

Blitz on ANC puts pressure on Slovo

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SECURITY Police counter intelligence believes that the SA Communist Party leader Joe Slovo — who is in command of the African National Congress (ANC) special operations — may come under increasing pressure within the ANC because of recent setbacks.

This was a conviction voiced at a special briefing last week at which senior members of the Security Police stated that practically the entire ANC special operations unit of 50 people had been wiped out or captured since the signing of the Nkomati Accord.

According to Major Craig Williamson and several other senior officers operating in the latest counter-insurgency moves, all but three members of the elite ANC unit have been captured or killed since Nkomati.

As announced by the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, last Friday, 18 terrorists have been captured and seven killed since the signing of the Accord.

Captured

The remainder, according to SA intelligence were neutralised or captured by the Swazi authorities, where a number are still facing charges arising out of clashes in which members of the Swaziland police were killed or injured.

"We anticipated that the ANC would mount a massive penetration operation in the face of the Nkomati Accord," said Maj. Williamson.

"The thrust of the operation was timed to create a number of spectacular incidents, particularly over the weekend to commemorate the Soweto riots. It was aimed at creating the illusion that the ANC had a strong infrastructure within South Africa and was capable of sustaining armed attacks despite the withdrawal of rear base facilities in Mozambique," he said.

"Now that the special operations unit of the ANC has been smashed (formerly known as the Solomon Mhlangu group) we expect that Joe Slovo will come under pressure in the ANC and that he will resort to other measures to try to restore his image," said Maj. Williamson.

Car bombs and major sabotage incidents, — involving up to 50 planned attacks — had been ordered, with each three-man unit of the ANC's special operations responsible for up to three attacks.

Mr Slovo is leader of the SA Communist Party, but is also a member of the ANC's High-Command and has been held directly responsible for the planning of the vast majority of terror attacks in South Africa. He is also reputed to hold the rank of colonel in the KGB, the Soviet external intelligence arm.

Commands

According to Maj. Williamson and his colleagues, the other commands in Umkhonto we Sizwe, which do not operate under Slovo, have been responsible for only a few attacks since 1978.

"We expect a change of tactics from Slovo and think that he might resort to penetrating White planning and reconnaissance teams as he did in mounting the attack on Voortrekkerhoogte," he said.

Although the police will not confirm any details, it is believed they are working on the theory that another spectacular act of sabotage, that on Koeberg nuclear power station, was engineered by a foreign technician working on the contract, but who has since left South Africa.

According to the Security Police, the ANC's special operations unit included its best trained cadres — those who had been selected to undergo specialised training in Russia or other Eastern Bloc countries.

In an interview last week, a terrorist from the ANC's special operations unit, told The Citizen of mounting discipline problems being experienced by the ANC and of the harsh repressive measures being instituted by the organisation's security squads.

Maj. Williamson said that security police had confirmed intelligence from the latest round of arrests and defections of an incident in an ANC camp in Angola this year where 250 armed cadres demanded a meeting with the ANC's leadership to discuss problems.

Disarm

Angolan troops had been brought in to disarm the mutineers who were then split into smaller groups and shipped out to different camps.

"Ten ANC cadres, who had been chosen to represent the group in the meeting they were demanding, vanished into the hands of the ANC security, and have never been seen since," he said.

Another factor being explored during the current operation against the ANC is the possibility that it is running short of trained personnel to send on terrorist missions into South Africa.

One of those killed during a recent incident was identified as a high-ranking ANC political official with no known background in sabotage or terror training and who consequently blundered on his mission. His identity is still being kept secret.

Maj. Williamson also revealed that the technology being used in the car bomb incidents involving the ANC has not been imported from Russia, but from extremist Irish organisations, and that it was not of a type generally used in cities.