

10 of 445 DOCUMENTS

The New York Times

June 15, 1985, Saturday, Late City Final Edition

U.S. RECALLS SOUTH AFRICA ENVOY IN RESPONSE TO RAID ON BOTSWANA; 16 ARE REPORTED KILLED AS COMMANDOS STRIKE AN INSURGENT 'CENTER'

BYLINE: By ALAN COWELL, Special to the New York Times

SECTION: Section 1; Page 1, Column 2; Foreign Desk

LENGTH: 1099 words

DATELINE: JOHANNESBURG, June 14

South African commandos attacked Gaborone, capital of neighboring **Botswana**, early today to strike at targets that **South Africa** described as the nerve center of the insurgent **African** National Congress.

Sixteen people, one of them a 6-year-old girl, were reported killed in the first attack of its kind against the capital of a black-ruled neighbor since October 1983, when **South African** commandos attacked an office in Maputo, Mozambique. One **South African** was reported wounded in the raid today.

It was **South Africa's** first known strike against **Botswana**, a landlocked, diamond-exporting nation that is economically dependent on **South Africa** and with which it shares a customs union.

Warning to Civilians

Nine houses and an office complex were said by **South Africa** to have been attacked by troops armed with grenades and automatic rifles. **South Africa** said its troops used loudspeakers to warn **Botswana** civilians and police officers to keep clear of the targets in the 40-minute raid at 1:15 A.M. today. But newspaper reports from Gaborone said at least two **Botswana** nationals were killed.

In the aftermath, reporters saw beds drenched with blood, suggesting that surprise in some of the purported safehouses and training centers had been total. Walls were spattered with bullet holes and at one house, great slabs of concrete hung at crazy angles.

Gen. Constand Viljoen, commander of the **South African** armed forces, described the raid as a success. But he warned that more attacks would follow if **Botswana** did not rid its territory of personnel from the **African** National Congress, the most prominent of exiled, armed groups seeking the violent overthrow of white minority rule in **South Africa**.

A spokesman for the congress in Lusaka, Zambia, denied **South African** assertions that **Botswana** was being used as a transit route to infiltrate saboteurs into **South Africa**.

The **African** National Congress is to hold a major conference soon, and **South African** commentators said the raid

U.S. RECALLS SOUTH AFRICA ENVOY IN RESPONSE TO RAID ON BOTSWANA; 16 ARE REPORTED
KILLED AS COMMANDOS STRIKE AN INSURGENT 'CENTER' The New York Times June 15, 1985, Saturday,
Late City Final Edition

seemed designed, in part, to disrupt the gathering. Moreover, the raid came only two days before blacks celebrate the ninth anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, and the attack seems certain to deepen their already profound animosity toward the **South African** authorities.

The raid was the second strike by **South African** forces across their borders in recent weeks, after an abortive foray into Angola's northern enclave of Cabinda. The two episodes, Western diplomats said, seemed to signal a reversion to policies of military intervention that apparently were suspended last year during a brief effort at detente between **South Africa** and some black-ruled neighbors. Pretoria's critics call the intervention destabilization.

South African political and military leaders sought to justify the attack by saying **Botswana** had refused to heed demands for the expulsion of the insurgents and had thus left Pretoria with no choice but to strike at their purported bases. They accused the Palestine Liberation Organization of training congress insurgents in assassination and sabotage. General Viljoen, moreover, said the raid had been necessary to forestall attacks on nonwhite political leaders in **South Africa**.

At a news conference at Waterkloof air base near Pretoria, General Viljoen said that since **South Africa** signed a nonaggression pact with Mozambique on March 16, 1984, the **African** National Congress had shifted its operational personnel to **Botswana**. "The aim of the operation was to disrupt the nerve center of the A.N.C. machinery," he said.

"We were ready to hit the targets a long time ago," he said. He maintained that **South Africa** had held off out of political considerations.

"We sincerely hoped that the **Botswana** Government would remove them so it would not be necessary to do this unpleasant job," he added.

He said, however, that grenade attacks last Wednesday on two legislators of mixed racial descent had been "the last straw" and had "convinced us we had to do this operation."

The Congress has denied it was responsible for the grenade attacks.

'We Hope We Were in Time'

The general, who is to retire later this year, said intelligence reports indicated that the **African** National Congress planned to step up its attacks in **South Africa** in the near future. "We don't know how many teams they have infiltrated into **South Africa**," he said. "We hope we were in time, but I'm not so sure."

Gaborone is only a short distance from the border between **South Africa and Botswana**. General Viljoen indicated that small squads of commandos crossed the border and split into groups to launch simultaneous attacks on each of the 10 targets as another unit guarded the highway to aid their escape.

At one point, he said, a car sped toward the unit holding the highway and its occupants opened fire on the **South African** commandos, who fired back, killing two people. A Dutch national living in **Botswana** was said to be among the dead.

General Viljoen said that 13 people were killed in the attacks on houses and offices and that 2 were killed in the car. Additionally, he said, the **Botswana** radio reported the death of a 6-year-old girl, apparently one of two children initially reported to him as wounded in crossfire.

At the news conference, General Viljoen presented what he said was a captured rocket launcher and a Kalashnikov rifle. The congress receives much of its weaponry from the Soviet Union and its allies, as well as other support from Western solidarity groups.

U.S. RECALLS SOUTH AFRICA ENVOY IN RESPONSE TO RAID ON BOTSWANA; 16 ARE REPORTED
KILLED AS COMMANDOS STRIKE AN INSURGENT 'CENTER' The New York Times June 15, 1985, Saturday,
Late City Final Edition

Expected International Outcry

General Viljoen said some congress personnel remained in **Botswana**. "We are hoping that the **Botswana** Government will remove them before it is necessary to move against them too," he said.

He said the likely international outcry after the raid had been "very carefully debated and thought out."

"We came to the conclusion that this was the right thing to do," he said. The **South African** police and military were on full alert after the raid, he said.

In a separate statement, Foreign Minister Roelof F. Botha listed the occasions on which he had met with **Botswana** officials to ask them to remove **African** National Congress personnel from their soil.

"The **South African** security forces had no alternative but to protect **South Africa** and its people from the increasing number of terrorist attacks emanating from **Botswana**," he said. "**Botswana** had repeatedly been warned to curtail these activities in its territory.

"We will not allow ourselves to be attacked with impunity. We shall take whatever steps are appropriate to defend ourselves."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: Photo of police officer in Gaborone inspecting house struck by **South African** raiders (AP)

Copyright 1985 The New York Times Company