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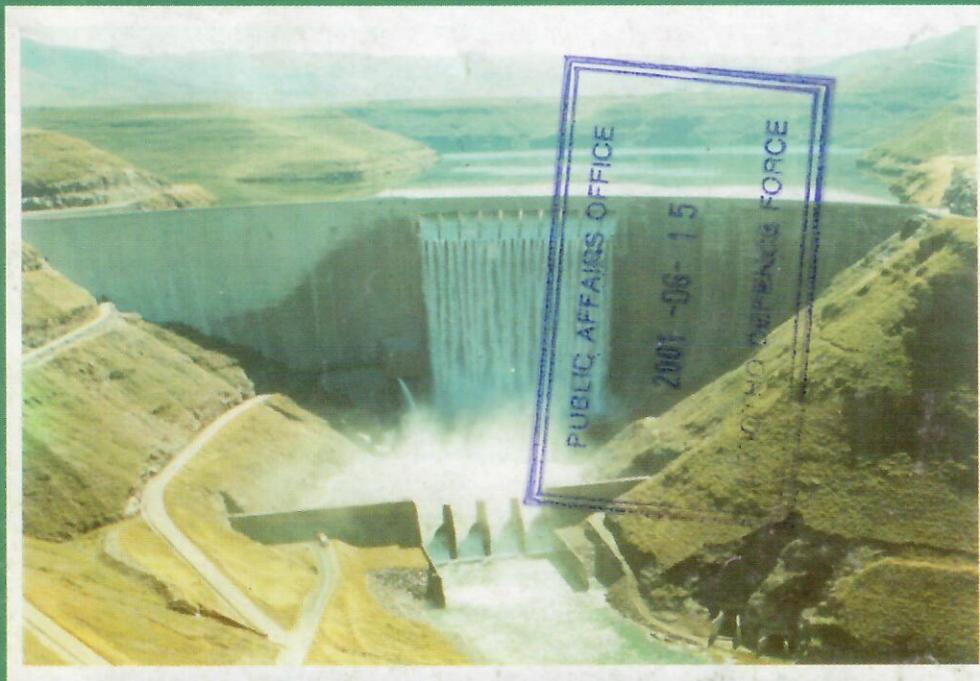
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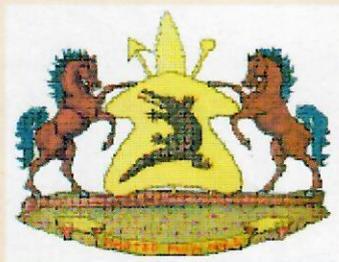
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Editorial

Interstate Defence and Security Committee: Challenges to Lesotho

By Captain Tanki Mothae



Lesotho hosted the 22nd Session of the Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) from 7-11 May 2001 in Maseru.

This was not a simple hosting, as one might think, it was also a change of guard from the Republic of Mozambique to the Kingdom of Lesotho. Lesotho became the chair of the ISDSC, because of this new status of Lesotho, the Minister of Defence, Principal Secretary for Defence, Commander of Lesotho Defence Force,

Commissioner of Police and the Director General of the National Security Service automatically become the chairpersons of their respective committees within the ISDSC.

What should the ISDSC do about Angola and the DRC?

Now, what challenges face Lesotho as the new ISDSC chair? The current political situation that confronts the region requires much; first, a commitment by all the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member-states. The second requirement calls for commonality of purpose and understanding in approaching or addressing all matters pertaining to regional security.

Lesotho, as the current ISDSC chair, has a huge task lying ahead. The crisis in the Great Lakes region, in particular the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the conflict in Angola, await fresh minds and the vision of a leadership that is, indeed visionary in addressing the issues.

One hopes that Lesotho will take over the unfinished business and continue with it and bring up solutions in those affected member-states. Agreements, protocols and pacts are being signed day in and day out in an effort to resolve or address regional problems, but very little has been done to enhance these efforts.

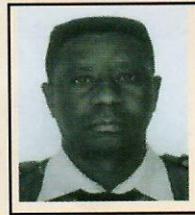
Nevertheless, the situation in some member-states remains calm, probably giving prominent attention to the worst affected states. It will be the duty of the chair-state, therefore, to apply more effort and commit more resources to address the DRC and Angolan situations more directly. It is our hope that the current peace-making developments in the DRC will bring an everlasting solution in that country.

Other than the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in the DRC, it is expected that SADC would in future commit its resources to try to resolve the DRC's problems, either by providing a SADC Peacekeeping Force or other personnel. It is in this regard that the various chairpersons from Lesotho are expected to spearhead positive developments in those affected countries.

Lesotho has had similar security problems in the past; so, the confidence shown by SADC member-states is immeasurable. Therefore, it is Lesotho's responsibility to retain that confidence and lead this region in resolving the current problems it is facing with regard to security matters.

Leadership is nothing but commitment, dedication and honesty. With these few comments, one would expect that those leading the whole show are aware and determined to keep and maintain the status quo. ■

The Chaplaincy in LDF



By Major Thabo V Mohapi

The history of having a chaplaincy within an armed force dates as far back as time immemorial. In almost every army in the world, religion forms part and parcel of the day-to-day activities. The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) is no exception.

Religion within the armed forces arises mainly due to life-threatening situations, operating mobility and the special demands of the service itself.

