

The firms named in the Lesotho court case "read like a who's who of the dam-building industry", according to the US-based environmental activist group, International Rivers Network

"The companies implicated in the (Lesotho) scandal are no strangers to allegations of corruption," the group said yesterday from its head office in Berkeley, California

Six of them were involved in multi-billion-dollar dam-building projects in Kenya, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Guatemala, which were tainted by allegations of huge kickbacks paid to top officials and other forms of bribery and corruption The companies are ABB (Swedish-Swiss), Spie Batignoles, Sogreah, Dumez International (French), Impregilio (Italian) and Lahmeyer Consulting Engineers (German)

Corruption scandals such as the Lesotho one "have played an important role in the ongoing problem of cost overruns on large dams", the International Rivers Network said

It said the World Bank had estimated that more than 70% of the dams it had built since 1960 had cost overruns of more than 30% For example, in the case of the Yacyretá Dam in Argentina and Paraguáy, which involved Impregilio, Dumez and Lahmeyer, the costs ballooned from a projected $2,7bn to a final $11,5bn Argentina's President Carlos Menem was quoted by the US-based agency as having called the dam a "monument to corruption"

Spie Batignoles and Sogreah were involved in Kenya's Turkwell Gorge Dam which, because of bribes allegedly paid to Kenya's president and energy minister, cost more than twice what the European Commission said it should have, the US-based agency said

It quoted from a March 1986 article in the Financial Times which said Kenyan officials involved were "fully aware" of the disadvantages of the deal "but they nevertheless accepted because of high personal advantages"

ABB and Dumez worked on the Itaipú Dam in Brazil and Paraguay and ABB also worked on the Tucuruí Dam in Brazil Costs in both projects ballooned amid allegations of "major corruption"

Lahmeyer and Impregilio had contracts on Guatemala's Chixoy Hydroelectric Project, where estimates were that between $350m and $500m was "lost to corruption", the agency said

Claes Norrlof, chargé d'affaires at the Swedish embassy in Pretoria, commenting on the Lesotho bribery case, said yesterday "We do not tolerate corruption and therefore we welcome the fact that these allegations are being tried in court" However, the Italian, French and German embassies were not prepared to comment

Masupha Sole, a former boss of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, was charged last week with taking R12m in bribes from a dozen international companies over a 10-year period to end-1998 The case, which took two years to prepare, will resume on August 31

Corruption must be fought in north and south

The privatisation of utilities is an invitation to bribery and graft, argues **George Dor**

(167)

BD 17/8/99

BUSINESS Day's exposure of bribery on the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is a pointer to the degree to which the practice of corruption is increasingly becoming the norm in substantial sectors of big business

It should also serve as a wake-up call to government in its seemingly uncritical faith in the private sector in particular international corporations as the vehicle for the development of SA and the region

The initial focus of the Lesotho scandal was on the water project official who took the bribes but Business Day was quick to point out that it "takes two to tango" It seems the 12 transnational corporations or consortiums of companies were even fighting one another for a place in the R12m dance

These included major dam construction corporations notably Impregilo the construction subsidiary of the Italian company Fiat and the French companies Spie Batignoles Sogreah and Dumez International the Swedish-Swiss ABB and the German Lahmeyer Consulting Engineers

All of these companies have been associated with allegations of bribery of top officials in dam projects in various countries

The Highlands Water Venture consortium alleged to have made the largest of the 12 bribes and the subject of various investigations into corruption and political payoffs includes SA firms Concor and Group Five and the French firm Bouygues SAUR, the other half of SAUR-Bouygues won the Dolphin Coast tender for the privatisation of its water services recently

Then there are seven or eight corporations that dominate the market in the local government services sector They also have tainted track records

The British company Biwater which won the tender for privatised delivery of water services to Nelspruit in April is party to the Panama water privatisation project which is under investigation for corruption.

