

# SA spies bugged talks with Maputo: diary

2.10.85

## MAPUTO.

SOUTH African military officers bugged the talks in Pretoria last September and October between South African and Mozambican ministers.

The placing of bugging devices is detailed in the diary captured at the bandit base of Casa Banana, and shown to journalists in Maputo on Monday.

The MNR diarist noted on September 17 1984 "They will install microphones in the negotiating room to listen in on the talks between Pick (sic) Botha and the Mozambican delegation: It will be very advantageous for us. In this way we will know Pick Botha's plan and Frelimo's."

The bugging of the talks was guaranteed by Colonel Charles van Niekerk of South African military intelligence. He is referred to in the diary and in the two notebooks also captured as "our friend commander Charles".

Van Niekerk ran a kind of clandestine postal service between Casa Banana and Pretoria, carrying messages to and from bandit chief Afonso Dhlakama, as well as dealing with the transport of equipment, weaponry and wounded bandits.

On September 1, 1984 South African Brigadier van Tonder, also of military intelligence and Van Niekerk held a meeting with MNR leaders in which they agreed to arrange Swaziland passports for two of them, and to fix up an audience with South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan.

## 'GENERALS'

They also discussed the evacuation of MNR "generals" from South Africa to Casa Banana before the start of further talks between South Africa and Mozambique.

The head of military intelligence, General van der Westhuizen, also met with MNR chiefs in Pretoria. On September 4 1984, the diarist wrote that Van der Westhuizen "expressed his concern and willingness, saying that they are always side by side with Renamo and that we shall study and work together since our common purpose is to rid Southern Africa of communism both politically and militarily".

General Constand Viljoen himself features frequently in the documents. At his May 26

meeting with Dhlakama, Van Niekerk transmitted a message from Viljoen which made it clear that he would not obey any order to switch sides and fight against the MNR. "As soon as we receive orders from my government for my troops to go and fight in Mozambique against Renamo, all the generals, my colleagues and I myself will resign from the armed forces."

Perhaps the most remarkable insight into General Viljoen's politics is the diary entry for September 6 1984. In this, Viljoen outlines a strategy for the MNR to follow faced with the renewed negotiations between Mozambique and South Africa.

## AMNESTY

"He recommended us not to lose military strength and control in the face of these negotiations. He recommended us not to accept the amnesty." (The amnesty for repentant bandits was announced by the Mozambican government, at the request of the South African authorities.)

Viljoen showed nothing but contempt for South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, and the diarist wrote "the general recommended us not to be fooled by the schemes of Pick Botha because he is a traitor; he even agreed with Chester Crocker's idea of Frelimo offering an amnesty to Renamo members".

"I agree with a joint strategy for getting rid of Machel," continued Viljoen. "Because we want to remove the Russians from our region of Southern Africa, we have to employ a joint strategy to be able to defeat communism."

"We soldiers have our way of fighting the Russians," he said. — Ziana-ADM.