The role and existence of a chaplain within an army is also recognized internationally, and its mandate is prominent in the catalogue of rights chronicled in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The latter states, "every person shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion".

It is therefore imperative that chaplaincy issues are featured regularly in this magazine, not only to inform LDF personnel and their families about activities relating to religion, but also to conscientise the public at large about spiritual matters.

This function is not only limited to the LDF, as there exists a network of chaplains among SADC countries, under the Southern African Regional Military Chaplain Association (SARMCA). This kind of setting helps to enhance cooperation within the armed forces in the region, including Lesotho, about spiritual issues. More detailed and specific issues will be covered in upcoming editions.

God bless you all. ■

MARA'S Beauties



This is **Busisiwe Mojaki** from Ha Tšosane. She is one of this month's beauties of *Mara*. She is 23 years of age. Her hobbies are watching TV, reading and part-time modelling.

Twins



Busi Mojaki from Ha Tšosane. She is one of this month's beauties of *Mara*. She is a part-time model / part-time modelling instructor. 23 years of age.

***Mara* will feature its beauties for the next coming issues. At the end of the year, the best three beauties will be chosen by our readers, and will win fabulous prizes.**

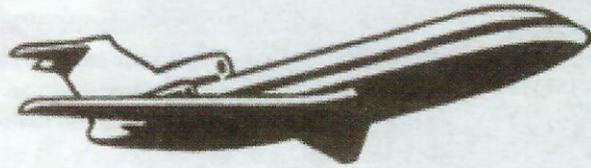
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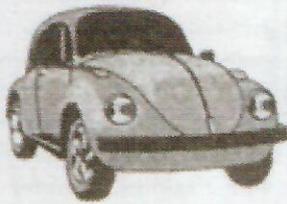


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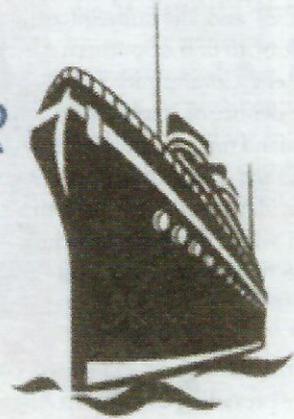


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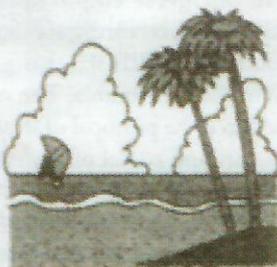
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The 22nd Session of the Interstate Defence and Security Committee



Pte Tšepo Phaila

Lesotho hosted the 22nd Session of the Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) from the 7th to 11th May 2001 at the National Convention Centre.

When officially opening the ministerial meeting, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili said there could be no doubt that the founders of the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) and the subsequent and predictable birth of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) following the demise of apartheid and the pressing demand for economic integration, had in mind the need to address the issues of defence and security. He said this was indicated when bringing Lesotho's matters back to normalcy in the post-1998 elections.

The Prime Minister expressed concern over the prevailing conflicts in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). "I urge all SADC member-states to spare no effort in the resolution of the prevailing conflicts," he said. He also expressed concern at the escalation of HIV/AIDS, and appealed to all member-states

to assist in the fight against the disease.

The minister in the Prime Minister's Office Hon Sefhiri Motanyane said the conference was a historic meeting, in that it was the first meeting since the reviewed Organ on Politics, Defence and Security was put in place under a newly-structured SADC. He

SADC foreign ministers agreed to the establishment of what was then referred to as the Association of Southern African States (ASAS). This was intended to take the place of the Front Line States (FLS) and including its membership the newly independent states of Namibia and South Africa.



The incoming Chairperson of the ISDSC Principal Secretaries, Mrs. Matšepo Ramakoa, who is the Principal Secretary for Defence in Lesotho, delivers a speech at the 22nd Session of the ISDSC conference. Pic by :- Pte M Maputlo

said the latter was a true reflection of the often quoted expressions, "no man is an island and united we stand". It will be remembered that in March

It was only in June 1996 that the heads of state summit established the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, which would be replaced by the ISDSC, which also incorporated the main features of the never-seen ASAS.

The ISDSC was under the leadership of Brigadier General Paulino José Macarigue, National Director for Defence Policy in the Mozambican Ministry of Defence. He put great emphasis on the SADC's Extraordinary Summit held on March 9th this year in Windhoek, Namibia. The summit adopted the protocol of the Organ as part and parcel of the structure of regional co-operation.

The Brigadier indicated that it was



The Prime Minister, The Right Hon Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili (fourth from left) poses for a photo with SADC Commissioners of Police at the 22nd Session of the ISDSC held in Maseru, Lesotho, May 2001. Pic by:- Sgt M Petje

cont. on pg 7

time to hand over the leadership of the ISDSC to Lesotho, saying, "I am convinced that the co-operation and support given to us will also be extended to Lesotho, which is at this point in time taking over the chairmanship."

Ministry of Defence Principal Secretary Mrs 'Matšepo Ramakoa, said it was an honour for Lesotho to host such an important session of the ISDSC. She committed her and her colleagues in defence and security in Lesotho to do all they can to pursue the objectives of the Committee. "We shall continue to work hard within the framework that has been developed by our predecessor," she said.