It is ironic that while in the wake of the 1970s Lockheed scandal involving bribery of Japanese officials the US developed legislation to take harsh measures against companies guilty of corruption many countries including those in the developing world do not have adequate measures and as such invite corrupt practices

The response of Water and Forestry Affairs Minister Ronnie Kasrils to the corruption on the Lesotho project may have sounded tough but was entirely inadequate

While he promised to recover the money he is simply relying on "international conventions and guidelines to address the groups concerned However he assured us that "despite the court case, the project is on target and on budget"

In other words the corporations punishment for making bribes is to be reassured that they can continue to profit as successful tenderers on the project

But there is more to the issue than those making and taking the bribes The role of government and its advisers in creating the environment for private sector corruption also needs to be scrutinised

In the Lesotho case there was a significant lobby against Phase 1B of the highlands water project, the construction of the Mohale Dam This included groups as diverse as unions civic consumer and other nongovernmental organisations Rand Water and even the water affairs and forestry department along with then Minister Kader Asmal s own advisers

There was no coherent scientific evidence as to whether and when Gauteng needed water from Phase 1B The World Bank, in its Project Appraisal Document of April last year acknowledges this and concedes that there is "lower future demand" for water in Gauteng than anticipated at the time of the signing of the initial treaty

The document states that the department "has made a firm commitment that no new investment decisions bevond Phase 1B will be made until this new information (on water demand patterns) is available and has been analysed"

Yet the dam-builder element in the department and the World Bank staff assigned to the project lobbied intensely for Phase 1B to be given the green light primarily on the basis that if we should one day need the dam it will be financially better to build it soon

This argument hinges on the presence in Lesotho of the contractors that built the Katse Dam and tunnel "(Phase) 1A contractors already have incurred many fixed set up costs that they do not need to repeat If the project was delayed for more than a very short period of time (one to two years) the benefits of existing bidders would disappear as staff and equipment were deployed elsewhere"

Leaving aside the weaknesses in the document s argument the point is that water affairs officials knew of the bribery allegations for at least two years and according to Business Day the department "has been closely involved in the investigation from the outset"

All of this raises a number of questions Did Asmal and the World Bank staff know of the investigation? If Asmal was unaware of the allegations how is Kasrils going to tackle his officials for withholding this information and can we expect a definitive statement from him? If the bribery charges are upheld should government continue to honour the contracts of the companies to complete a dam that may not be needed?

However the lax attitude towards the potential for corruption in the privatisation process is not confined to the highlands project or the water department

To give but two other examples. a top-ranking official in the department of constitutional development simply dismissed the concerns of the SA Municipal Workers Union in the Nelspruit water privatisation case as the union resorting to corruption as a "stock" argument against privatisation And in Johannesburg former transport director-general Khetso Ghordan was given the task of privatising as many aspects of the council s functions as possible with his remuneration package being linked to the speed with which he implemented the process and the value of assets sold off

The Lesotho case highlights the need to recognise the very real dangers inherent in a reliance on the private sector to deliver

It calls for a re-evaluation of the notions of the public sector as inefficient and the private sector as the preferred vehicle for delivery

This amounts to an urgent need to re-open the debate on privatisation in SA

Dor is a researcher at the Alternative Information and Development Centre in Johannesburg



Corruption threatens to tear apart the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

Developed countries also have their hands in the cookie jar, writes **Stiaan van der Merwe**

THE recent focus on international bribery in the Lesotho Highlands Water project has offered south Africans a glimpse of the bigger picture on corruption as an international problem

It can be seen as an opportunity to start understanding the nature and extent of the corruption phenomenon in our global village and SA s position and role in this larger framework. Though the specific issue in this case is the alleged bribery of government officials by companies based outside Lesotho it encompasses much more

The following need to be noted

- Lesotho is a developing country in the southern hemisphere

The companies cited in the bribery allegations are based in the so-called "developed countries" of the north All belong to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- The OECD governments have signed the OECD Convention on the Bribery of Foreign Officials promising to act against bribery in international business

- According to the annual corruption perception index published by Transparency International governments of the OECD countries are perceived by international business to be relatively clean Governments and officials in the south though are by and large perceived to be very corrupt and

In most cases international and transnational companies are operating from countries where bribing officials in other countries is tax deductible

Such indices highlight a fundamental problem in anti-corruption strategies the world over — corruption is generally seen as the actions or behaviour of individuals or groups and that corruption is largely a problem related to the public sector only

Messages from business and governments of "established democracies" or financial institutions based in those countries call for reinvention of the state and democratisation of political processes Such steps are regarded as being part of an overall strategy to address corruption

Glaringly absent is the call to democratise the global economy

What chances are there for a political democracy to be established and sustained if the powerful economic forces and players are not bound and driven by an ethos of democracy and socio-economic justice?

