



Publikasie nr. 0 3 5 3

Datum 8/12/81 15:22,7

Onderwerp nr. 329

Dokument nr. 1,7,5,3 a

THE CITIZEN

Jg..... Nr..... P. 6 Dat.....

81 8. 15.

**THE CITIZEN COMMENT**

**Not rocked**

THE ROCKET attack on the Voortrekkerhoogte military base is, as General Malan, the Minister of Defence says, an indication of what South Africa can expect.

"It is against such efforts that we must steel ourselves," he declares.

One rocket launcher, and four rockets, cannot dent our defence armour one millimetre; but though the attack was more in the nature of a hit-and-run effort than a serious assault on our top base, it cannot be shrugged off.

That it was made at all shows the recklessness to which the terrorists are prepared to go in choosing their targets and placing lives and property at risk.

As it was, the rockets only did extensive damage to a servant's room.

And the only person injured was the servant, and then she only received a cut on her arm.

Nevertheless, if the rockets had been directed at specific targets, instead of seemingly being fired into the base at random, and if they had hit their targets and exploded, the story might well have been a different one.

We have no doubt that our military chiefs will hold a pressing probe into the attack to prevent a repetition.

**On guard**

There's nothing like being on guard against all possible eventualities — particularly if those eventualities concern the military themselves.

However, although we do not minimise the nature of the attack and the propaganda success it may have given the terrorists among Blacks who support so-called "liberation" movements from the comfort of their township chairs, we do not think General Malan is right in suggesting that the media are playing into the terrorists' hands.

He says the "primary aim of the enemy is to unnerve, through maximum publicity.

"In this regard we will have to obtain the co-operation of the South African media in not giving excessive and unjustified publicity to terrorists."

Attacks like the one at Voortrekkerhoogte cannot, however, be swept under a blanket of secrecy.

News that an attack has taken place becomes known to everyone in the area (in this case at the base and in neighbouring civilian townships).

TREFWOORDE

1 Redaksioneel

2 Malan M.A.

de M

3 Voortrekker

hoogte

4 Stedelike

Terrorisme

5 Nuropyle

6 Hanvalle

7 Media

8 Berigting

9

10



Publikasie nr. 0 3 5 3

Datum 8/11/81/15/2/27

Onderwerp nr. 329

Dokument nr. 117536

81 8. 15.

THE CITIZEN

Jg..... Nr..... P..... Dat.....

Blacks as well as Whites hear about what has happened — often in versions that are garbled. In such circumstances, the media play a very vital role in telling the true story, while respecting the limits imposed on reporting for security reasons.

There is no excessive and unjustified publicity — the public has a right to know what has happened because only by being told can its fears be allayed, the nature and extent of the attack be known, and unfounded rumour squashed.

Fully Informed

Furthermore, if South Africa is to be on the alert for terrorists — instead of being complacent about them — the public must be kept fully informed of attacks, the consequences, the methods used, the precautions that can and must be taken, and so on.

Exaggeration is quite another matter — but we do not believe that any section of the media has been guilty of that.

Reports have been factual and without emotionalism, and we believe the media have helped rather than hampered the authorities.

The media have certainly not given the enemy any comfort or propaganda help.

The authorities have also, through the media, been able to give the public the reassurance that the terrorist situation is under control and that there is no cause for alarm or panic.

How important this is can be seen from the wild claims made in Zimbabwe, where the Salisbury newspaper, the Herald, says the rocket attack is "the signal for a new guerrilla offensive that may soon engulf the racist capital in flames.

"The freedom fighters are moving closer and closer to the seat of power in the regime."

It will take more than a few terrorists to come anywhere near the seat of power.

But only frank and balanced reporting of what is actually happening can counter this kind of propaganda both within and outside our borders.

The Press also reports the successes of the police and security forces in fighting the battle against terrorists — like the killing of four of the men responsible for recent terror attacks in the Eastern Cape.

True message

The true message of Voortrekkerhoogte is that the need for vigilance is more imperative than ever, attacks will come in the most unexpected places, and the people of South Africa must gear themselves to deal with terrorism as part of their daily lives.

The battle of survival is not just on the borders, but on the home front; it is not just a military and security battle, but concerns each and every person.

We have no doubt that it will be won.

TREFWOORDE

- 1 .....
2 .....
3 .....
4 .....
5 .....
6 .....
7 .....
8 .....
9 .....
10 .....