General L H Lidimu, Chief of Staff of the Mozambican Armed Forces and outgoing chairperson of the defence sub-committee, handed over the leadership of this portfolio to Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng, his Lesotho counterpart. Gen Mosakeng pledged his commitment to do all that was possible to pursue the objectives of the ISDSC, and to continue the work that was developed by the sub-committee prior to Lesotho taking over the leadership role.



The incoming Chairperson of the ISDSC, Director of National Security Mr. Letsapo, delivering his speech at the 22nd Session of the ISDSC. Pic by:- Pte M Maputla

"I am convinced that the co-operation and support given to us will also be extended to Lesotho, which is at this point in time taking over the chairmanship."

Minister Motanyane closed the conference on behalf of the Prime Minister (who is also Minister of Defence). In his closing address, the Minister indicated that ISDSC aims at averting conflict and creating situations in the region that make it conducive to manage and co-ordinate on matters of security. This is done by avoiding wars, which have devastating effects on local populations, and managing conflict properly and effectively. ■

Initiation schools: should they be outlawed?



WO II Ntele Masoetsa

undisturbed.

Perched on the beautiful mountains are small thatched wooden rondavels. Smoke rising to the sky and suddenly a group of between 10 to 15 traditionally-clad young

Unpolluted water flows down the streams of the majestic scenery of the mountains of Lesotho, endangered species of birds twinkle from time to time. Nature remains

Basotho boys are spotted, seated and singing beside a rondavel.

The Basotho have always believed in the cultural transformation from boyhood to manhood. This was done in a customary way through an initiation school (*lebollo*).

A series of events take place during the six-month initiation period, which usually starts around spring-time. This is the ideal period when boys are being transformed into men.

It is quite fascinating to note that Basotho people have always regarded this transformation as a prerequisite to manhood. It is after the initiation that men would get married. A male who had not gone through the initiation ritual was, and is, still considered incapable of leading a successful marriage based on culture and tradition.

A teacher at Makoanyane High School, Pte Tumo Ramokuena, who

cont. on pg 8

Initiation...

cont. from pg 7

holds a BA (Ed), obtained from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in 1987, says Basotho initiation is a culture based on transformation from boyhood to manhood dating back some hundreds of years.

"I spent three months in the remote areas of Peka, going through each and every stage of the initiation," he recalls.

Ramokuena said he was driven by a feeling of inferiority to attend initiation school, because his entire family (brothers, sisters and parents) had gone through this ritual. He said that he did not feel part of the family because he would, in some way or another, be labelled a coward who would have not experienced the bitter part of growing into a real man.

He said he has learned quite a lot in the areas of manhood that include social relations, general responsibility and, most importantly, in culture. "Instantly, I was able to identify and learn all aspects pertaining to manhood" said the soft-spoken Ramokuena.

He refuted allegations of killings, which he said seldom take place. Many of the acts are attributed to what other people perceive as bravery; he said initiates get involved in adventurous events that could appear to be fraught with peril.

He said initiates should be from 24 years upwards, as at that age they exhibit some maturity. "Fourteen to sixteen year olds usually get involved in intolerable behaviour, contrary to what is being taught at the school, in the belief that they are now men", commented Ramokuena.

Ramokuena said he is concerned about certain healers who have turned these cultural practice into profit-making ventures, thereby losing track of what our forefathers saw as beneficial to the Basotho nation.

There was an investigation and evalu-

ation of the Basotho customs and traditional medical practitioners, conducted by Dr Ramokoaoqo Letuka Tuoane of Lesotho Universal Medicine Men and Herbalist Council. He said Basotho initiation is a traditional ritual based on strong feelings of patriotism, bravery and social responsibility.

Dr Tuoane (66), a traditional healer himself, said initiation was conducted in accordance with values derived from culture. "Men who attended this traditional school, turned out to be loyal and brave and were taught security consciousness, they would stay awake all night, yet their general behaviour and conduct, was that of young boys," laughed the healer as he sank in his chair.

Mr. Tuoane said it was a cultural norm that men who were not initiates were labelled cowards who would not face war situations because they had not learned the social responsibilities.

"In fact we need to see a situation where traditional healers and modern medical practitioners work together and share ideas in combating the deadly disease (AIDS)."

Dr Tuoane said it was saddening to note that nowadays certain traditional healers conduct these important ritual as a profit-making venture. He said in the olden days healers were given a cow by the parents/family of a boy who would be initiated. "This was a gesture of goodwill", said Dr Letuka.

He said in an attempt to administer the initiation schools, village committees were set up by veteran initiates who served as watchdogs of the whole process.

Dr Tuoane concluded by saying, it was his hope that messages of conscientising the nation about the importance of the culture would continue. "Our children should be taught about their

cultural origins, lest they forget who they are", said the old man.

The Principal Officer of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) of the AIDS Prevention and Control Programme in the Ministry of Health, Mrs 'Mapitso Matsoha says there have been reports of fatal cases at initiation schools, especially during the circumcision process.

Mrs. Matsoha said her Ministry is not opposed to Basotho culture, "In fact we need to see a situation where traditional healers and modern medical practitioners work together and share ideas in combating the deadly disease (AIDS)."

Mrs Matsoha said traditional healers had to adapt to modern preventive measures, such as stopping the practice of re-using razor blades. The practice contributes immensely to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

She said her Ministry has observed with envy that in the Eastern Cape of the Republic of South Africa, traditional and modern circumcision is done concurrently in an effort to prevent the transmission of the disease.