Robert Klitgaard an author on corruption formulates it as follows "Corruption equals monopoly plus discretion minus accountability"

It should be understood that public power and responsibility are not limited to public sector power or power vested in public officials only It also applies to the private sector and organs of civil society which are too often not entered into the equation

The implications are that the abuse of economic, political and other power of the developed north towards the governments economies and people of the south should now assume centre stage in the discourse on international and national anti-corruption policies and strategies as well.

This would include citing players in the international and transnational theatre such as governments business financial institutions and development bodies for abusing their political economic and military power and thereby committing the crime of corruption per se It should be accepted that public power in the hands of countries enterprises and institutions in the north also implies responsibilities and obligations towards all stakeholders including the countries in the south

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project might have turned out differently if adequate measures and traditions of international accountability had been in place to ensure the integrity of contracts and the services and products delivered

Corruption on an international level should however never be cited or construed as an excuse for governments business and organs of civil society in the south to avoid addressing corruption in our own ranks and contexts

We are, after all often creating and sustaining an environment conducive to international corruption in a variety of forms. This cannot be condoned and needs to be vigorously resisted by ourselves

The Lesotho case also raises poignant questions for SA, since it is also an SA project.

Were individuals of relevant authorities in business and government aware of irregularities in the project" If they were aware of irregularities, what did they do to address them? What can and must be done to avoid similar occurrences in the future?

The lessons and challenges for SA include that we should.

- Ensure that we are not addressing corruption as a domestic issue only but as an international problem as well

- Monitor the behaviour of SA officials and businessmen acting outside our borders

Work jointly on regional and international levels making use of existing international conventions or signing them (for example the OECD convention) to stamp out corruption in all areas

- Pass legislation criminalising corruption by South Africans in other countries as an offence in SA and

- Ensure that we do not act according to the typical and skewed northern styled approach towards countries in southern Africa.

Van der Merwe is the CEO Transparency International SA

Former official ordered to pay

BD 21/10/99 (167)

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — A former top official at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, Masupha Sole, has been ordered by that country's high court to pay R7,776m to his former employer

The case, one of the longest civil trials in Lesotho, began in Maseru in November 1996

Sole has also been charged in a separate but related criminal case with taking R12m in bribes from a dozen international companies in more than 10 years

That case is expected to begin early next year

It has taken two years of extensive investigation to put together, and involved close co-operation between the governments of Lesotho and SA, with the assistance of Swiss and French authorities The companies involved include ABB (Swedish-Swiss), Dumez International, Spie Batignoles, Sogreah (French), Impregilio (Italian), Hochtief, Lahmeyer Consulting Engineers (German) and Acres International (Canadian)

Yesterday's judgment by Judge Michael Ramodibedi was in favour of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority — Sole's former employer

The civil case arose out of a disciplinary hearing against Sole in 1994 and 1995 while he was CE of the development authority

The R10bn international project to bring water to Gauteng from Lesotho is managed by the development authority and is overseen by the governments of Lesotho and SA The civil case involved 11 claims against Sole, including fraud, abuse of entertainment and travel claims, and housing and other allowances

The biggest claim was for R6,5m, and arose from an authorisation by Sole for the alteration of the conditions of the Muella Dam contract — the hydro-power plant built in conjunction with the Muella Dam which is situated below the Katse Dam (part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project)

Sole was found by the court to have authorised the alteration of the contract in favour of the contractor, Muella Hydro-Power Contractors — a consortium of international contractors

