

The Role of the South African Police in the Elections.

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The following is a transcript of his presentation.

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Thank-you for the opportunity to address you on this very important subject – *Policing of the elections*. Unfortunately we will be unable to supply you with full details of our planning process for reasons beyond our control. From the South African Police side, I just want to assure you that this election is a number one priority. The SAP is not the only role-player, and I think that is the main reason that I am not allowed to tell you everything that has occurred and been discussed. We are involved in this process with quite a number of other role-players. The main role-player is the Independent Election Committee.

A brief indication of how it works: – the IEC together with the TEC formed a working group for these elections. Representatives from the Sub-councils of Law and Order, Defence and Intelligence, together with the IEC, sit on this working group which also includes representatives from the police agencies and the military forces in South Africa. The working group is under the chairmanship of Lieutenant General Van Eck and I am the convener of this group. We work very closely with the IEC and our planning sessions are held at the World Trade Centre.

This working group has formulated an aim for the Security Forces. The main aim of the Security Forces during the elections is to maintain public order and to create, by means of effective policing, a favourable climate in which a democratic election can take place. This

will contribute to the levelling of the political playing fields and will effect political meetings as well as the casting of votes without intimidation. Intimidation is one of our main problems.

During these discussions we identified the main role-players involved in this election: The Transitional Executive Council; the Independent Electoral Commission (who are bound by the law to ensure that it is a free and fair election); The Commission for Enquiry regarding the prevention of violence and intimidation; the Goldstone Commission and the Policing Agencies (which include the SAP as well as the ten other Policing Agencies). Other role players include the Military Forces; National Intelligence Service; Department of Justice (the public prosecutors); the Department of Local Government and National Housing; the Department of Internal Affairs; the **Department of Correctional Services**; **Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)**; organisations such as the **Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)** and Universities; the media; International Monitoring Groups; Peace Structures and the Independent Self-Governing States.

During this operation all activities will be coordinated through the Joint Operational Centres (JOCs). These will be established at the following levels: National Level; Regional level (in each SAP region there will be a regional JOC as well as in the TBCV and National States; magisterial districts will each have local JOCs because the Voting Districts are planned according to the magisterial districts.

The Electoral Official of the IEC will be in control of the polling stations. Others with authority include the members of the policing agencies, military personnel, monitors appointed by the IEC; observers appointed by the IEC; the Department of Justice; Intelligence; Correctional Service; National Peace Keeping Force; Electoral Court Officials and Traffic Departments. The need for greater consultation with other people and other groups necessitated the formation of Information Centres based at each JOC. Groups in the Information Centre will include: Civil Protection (to get all the necessary emergency equipment and emergency services); Taxi Associations and Metro services (also very important because we want to see that there are proper transport services); Political Party Agents (there is provision in the Act that at local level there will be a Party liaison mechanism). We indicated that they could be of great support to us in the planning, especially during political meetings. One role they could play would be to co-ordinate the meetings so that not too many occur on one night. Other groups at the Information Centres may include local authorities and any other organisations that could render assistance to the IEC or Security Forces.

The election plan is divided up into three phases. The first phase is the Pre-election Phase (the run up to the elections), the second phase is the Election days themselves (the 26, 27, 28 of April) , and then the Post-Election Phase. During each phase we decided that there were certain focus areas that we want to concentrate on.

Phase 1

In the first phase one of the major focuses will be on fostering co-operation between all the role-players. Other focus areas include: the provision of man-power, training of the police in accordance with the Electoral Act and the Independent Commission Acts, the combatting of intimidation, information and communication and logistics support for the forces.

Phase 2

During the election itself the main focus will be on effective policing of the electoral polling booths. There will be more or less 9000 polling stations and there will also be a number of mobile polling stations especially for the rural areas. We are going to need about 126 000 police in order to man these booths effectively. Another focus area will be on the optimum utilisation of all our resources.

Phase 3

In the Post-Election Phase the focus will be on the provision of visible services, the investigation of crime, provision of man-power, support of policing by means of logistical and financial support, and the maintenance of community relations.

Pre-Election Issues:

Training

The first real issue of the elections which needs to be dealt with is the training of our members. We need to ensure that they are properly informed of what is expected of them, and understand the election bills. We plan to put out a manual in pocket book format, regarding all the electoral legislation and to make this manual available to all police personnel. We are also going to run lectures on the subject of elections during basic training. We envisage that we may use the students from the training colleges during the election period. We will provide training for all members on a decentralised level regarding policing and elections. This training will be run with IEC involvement. Advanced training will be temporarily suspended during April and May so that we can have the manpower available. The IEC is involved in this training process and that there is a possibility that they will be involved in the training of trainers.

Political meetings

Another important issue will be the policing of political meetings. We envisage that there will be quite a number of these meetings after the 27th of April. From the police side, we cannot provide manpower to police all of these meetings adequately. We plan to interact with the interest groups involved in the political meetings via the election co-ordinating committees that will be established according to the electoral act. These are not yet established and we hope that they will be established soon. We will secure the buildings in which the meetings and gatherings take place, on request of the organisers. We won't secure every building,

only those which we are particularly asked to do, or where there is a possibility of dangerous objects and explosives. We will monitor the meetings and will have a reaction group available nearby in case it is necessary to maintain law and order.

Combatting intimidation

One of the main problem areas is the combatting of intimidation. We will make use of maximum visibility by the police and we will involve all our police reserves. We will make maximum use of other resources such as the SADF and other military forces. Optimum use will be made of sources of information regarding any intimidation. Information will be one of the critical areas because we cannot plan properly if information is lacking. We will implement a plan of Communication and will lecture to members on the optimum utilisation of the legislation available – for example: the Intimidation Act, Electoral act, de-regulations by the IEC, and the unrest regulations. We will apply the legislation strictly, enforce speedy arrest and detention, and ensure speedy finalisation of the cases. For us it is very important that we remove a person who is intimidating others. We are going to publicise our crime-stop telephone number so that the public can use it to report intimidation to the police. We want to police all areas, especially the no-go areas because we want to be seen all over the place.

Election Day Issues

During the elections days themselves, there are certain actions that we will have to take. The electoral officer of the IEC will be in control of the polling stations. A very crucial factor will be power supply, especially emergency power supply, to guard the polling stations through the night. We need to ensure maximum visibility in all areas, maximum airability and observation posts. There are a number of aircrafts hired by the TEC, to observe the election process from the sky.

All polling stations must be searched for explosives and other dangerous objects on the day before the elections. After they are searched we will guard them until the end of the election. We will use video camera's to provide evidence, escort ballot boxes and secure the area where boxes are kept after the first day and second election day. The police will not handle any ballot boxes. The political parties and the IEC officials themselves will take care of the boxes. We will only take the necessary steps to secure them. We will guard the polling stations during the night, and secure the premises when the votes are counted. This is also a crucial stage, because if polling boxes are tampered with, it will cause a lot of trouble for us.

Post-Election Day Issues

During the post – election phase we want to: retain high-visibility, maintain internal stability, combat crime through effective management of information and investigation techniques; maintain competent and motivated personnel, maintain logistical, financial and legal services, and maintain community relations.

Conclusion

At this moment, one of our problem areas is the carrying firearms and other legal weapons into the polling booths. This is a real danger for the complete process. If we are going to forbid the carrying of a firearm within a polling station, the police face a big task. This will be extremely intensive in terms of man-power because we will have to search everybody, make use of metal detectors which are quite an expensive facility, and provide separate searching facilities for women and men. The logistical repercussions are enormous.