Dr. Tuoane said initiation schools aren't the same as compared to the olden days. He said boys and girls were not forced to attend these schools, "Every citizen felt bound to go through the ritual as a matter of respect for our culture" said

Dr. Tuoane.

He said, he foresees a very bleak future for the initiation schools, because the Basotho people aren't taught the vital importance of the ritual. He further said he would advise the Government, through the Ministry of Education, to introduce Culture and Tradition in the Primary School curriculum.

Dr. Tuoane said Customs and Traditions cannot be modernized, "How can you do that?" asked the old man in astonishment, "That's the idea of Western civilization, the white people have cut the strings that held us together and now we have fallen apart," said Dr. Tuoane in a sad tone. ■



As I see it

By Major Maaparankoe Mahao

A military force is a function of conflict. Administration of the military force must be understood in the context of Conflict Management. Conflict itself is a broad spectrum with many characteristics and levels.

For purposes of assessing and brainstorming on the strategic management of military resources, one will focus on levels of conflict and thus inculcate a democratic culture in the military command. The high command directly takes its cue from levels of conflict, namely grand strategy, military strategy, operational and tactical. These levels require definition.

- a. Grand strategy is concerned with application of national resources to achieve policy objectives. This is a level of conflict where military and non-military resources are combined to achieve national policy according to the mandate of the government of the day. It is therefore the domain of the political authority in power.
- b. Military strategy is about application of military resources to achieve military aspects of the grand strategy. It follows an assessment of what role the military can play in achieving grand strategic goals. The military strategic authority decides on necessary campaigns and objectives in the given milieu of politics, law and economy.
- c. The operational level is about the formulation and direction of campaigns and major operations to achieve the military strategic directives. It is, in other words, concerned with management of resources committed to the operational theatre. Campaign directives limit an operational commander in his planning and execution of his mission. He/she decides on tactical objectives and sequences them. He allocates

forces and resources and directs their use.

- d. Tactical level is where operations are planned and executed to achieve the operational objectives of a campaign. It is a level where battles and engagements are fought within the limits of campaign plans.

With the foregoing, the role and level and degree of involvement of the civil authority in the Command of the military resources may easily be determined.

Primarily, the Ministry of Defence draws the country's defence policy and oversees adherence to it by the Military. The parameters of military compliance with the policy are those set out by the Constitution and Statutes of the land. It is not an amorphous phenomenon dictated by whims and thus without legal trappings. The policy normally reiterates the role of the military defence of territorial integrity, sustaining the rule of law and internal order, and performing such other functions which may be conferred within the confines of the law.

A comprehensive defence policy flowing from the grand strategy clearly identifies vital national interests within and outside the country and directs their safeguarding by the military and the structure and capabilities arising therefrom. As grand strategic goals shift in response to national survival interests in the competing forces of the global order, so shall the defence policy, posture and composition of the military also alter.

The organisational structures of ministries of defence ordinarily reflect the need for combined civil-military control by way of co-location at a defence

headquarters. The Principal Advisor of the Minister of Defence become the Chief of the Defence Force who is in command and control of the Military and Principal Secretary who is the chief financial accounting officer. The two officers have parallel responsibilities, though one is a civilian at the grand strategic level while the other is at the military strategic level. They thus have to be in constant consultations with the Minister of Defence together or individually and among themselves according to the need.

The role of the staff of the Ministry of Defence collectively is to contribute towards coordinating, determining priorities and allocation of resources to the military and advice to the Minister of Defence.

Parliamentary oversight plays an important role too. It may take the form of parliamentary inquiries and questions in regard to any aspect of defence, whether it is administrative or operational. It may be by way of Public Accounts Committee looking into whether public funds are used in accordance with the dictates of Parliament. It may also be by way of Select Committees. The Select Committee is the one that looks into specific defence issues requiring security sensitivity in handling because open parliamentary inquiries and debate may not be appropriate.

One wishes to conclude by leaving the reader with food for thought from a British Prime Minister who once said:

"You cannot run the details of an operation by politicians around a Cabinet table. You can set straight criteria, strict parameters, and strict rules of engagement. Then, the precise way in which those are carried out is up to the Military". ■

Population growth aggravates unemployment



WO II Selebalo Sebe

If you think that the people you see in Maseru industrial sites and business centres every morning and evening are all working, you better think again. Many of them are job seekers accompanying workers to and from work.

The scarcity of job opportunities in the country, makes many people overcrowd at various places in search of jobs that only a few can get. The unemployment rate is estimated at 35% - 45% (1993) This is found in Strategic Economic Options Study - Phase II, produced by the Ministry of Economic Planning in 1997. They are always patient enough to wait until an employee is fired or removed for what-ever reason, which is quite a rare occurrence, before they can be employed.

As the sun rises, some of them, due to hunger and frustration, resort to crime and immoral behaviour such as stealing, alcohol, drug abuse and prostitution.

Mrs Maleshoane Maapea Rapholo, the Senior Statistician in the Ministry of Labour and Employment says the high unemployment rate in the country is caused by inadequate job opportunities which is aggravated by the high population growth rate of 2.6% per annum. This is shown in the Population census analytical report, volume III B of 1998, produced by the population dynamics of the Bureau of Statistics. "The population is growing too fast while the economy is declining", she said.