As a result of the alteration, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority ended up paying R6,5m more to Muella, which is also implicated in the criminal case against Sole, in which he is facing 14 charges of bribery and fraud and one of perjury

Sole indicated yesterday he would be appealing against the court judgment However, sources in the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority said they would resist an appeal

The development authority was represented by advocate Guido Penzhorn of Durban, and Sole's legal counsel was advocate Guy Hoffmann SC, of Johannesburg

Lesotho strikes out on bold new path

Government hopes incentives will attract foreign investment, writes S'THEMBISO MSOMI

ST(BT)31/10/99(167)

LESOTHO is successfully forging ahead with its economic revival and has embarked on an ambitious drive to attract more foreign investors to the country

Lesotho was plunged into turmoil in September last year following an armed intervention by SA and Botswana to stop a military coup Violent protests by opponents of the intervention resulted in the destruction of more than 1 000 businesses with the damage estimated to have cost R500-million. At least 6 000 jobs were lost

A year after the debacle, a series of burnt buildings in the capital Maseru remain as a reminder to a political conflict that threatened to turn the former British colony into a wasteland

But the Lesotho government says "the black cloud" had a silver lining

"It forced us to do some soul-searching, to review everything that we had been doing as government," says Industry, Trade and Marketing Minister Mpho Malle. "We have had to come up with new strategies to revive investor confidence and that has meant revisiting grand government plans that have been gathering dust for many years "

The first step to regaining investor confidence was to reform the political system and address the issues that led to the coup

The Interim Political Authority consisting of the major political forces in Lesotho has agreed on a sophisticated electoral system that allows for both proportional representation and a constituency-based system.

The constitution and electoral legislation will soon be amended to accommodate this agreement ahead of next year's general elections

On an economic front, the past seven months have seen trips to SA, China and other countries by the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) and senior government officials canvassing for much-needed investment.

LNDC chief executive Sophia Mohapi says they have also embarked on a drive to encourage locals to take part in economic activities

With advice from the European Investment Bank and other international financial institutions involved in funding the reconstruction programme, Lesotho is looking not only at rehabilitating destroyed businesses but at turning around the struggling economy

The riots forced us to do some soul-searching, to review everything we had been doing as government'

Government has put more than R500-million aside for road construction and a R54-million Kings' Way project is at an advanced stage.

With a population of just over 2-million, Lesotho s focus is on becoming an export-driven economy

Malle says government hopes that SA, with whom it runs the Lesotho Highlands Water Development Project, will agree to the development of the Maluti Highway that could link Maseru to Durban and halve the distance between the harbour and Bloemfontein

Lesotho is confident its attractive package of investment incentives, and the fact that most of the pre-insurrection investors have returned, will encourage more investors to do business there.

Lesotho has preferential access to developed economies through the European Union's trade accord the Generalised System of Preferences and the Lome Convention

Malle said government was looking at other incentives including further reduction of the 15% corporate tax rate for manufacturers and the provision of cheaper electricity and water for manufacturers

"We have a very high level of unemployment, about 40%, and we are willing to do whatever is necessary to improve our competitiveness and attract investment We do not see why we should have higher taxes for people who help fight poverty by creating jobs and generating a larger tax base for the government " Malle said

The country could see a rise in unemployment unless SA mines' plans to lay off workers some from Lesotho, are reconsidered

Malle hopes these incentives and the fact that Lesotho has a more stable and literate labour force will result in increased foreign direct investment

But Lesotho s real growth potential lies in the privatisation of state assets Although government says it is committed, the process has been painfully slow with the Lesotho Flour Mills and Lesotho Airways being the only major state-owned companies to be partially sold.

The Director of the Privatisation Unit, Mothusi Mashologu, says a series of factors which include the lack of a strong private sector base within Lesotho, have impeded privatisation.

"The concept is fairly new here. We invested much time on information as our people did not know what privatisation meant. Our legal framework also contributed to much of the delays," Mashologu says.

