

Project name: AL3283

Date of interview: 12 October 2009

Location of interview: Centurion, Pretoria

Language/s of interview: Afrikaans

Length of interview: 8 minutes 49 seconds

Name of Interviewer: De Wet Potgieter

Name of interviewee/s: General Tienie Groenewald

Name of translator (if any): De Wet Potgieter

Name of transcriber:

Notes on access and use (if any):

Audio file name/s of interview: AL3283\_PTA\_GROENEWALDTIENIE\_20091012\_2

De Wet	<p>I am sitting here with gen. Tienie Groenewald. It is Monday 12 October 2009. Gen. Groenewald is the retired chief director of military intelligence. Tienie, I would like to talk to you about the beginnig of 1994 when South Africa was on the brink of a civil war and the chances were good that the country could be turned into a blood-bathwith the right wingers like the Volksfront threatening with vilence if their demands were not met.</p> <p>Could you explain to us, here in January, how close were we, people do not realise how close we were to a blood-bath and aq possible bloody war.</p> <p>How ready was the Volksfront in fact because a lot of people still claim it was merely threats and talks of war.</p>
Tienie	<p>Peoples always had this perception that it would have been a conventional Afrikaner force against the government conventional war apparatus.</p> <p>Although we still needed a ot more time to establish a resistance movement, we did our planning and we were ready. In the first instance we full weill knew where the support for the goverment was in the defence force and who would support gen. Viljoen.</p> <p>In the first instance we very aware who in the defence force</p>

would support the government and who would support gen. Viljoen. And I just would like to tell you that surveys conducted in the defence force and through our contacts inside the defence force, we had a lot of feedback.

It was determined by military intelligence that in the first instance the commandos would support gen. Viljoen en masse and stayed loyal to him.

And then in the permanent force the most important units and a great percentage of its members would not have been prepared to take up arms against their own people. There were certain citizen force units, in particular the English speaking elements that would have supported the government.

If we then talk about a conventional confrontation it was for certain that the government would not have been capable to suppress such an upheaval. But this was not the way we had planned to go about it.

We then already had in our possession the documents which identified all the strategic keypoints. These were the most vulnerable points identified to protect and guard these installations and buildings against possible revolutionary attacks.

We exactly knew where these keypoints were situated within the government's setup. I am talking about the radio stations, the television stations, power stations, fuel depots and there were a whole multitude of these strategic points we had access to in this register.

Secondly, we would have mainly made use of the, what gen. Geldenhuys preferred to call the heavies. You are not going to use ordinary soldiers to kill other soldiers. You were going to use the heavies and here we are talking about in particular about the Special forces, the CCB (Civil Cooperation Bureau) which were highly trained to carry on expert operations.

These were also people with access to ammunition storage depots, weapons and what went with this. Furthermore the commandos were issued with fairly sophisticated weapons.

With such an operation it would have been fairly easy to paralyse any efforts to hold an election. But to launch a prolonged freedom struggle would not have been that easy. You have to conduct such a struggle in such a way that the rest of the world will not intervene immediately and if it was a conventional war it would have been more likely that the UN would intervene.

But in the case of a freedom struggle with a guerrilla war, it would have been a total different issue. Now, any organisation wanting to start such a war have to comply to two conditions. In the first place it had to have the support of a major power, or had to financial power to launch such a prolonged war.

In the second case it had to have a safe base from it could

operate. It would not have been possible to operate from within South Africa's borders. The police were already given a huge budget for intelligence gathering. They paid up to R250 000 for informants to provide critical information regarding such planning against the government.

Therefore gen. Viljoen ordered me to pay dr. Jonas Savimbi a visit in Angola. I then flew with a light aircraft over Botswana and the Caprivi to Jamba. There I picked up the local commander and flew on to an air strip at a small village north of Huambo used by Savimbi as headquarters on the Benguela railway line.

Very well organised. We arrived about two in the morning, it was pitch dark and they switched the landing lights on. He was busy with meetings with his commanders and I met with him at three that morning.

I told him that gen. Viljoen send his greetings. I also knew Savimbi very well and I told him there were good chances we had to resort to military action in South Africa.

I told him that gen. Viljoen wanted to know if he could provide us with a safe haven, training facilities and possibly weaponry. Savimbi's reply was, tell gen. Viljoen that everything I and Unita own was at his disposal. And if he give everything he had, it would have been merely a drop in the ocean for what gen. Viljoen had done for him.

What I am trying to tell you, De Wet, is that we had the capability and planes to fly people in and out.

We could have planned operation. People would have been outside South Africa receiving training and would have been able to properly exercise for particular military operations. They would have been flown in. There would have been a separate logistic organisation supplying weaponry for such operations. They would have launched operations and then flown out immediately after it back to Angola.

We had the capability to do such operations. We were capable to create total chaos in this country if needed to.

Did we have the capability? Yes.

If the accord was not signed, the US ambassador at that stage had given us the go-ahead to resort to violence. He in fact did put pressure on the government as well as the ANC to sign that accord.

If that accord was not signed, yes, I believe that the election would not have happened.