She said in the past, many Basotho people were self-sufficient, they did not need to be employed to survive. "They depended on farming, and

they were blessed with good seasonal rains that brought prosperity", she said.

Maleshoane said the livestock diminished with population growth, arable land and grazing pastures dwindled as villages grew and farm produce declined.

Mrs Rapholo said the legal framework for the employment policy has not yet come in force. "We have a draft policy which involves many departments, and soon a national policy will be in place," she said.

"Rural areas have a higher rate of unemployment than urban areas. 204,000 people are unemployed in rural areas while urban areas have 34,000 unemployed people"

She said unemployment rates differ from district to district depending on educational attainment. "Rural areas have a higher rate of unemployment than urban areas. 204,000 people are unemployed in rural areas while urban areas have 34,000 unemployed people", she said.

She said that educational attainments are at the rates of 68.24% for standard 1-7, 14.54% for form 1-5, or 0.36% for A level and 0.34% for degree and above. "Women have higher rate of unemployment than men, with 48.6% while men are at 31.9% rate",

she added.

On the impact, Maleshoane said that her department has not done any study yet.

A middle-aged man, who wished to remain unnamed, waiting for a chance to be employed at Thetsane Industrial area, says he is shy to go home without money. The man from Sefikeng in Berea District said he has been waiting for more than a year now. "I left home with a hope that I would get a job, but it is more than a year now and the money that I had is finished but I am not employed yet, what will I say to my wife and children when I get home without money? He asked.

He said sometimes he gets tempted to steal so that he can survive, but the fear of getting arrested scares him off. "I was once encouraged to steal by my friends, but my conscience would not permit me," he said.

Sarah, also a job seeker at the same industrial area, says that she sells her body to men to get a fare for her daily routine journey to and from Thetsane Industrial area "what else can one do?" she asked "I must live, although I am afraid of contracting sexual diseases including AIDS." She added.

Sarah said she drinks beer to suppress her shyness," she said.

On crime and immorality, Superintendent Sekoateng Serabele of the Police Crime Prevention Unit said he does not see a probable solution as yet. "My patrol has gone as far as Mohale and the Hotel Victoria, where the trend is the same," he said. He went on to reveal that some ladies were taken to factories from hotel Victoria and were offered jobs, which they turned down saying that they could not wait for month to get a salary which they make overnight at Hotel Victoria through prostitution. ■

“Operation Clean Sweep” shows criminals its teeth



Pte Rapele Mphaki

Staff Officer Class 2 (SO2) Operations, Major Malefetsane Maboloka, says the proliferation of small arms used in different types of crimes perpetrated in Lesotho

prompted members of the disciplined forces to embark on Operation Clean Sweep, which ran from 23rd February to 3rd April this year.

He indicated that the unlawful possession of arms, stock theft, drug trafficking and other related crimes were declared as acts of terrorism by the government of Lesotho. He further stated that a joint operation (Operation Clean Sweep) by members of Lesotho Defence Force (LDF), Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) and Intelligence Services had to be conducted to root out those crimes.

“We confiscated 575 different types of weapons, bags of dagga which weighed well over 10,000 kg and we also recovered 2000 livestock. All the suspects have been taken to courts whereby the law will take its cause”, asserted the Major.

Major Maboloka stipulated that the operation became a success because of the good relations between the public and members of the disciplined forces.

The company commander of B11BN, Captain Tšenolo Stephen 'Mako who was operating in the South of the country said although the operation was to be conducted all over the country, they were going to villages where they had suspects.

He pointed out that 71 different types of firearms and rifles, and 439 rounds were confiscated. He said villagers from Mafeteng and Qacha's Nek voluntarily surrendered 27 arms and 159 rounds.

Captain “Mako firmly stated that 137 cattle, 457 sheep, 634 goats, 19 donkeys and

22 horses were recovered while 240 bags of dagga was found.

“Although the resources which were used in the operation were not enough, such as transport, the manner in which the operation was conducted was really good and therefore I was indeed happy”, the Captain gladly said.



Operation Clean Sweep: Members of LDF and LMPS take a break during thier patrol at Mokhotlong along the RSA-Lesotho border. Pic by:- L/Cpl P Shamatla

He recommended that the operation of this nature should be mounted at least three times a year in order to ensure stability in this country. He went on to say that even the presence of the army in different villages countrywide encourages the public, more especially when the culprits are sued.

However, some members of the public at some villages were not content with Operation Clean Sweep.

Chieftainess of Pelaneng Ha-Sebotha in Leribe, Mrs Masebotha Sebotha, complained that Operation Clean Sweep has not brought anything significant in her village except leaving a widow and children with no father.

“On the 13th March, 2001, I was told about the death of Tšele Lebitsa, who

was allegedly killed by members of the security forces. I immediately ran to the scene of crime and found the corpse lying on the ground”, lamented Mrs Sebotha.

The chieftainess said she was very flabbergasted when the police took the corpse before the father of the deceased arrived.

“Although nobody heard a gun shot, I was very suspicious that he might have been killed by members of the security forces because the police did not want to work in collaboration with anybody in this village”, said Masebotha angrily.

She asserted that members of the disciplined forces did not inform her of their presence in that village; she only saw them erecting their tents without her consent.

“I hope I will never see them. I do not want to see soldiers and police going about erecting tents here, they were not cooperative therefore I don't need them at all,” she said bitterly.

