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Location of interview: Garsfontein, Pretoria

Language/s of interview: Afrikaans

Length of interview: 18 minutes 46 seconds

Name of Interviewer: De Wet Potgieter

Name of interviewee/s: Colonel Vic McPherson

Name of translator (if any): De Wet Potgieter

Name of transcriber:

Notes on access and use (if any):

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Interviewer	I am talking to Vic McPherson about the planned bombing of the whole executive council of the ANC during the Arusha Conference in Tanzania. What year was this? 1985?
Vic	No, I think it was round about '85 . It was long after the London bomb and the Lusaka bomb. They had their annual. It happened so that military intelligence, special force, the reconnaissance units, the South African police at that stage worked very closely. When the general, I will have to go and look who was in charge.
Interviewer	Joep Joubert?
Vic	No, I am talking about a police general, security branch. My general, head of the security branch, called me in and said I have to go to military intelligence. I think general Witkop Badenhorst, and, oh yes, it was actually general Joep Joubert. They had an operation planned with the annual ANC conference which was to be held in Arusha at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, and they had all the means for the job, all the money was already allocated. They had problems when it comes to, they did not have the infrastructure to get to Arusha. They knew I had an infrastructure inside Malawi and I had people to go as far as Dar es Salaam, who knew the languages, knew the Tanzanian language.

	<p>They then bought to Nissan 4x4 vehicles in Centurion. They also transported equipment in those trucks that moves containers. They then loaded the two vehicles and two rubber ducks and I do not know how they smuggled the bomb through. It was hidden somewhere, maybe in the vehicles, I do not know.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Why don't you know it? Because it was a military operation and handled by them?</p>
Vic	<p>Yes, there was a colonel, the commander of the operation. My role was merely to create the infrastructure, provide people knowing that language. They had two members of the recces, parabats who were also explosives experts who knew how to build the bomb, who knew how to stalk the target during the night from a mountain, place the bomb under the stage and then wait for the right moment to detonate it remotely. I mean they will be in the vicinity when they press the remote detonator, the whole stage will be blown up and many people would have died.</p> <p>I had a safe house at Mantli Bay on Lake Malawi available for the team to do their planning. The vehicles were then imported into Malawi. In order for them to travel in Malawi and eventually carry on over the border, they needed Malawian number plates and licence discs. They also had to pay import taxes.</p> <p>I was there when the vehicles arrived in the country. The two recces with Irish passports travelled under their real identities. The first task was to get Malawi number plates, to register it in Malawi and to pay the import taxes for the two vehicles, 100 000 Kwacha. This would have been a problem, but I told them, no, it is no problem.</p> <p>I know a woman, a fellow officer, married to a Portuguese who was staying close to Lake Malawi. I knew he had 250 000 kwacha stashed away in the ceiling of his house. He could not do anything with the money. There was nothing to buy in Malawi with the money. So he just hid it away in his roof. All you had to do was to pay the equivalent amount in the sister's bank account here in South Africa and then they could go on holiday in South Africa and go and buy clothes for themselves in South Africa.</p> <p>They did it and head office transferred the equivalent of the 100 000 Kwacha. Say it was about R80 000. There he managed to get rid if this foreign currency, these note he had no use for.</p> <p>I then told the colonel I know the head of the licensing department to register the vehicles quickly. I told him, okay, we will pay the guy at licensing a small fee, say R1 000. He agreed and within four hours the vehicles were registered.</p> <p>He then said he needed frameworks to be build on to the</p>

vehicles for the rubber ducks. The rubber ducks were to be used to ferry the bomb across the river between Malawi and Zambia. The colonel, he was one of the special forces divers from Langebaan.

He will then transport the bomb up to a certain spot where my people would exactly know where to dig two deep holes for the parachutes to be concealed.

The two recces would then fly in, in a King Air plane over a huge game reserve in the area where there are enough dirt roads to land the plane. The plane would fly under the radar and then go up and drop the two men from a height of a thousand metre.

My man, a Malawian citizen, they gave him a small torch with a red light. He had to choose an area with no bushes or trees, preferable a maize field from where he would give the pilot a signal by making a figure eight with the red torch. If he may have been caught he would signal with a figure D to warn them off.

The rubber ducks with the bomb had already crossed the river. Everything was in place. My man and their man already dug the holes; everything was ready for the operation to go down.

It was only for the colonel to get the final clearance because the people on that stage were Thabo Mbeki, Aziz Pahad, Essop, Vali Moosa, Ronnie Kasrils, Solly smith and Dulcie September. The whole ANC top management were there.

There is a mountain outside the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College where they would be hiding when they press that button. The bomb would go off and all those people would have been dead.

I was sitting with the colonel next to the swimming pool at the Capital Hotel and he had to communicate over the phone. In those days there were no luxuries like cell phones, and no radios.

He phoned Magnus Malan. Magnus told him no, no, he had talks with Pik Botha and was told that the top management of our country was already busy with talks with the ANC and that the national intelligence agency (NIA) were already engaged in talks and told him that some of those people they were negotiating with for the future of South Africa will also be on that stage. We could not afford to lose those people- the contact persons.

The colonel was furious. Unbelievable, he said now we have to get everything back from there.

We sold those vehicles in Malawi. They gave me one for my warrant-officer who was working in the country undercover.

We came back after spending hundreds of thousands of rands.

We did it because that it was the minister wanted. At the last minute. You see, what happened at that time, unfortunately, the police and defence force talked to each other. There were

	no secrets between us, but now the politicians and also national intelligence had their own agenda, but never informed their ministers what was going on.
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