When Business Times visited Lesotho this week, Mashologu gave a "lecture" to representatives of former miners who want to take part in the process. Part of the lecture included lessons about basic concepts such as share ownership and unit trusts, which are still foreign to most Basotho



RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT: The mountain kingdom is working hard to attract foreign investors

Companies face Lesotho bribe claims

BD 18/11/99

SA firms are part of consortiums accused of making wrongful payments to project official

(167)

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — The Lesotho government has charged more than a dozen international companies and individuals with bribing the former top official of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

Three SA companies — LTA, Concor and Group Five — are members of two international consortiums that have also been charged

Representatives of the World Bank and the European Union (EU) assured Lesotho officials that, in the words of one person who was at yesterday's World Bank meeting in Pretoria, they would help to "bankroll" what is expected to be a lengthy and costly court case

The companies charged are Acres International (Canadian), ABB (Swedish/Swiss), Dumez International, Sogreah, Spie Batignolles, Cegelec, and Coyne et Bellier (French), Lahmeyer International (German), Universal Development Corporation, and Electro Power Corporation (Panamanian), Associated Consultants and Project Managers (Lesotho) and Sir Alexander Gibbs and Partners (British)

The international consortiums charged are Highlands Water Venture and Lesotho Highlands Project Contractors International companies in the consortiums include Impregilio (Italian) and ED Zueblin (German)

Individuals charged are JM du Plooy of Ficksburg, M Bam of Ladybrand and Max Cohen of France

Those charged must appear in the Maseru Magistrate's Court on November 29, when Masupha Sole, the former CEO of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, appears next on charges of taking R12m in bribes over a 10-year period ending last year

According to the source, the World Bank's undertaking to pay for the case — which was given to Lesotho's attorney-general L Maema and Natural Resources Minister Monyane Moleleki — was to show its commitment to fighting corruption

The bank has a $150m stake in the R10bn international project to take water to Gauteng from Lesotho, while the EU has also helped fund the project

The summonses, involving differing amounts, allege that the accused did "wrongfully, unlawfully and corruptly make payments/transfers" to Sole or an intermediary, who passed on the money to Sole The latter had bank accounts in Switzerland and SA

Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Ronnie Kasrils and Moleleki have worked closely together on the case for the past four years

Kasrils said yesterday's meeting "discussed ways of supporting Lesotho in combating corruption and bribery" after Sole was ordered last month to pay R7,776m to his former employer

Kasrils dismissed recent media accusations that his efforts had been inadequate "Look at the scoreboard Our side is winning Now the criminal case is being pursued," he said

Construction firms to appear in court on charges

Lesotho bribe shock

CT (BR) 22/11/99 3 (167)

MICHAEL DYNES

Johannesburg – At least nine international construction companies were at the weekend charged with bribing a former government official to win multibillion-pound contracts in Lesotho

All companies named in the summons have been instructed to appear before the magistrates' court in Maseru, Lesotho's capital, on November 29

This is the date Masupha Sole, the former Lesotho Highlands Water Project's chief executive, is to appear in court on charges of taking £1,2 million in bribes over 10 years

The summons alleges that the companies did "corruptly make payments/transfers" to Sole or an intermediary working on his behalf, which were then transferred to his personal bank accounts in South Africa and Switzerland

Sole was held liable in a civil court last month for corruption, and has been ordered to repay some £750 000 to his former employers which he received in bribes The criminal case against Sole is still pending

Companies named in the summons include Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners (UK), Acres International (Canada), ABB (Sweden-Switzerland), Impregilo (Italy), Dumez International, Sogreah, Batignolles, Cegelec and Coyne et Bellier (France), Laymeyer International (Germany), Universal Development Corporation and Electro Power Corporation (Panama), along with a number of other firms and individuals

When The Times contacted Anne Cronin, of Sir Alexander Gibb on Thursday concerning the allegations, she said it was the first the company had heard of the charges

Most of the construction companies alleged to have paid bribes in the first phase of the project are also working on the second phase, to be completed in 2017

The water project was largely financed by South African banks, although the World Bank contributed $150 million

Companies convicted of offering bribes face being barred from all future World Bank-financed schemes – The Times, London