Operation clean sweep

cont. from pg 11

The father of the deceased, Mr Phephetho Lebitsa concurred with the cheifainness, and added that he still expects compensation from the government of Lesotho "for the expenses I have incurred as a result of my son's death".

The top brass of the security forces including the Minister in the Prime Minister's office, the Honourable Mr.

Sephiri Motanyane paid a visit to the village of the bereaved family to convey their condolences, as well as assuring the people that the objective of such operations is to safeguard their lives and their property, and not to harm anyone.

A villager of Ha Lejone, Mr Thabo Nkheo, said he was happy with the manner in which Operation Clean Sweep was conducted.

Mr Nkheo urged that soldiers be equipped with sensors that would be used to sense illegal weapons, to avoid situations whereby members of the public may maliciously implicate each other.

"The operation was good and I want to appeal to army commanders to maintain the same pace and ultimately law-breakers will feel obliged to surrender," averred Nkheo.

One of the operatives of A11BN who was deployed at Mphosong, Lance Corporal Lefa Lefeta said although the operation was conducted very well, lack of transport made it impossible for them to go to some of the areas where they had suspects.

He stated that the operation did not meet the intended goal absolutely, because information about it was disseminated to the public before they embarked on that operation.

"I urge that operations of this nature be conducted at least four times a year to discourage criminal activities," he said boldly. ■



Operation Clean Sweep: Arms and ammunition confiscated in joint operations of LDF and LMPS. Pic by:- Pte T. Kharafu

LDF recaptures stolen herds

Pte Rapele Mphaki

The Intelligence Officer of the Lesotho Defence Force, 2Lt Makhabane Kholopane says Lesotho soldiers deployed in Mokhotlong recaptured 300 sheep, 110 goats and 4 cattle that were stolen by South African cattle raiders on 7th February 2001.

Second Lieutenant (2Lt) Kholopane said the alarm was raised by the police on the evening of 6th February, that Basotho herds had been captured by South Africans from kwaZulu-Natal.

"After we got the message, we soon followed on our army vehicles. On the way we had to leave the vehicles because the place was inaccessible, and after having walked about 35km,

Major Thabo Victor Mohapi and Captain Tanki Mothae arrived on a helicopter and assisted us", asserted 2Lt Kholopane.

He further indicated that some of the South Africa citizens seem to be assisted by some Basotho who escaped arrest and went to reside in South Af-

rica. He said the South Africans used M a h l a b a c h a n e , Sangebethu and Langalibalele passes but to mention a few as their entrance and exit routes.

The Company Commander of C11Bn in Mokhotlong, Captain Matela Albinus

Matobakele, said he had started to deploy soldiers along Lesotho and South Africa borders to prevent both South Africans and Basotho from entering both countries unlawfully.

"The fight was so intensive, but we managed to kill three of them and captured one and some took to their heels"

On a different occasion but in the same district, three men from South Africa were killed and one captured by Koakoatsi villagers in a fight on Saturday 17th February 2001.

Mr Tefo Hajaje of Koakoatsi told Mara Newsletter that those South African citizens had stolen Basotho animals and when Basotho men followed their animals, the South Africans peppered them with bullets. He said none of the villages was killed in that fight.

"The fight was so intensive, but we managed to kill three of them and captured one and some took to their heels", explained Mr. Hajaje. The captured man was still in police custody

Mara wishes that an amicable solution be reached peacefully at the borders between Mokhotlong and KwaZulu-Natal. It hoped that further loss of human life would be stopped with immediate effect. ■



Is there gender equality in the LDF?

By 2/Lt Mole Kumalo

Gender inequality is currently one of the hottest issues around the globe in almost every institution of human interaction including armed forces institutions.

The concept of gender is not concerned with the difference in physical attributes between men and women. But it tries to explain the importance of masculinity and femininity in the process of social development. It argues that it is imperative that women are mainstreamed into economic activities, political arena, and social activities. It emphasises that this initiative will not only enhance the status of women, but will also meaningfully contribute to the overall development process.

After the inception of Women In Development (WID) approach in the early 1970s, feminists scholars have argued that the usual inequality between men and women emanates from traditional patriarchal society, which has over time entrenched itself through erection of values and norms that perpetually subordinate women into a lower status in relation to their male counterparts. Feminists argue that true equality can only be recognized through the deconstruction of this patriarchal society.

The notion of security has also over time evolved from the traditional state-centred security. Its main focus was on the conventional warfare to a broader perspective that includes environmental security, food security, human security against disasters and other forms of security.

It is against this background that women argue that the army should shift from being a male-dominated institution, to include women, who are also equally capable of performing at par, if not better than their male counterparts.

In other countries in Africa the issue of inclusion of women into armed forces has been clouded with complexity. In Botswana, for example, women are fighting to be included in the armed forces, while the army does not feel the need to do so, citing the fact that women are not physically endowed to cope with the nature of the army's demands especially in times of war. The ironic part of this debate is that in the American armed forces, women are fighting for their lack of physique to be used as a criterion in allocating tasks so that they are only allocated those tasks that suit their physique.

The balance between the enlistments of women in the army versus the interest of the armed forces is one delicate issue, which

is facing the policy makers and stakeholders in general.

LDF has continued to enlist women as soldiers within the organization. Its policy on women has been non-biased, treating male and female soldiers on an equal basis. The above is evident in the LDF's promotion criteria, which base themselves on the merits and qualities that apply to all soldiers regardless of their sex.

