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Name of Interviewer: De Wet Potgieter

Name of interviewee/s: General Herman Stadler

Name of translator (if any): De Wet Potgieter

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Interviewer	<p>I am sitting here talking to general Herman Stadler, retired former head of the security branch's intelligence unit.</p> <p>General, I would like today to talk to you about the incident, as the Sunday Times reported it at the time as the Guns of Gaborone, when the defence force attacked ANC bases in Botswana. Would you please describe what happened there?</p>
Herman	<p>De Wet, yes, at that stage it was a fact that the ANC was making use of foreign facilities, our neighbouring states, in particular Botswana. This was denied at all times.</p> <p>But the fact of the matter was that we knew they were using facilities in Botswana. There were on several occasions discussions held between Pik Botha and the government of Botswana as well as with their police, minister of foreign affairs etc.</p> <p>We made it very clear to them that this was the case, but they denied this to a certain extent and did nothing about it. At that stage the terror campaign of the ANC was very serious and we then, the State Security Council, decided we should launch a hot pursuit operation into Botswana.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Could you tell when, more or less, what year are we talking about now.</p>
Herman	<p>You know, De Wet, as time goes by one tends to forget times</p>

	<p>and dates, but I think this was about 1985.</p> <p>In any case they then, the State Security Council, I don't know if you know how the State Security Council operated. They identified certain things through the secretariat of the State Security Council, on which I also served, where we explained the revolutionary climate.</p> <p>It was then decided, as I said, to invade Botswana. It was the prerogative of the defence force to do it and I had to inform them about targets, the facilities in Botswana, and I henceforth did so.</p> <p>With the transparencies and so forth I showed them the whole building housing the offices, where there computers where etc. I furthermore briefed them because that was my duty. They then decided to go ahead and made a decision on a particular date.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Explain to us. You say you had given them the information on the targets and where the ANC offices were situated. How efficient was the intelligence unit to in order to evaluate the threat of ANC facilities in other countries.</p>
Herman	<p>De Wet, you know just as well as any other person that when you have to go up against a terror campaign you need informers, agents, and what, of course, also helped us a lot, were the arrests of terrorists where could interrogated them thoroughly and where they explained all these detail for us at length. This is how we got hold of our information. In other words I can say that my information was absolutely correct. So the briefing I gave was based on those facts. I was also requested to inform the people what kinds of activities were launched from those facilities in Botswana.</p> <p>I pulled out 33 incidents. Yet again, obtained from interrogations and other means. I was also in a position to verify that those 33 incidents were in fact orchestrated from within those facilities in Botswana.</p>
Interviewer	<p>What was the extent of those incidents?</p>
Herman	<p>It was, it stretched as far as to the Cape. I think even Mpumalanga; there was an incident in Natal. I can't remember exactly all the incidents. But also, among others, that farmer and his wife murdered in Swaruggens. This was also committed by the ANC. In other words, those facts, there were also attacks on police stations in Cape Town, for example, that I briefed them on.</p> <p>In other words, I didn't not only describe the facilities to them, but also the incidents committed.</p> <p>Now, well, at a certain date they had launch the cross-border attack and I then received orders to inform Mr. Pik Botha, minister of foreign affairs, so that he could do his bit when things start to happen and knows what to tell the people.</p> <p>Now, they crossed the border that night, they had to go in and</p>

	return very quickly.
Interviewer	Could you, before going into these details, describe to what lengths you had to go to be able to inform Mr. Pik Botha about the planned attack.
Herman	<p>Yes, that is quite interesting. All of us who knows Pik Botha, full well knows he is a difficult chap. At that stage I was told that he was on a hunting trip near Ellisras. The defence force made one of their jets available to me- one of those small ones.</p> <p>I then took my second-in-charge Craig Williamson along with me. When we arrived there a car was waiting at the airstrip to take us to the game farm. Arriving there we were told he was out on a hunt, but I suspected that he knew we were coming to see him, but didn't really care. Well, that was his prerogative, I suppose.</p> <p>The pilot informed me that he couldn't take off after sunset and asked us to keep him informed. Close to sunset I told Craig he must go back and fly back with the pilot to Pretoria. And send a chopper or something the next morning to fetch me.</p> <p>I waited and about nine that evening the lot came back from the hunt. Now well, I don't want to gossip, but it was clear they already had a few drinks. I was there, but the barbeque fire was the priority at that stage while they were chatting around the fire.</p> <p>I battled, but eventually managed to call Pik Botha after eleven to one side and briefed him properly. He was a bit concerned that civilians may be caught in the cross-fire.</p> <p>I explained to him how they were going to handle the operation. They will let a chopper hover overhead in the air explaining to the local population that they were not the targets and that the attack was aimed at the ANC facilities. He was then happy with the arrangements and I flew back the next morning.</p> <p>That night the attacked the targets. I was in the whole night with the defence force in their operational room listening how the operation went down. It was very interesting.</p> <p>They returned to base and brought back with them a lot of things they confiscated on the sites. Among others firearms and computer systems. I thought the operation was a huge success. It is a pity that some of the civilians became panicky and fled from their houses being caught up in the firing. I think, if I'm not mistaken, there were four fatalities. Can't remember all the details clearly.</p> <p>The main aim of this operation was to protect our own people in South Africa and the State Security Council wanted to show Botswana that they in fact do harbour ANC cadres using the neighbouring state as a springboard for attacks on our country.</p>