The organisation also boasts the strongest female teams in netball and taekwondo. It also has a unique way of dealing with petty family squabbles and disputes. The LDF command has taken upon its responsibility to contribute to preventing alarming divorce rate within the organisation. The Soldiers Spouses are taken care of by ensuring that they receive the financial support from their husbands. They also deal very harshly with domestic violence, which is very common within male-dominated institutions.

LDF can be proud of itself as one institution that has always maintained an open and democratic policy on women. However, despite these efforts, LDF still is faced with the issue of sensitising its members about the importance of gender equality. It is proposed here that the organization is heading in the right direction. Since the issue of gender equality concerns the public at large, it is also imperative that other organizations follow suit. ■

LDF can be proud of itself as one institution that has always maintained an open and democratic policy on women. However, despite these efforts, LDF still is faced with the issue of sensitising its members about the importance of gender equality.

Water reservoir eases life at Makoanyane



Pte Tankiso Nkoho

The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) has embarked on a water project worth above M48,000.00 at

the Makoanyane Barracks. The project started in February and was due for completion in June this year," said the Officer in charge of LDF projects, Colonel Sebastian Mohanoefefosa.

Colonel Lefosa said there was a water crisis in Makoanyane Barracks during severe droughts and the building of a water reservoir was the only answer to that problem.

The Colonel indicated that the Lesotho Work-Camp Association (LWA) provided twelve members to make the project a success. There are ten LWA voluntary elements and two military personnel at the project site, which was commendable.

Colonel Lefosa elaborated that he initially surveyed the whole Makoanyane landscape and later identified many water sources. The Colonel showed that water shortage has been a persistent problem for a long time, primarily because Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) supply had been inconsistent.

The Colonel bemoaned why they should not have constructed a water reservoir. There are skilled personnel who could build and install water pipelines to supply the whole barracks.

Colonel Lefosa indicated that he consulted WASA to grant them permission to construct the reservoir. However, he did not encounter any problem, but he was advised to consider water affairs rules; that is to allow the flow for downstream residents.

Water supply pipelines from newly constructed water reservoir will be connected to pipes, which are already in use to supply the whole barracks.

The beneficiaries will be all military personnel residing at Makoanyane Barracks as well as military personnel dwelling nearby. The water will also be used for irrigating the fields at Makoanyane during dry seasons.

"We, as Basotho know that, there are grandmothers who have no ones to help during water crisis. They will never be left aside as soon as the project is functioning", Colonel Lefosa said. He added that they will be given



LDF officers inspecting the water reservoir. LDF Chief of Staff Major General Anthony Thibeli and other officers inspecting the new constructed water reservoir at Makoanyane Barracks. Pic by:- Pte T Kharafu

first priority to draw water from the barracks, should the need arise.

The project overseer Lance Corporal Teboho Ntlobo is qualified in spring catchment and source purification. Moreover he did his group built a silt-box, which contains about 500liters.

The Lance Corporal contacted Colonel Lefosa to assist him to introduce the project, after the Colonel had seen the reservoir that L-Cpl Ntlobo built in Sehong-hong on January 1998. That encouraged and compelled the colonel to convince the organization into constructing the similar one in Makoanyane.

"Donors are not reluctant to buy materials," Ntlobo indicated. He added that they will attain their goal, and all materials required for the project are available," Lance Corporal said. Ntlobo indicated that it is possible to complete the work within time frame, however they are experiencing petty

technicalities such as shortage of transport, which may delay the completion. Nonetheless, this could not hinder the progress on constructing the reservoir.

L/Cpl Ntlobo emphasized that the chosen water source will not be affected by severe droughts. He disclosed that it is the source from which they used to draw water with watering cans during severe droughts; its reliability has been tested before. During dry seasons, the source used to fill a litre in 18 seconds. The tank will be a rectangular shape;

length by breadth (840m x 470m) and the height will be 240m. The maximum capacity of the reservoir will be about 40, 000 litres.

"After completion of this reservoir, we are going to proceed with a similar one at Ha Peete in Onglok's Nek. It is likely to commence in September this year," the Lance Corporal disclosed.

Ntlobo thanked the LDF for tireless support as well as the LWA by bringing to the attention of the LDF administration the importance of this project. The overseer further suggested that the military personnel who have skills from which the LDF could benefit should be given opportunity to display their skills in order to develop the army.

A resident at Makoanyane barracks, Pte Thabang Mahanetsa, is very proud of the reservoir, which is now under construction. "The problem of water scarcity will be alleviated," he indicated.

cont. on pg 15

Ombudsman visits the LDF

By Pte Ntlele Ntoi

A two-man delegation from the office of the Ombudsman visited the Lesotho Defence Force command at Ratjomose Barracks *en route* from other government ministries and the parastatals on the 13th June, 2001.

The Ombudsman, Mr. Henry Mohale Ntšaba and the Chief Legal Officer, Mr. Semenekane Moorosi's campaign

is to sensitise the Basotho from all walks of life about the role of the Ombudsman's office as yet another arm of providing social justice in Lesotho.

"The office of the Ombudsman was established under section 134 of the Constitution of Lesotho in 1993", Mr Moorosi said.

In a clear and precise manner these

man's office a chance to exercise its mandated powers, but the disciplinary measures will always remain the LDF private business – you people should be aware of that", Maj Gen pointed out.

However Maj Gen said in some other areas of administration where the LDF may tread on somebody's toe; the Ombudsman's mediation



The Ombudsman, Mr Henry Mohale Ntšaba (sitting centre) with his staff.

Reservoir

A Lesotho Work Camps Association volunteer, Mr Rethabile Joshua, said that they were invited to assist in constructing the reservoir at Makoanyane. "Our policy is to contribute on projects, that are useful to the public not individuals," Joshua explained.

Joshua considers this project as the most challenging and robust they have encountered so far. Usually they mix with ladies when carrying out work camps tasks, but in this project only men were nominated to participate.

On the question of how they are treated Joshua said that they feel at home and the people who do not know them cannot easily distinguish that they are volunteers. ■

two officials unfolded what from the journalistic perspective the local media seemed to have turned a blind eye on since the establishment of this office.

"As an independent institution whose existence is enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Ombudsman will protect citizens and the general public against infringement of their rights by the public sector agencies", Mr. Moorosi further recited his office's mission statement.

The Deputy Commander, Major General Anthony Rachobokoane Thibeli said the LDF understands the role of the Ombudsman's office and welcomes it.

"We will certainly give the Ombuds-

will be welcomed.

"It is good to learn that now we have an independent institution which mediates relations between the individuals and the public sector agencies. But I am sorry I am not available for any further comments since I am not fully conversant with that office's role", was the response *Mara* got from most of the public sector employees.

"We are also for that opinion too!" others would exclaim in unison.

The Ombudsman's delegation met the LDF middle and senior management. It is expected that the Ombudsman's office will re-visit the LDF to conduct some lectures to all, in regard to its role in the near future. ■

EVENTS IN



Botswana Defence Force Deputy Commander (left) Major General Teboho Carter Masire receives a present from the Chairman of ISDSC Chiefs of Defence, Lieutenant General Augustinus Makhula Mosakeng.



The Chairman of the ISDSC Commissioners of Police Major General Jonas Malewa of Lesotho Mounted Police Service delivering a speech at the ISDSC conference.



The Chief of Defence of the South African National Defence Forces (SANDF), General Siphive Nyanda listening attentively.



The outgoing chairman of the ISDSC Principal Secretaries, Brigadier Paulino J. Macaringue, addresses delegates.



The Right Honourable the Prime Minister of Lesotho Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili with the Council of SADC Ministers during the conference.



The Democratic Republic of Congo was also represented at the conference.

PICTURES



Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, the Honourable Sephiri Motanyane (third from left) with the Commander of LDF conveying their heart-felt condolences to the Lebitsa family.



Director of LDF Public Affairs & Protocol, Captain Tanki Mothae (in red T-shirt), is seen here receiving 75 folders donated by Imperial Fleet Services (IFS) for the ISDSC conference.



Participants at the Fun walk during the launch of MARA on 29-04-2001.



Basotho horses plying their skills during the trade fair held at Ha Foso in June.



The three LDF officers undergoing military training in China during their visit to the Embassy of Lesotho in Beijing on the 3rd May 2001. They are with the Ambassador of Lesotho to China, His Excellency Mr. Lefa Mokotjo and his wife. Standing from right are 2/Lt PS Nkeli, 2/Lt ET Nthakong and Lt DS Ramoseeka.



His Majesty King Letsie III inspecting the Guard of Honour during one of his official visits to countries outside Lesotho. He is escorted by Major Kopano Thoola.

Army Commander decommissions helicopters

Pte Tšepo Phaila

The Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Commander Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng officially decommissioned the two BO 105 CBS helicopters at the LDF Air Squadron on Tuesday the 26 June.

tions and that he had been able to use one of them to transport his late mother from Maseru to her home in Semonkong.

Speaking at the same occasion the

endeared themselves to the Basotho especially in the mountains with their display of aerobatics," he said.

The slogan given by their manufactures "even birds are jealous" seemed to have been in conformity with their aerobatics performance" the Colonel asserted.

One of the pilots of the helicopters, 2/Lt Lehloa Ramotšo was in dolour as he had been with them for some time. He indicated that he was familiar with their technical problems and how to counter them. "However the new ones are more powerful," 2/Lt Ramotšo indicated.

The two helicopters were honoured by a parade that was commanded by Major Jonathan Mateka. It is during this parade that Lt. Col. Samuel Makoro and 2Lt Lehloa Ramotšo displayed the capabilities of the aircrafts in a maneuvering march



Lt Gen M. Mosakengs (green beret) hands over the Helicopter keys to Lt. Col. S. Makoro. Pic by:- Pte Teboho Kharafu



The two decommissioned BO 105s choppers in preparation for a spectacular march past. Pic by:- Pte Teboho Kharafu

The two helicopters have been bought by Eurocopter South Africa.

The Commander recalled that the helicopters were LDF's first acquisi-

Officer Commanding LDF Air Squadron, Colonel Thuso Motanyane gave a brief history of the helicopters which he said reflected reliability and durability. "They truly

past.

Major Patlo Matebesi was the master of ceremonies, and the Lesotho Defence Force Brass Band provided music for the occasion. ■

General Mosakeng welcomes Indian instructors



By Pte Ntlele Ntoi

The Indian Army Security Advisor to Lesotho, Brigadier Jasbir Singh, SM introduced a newly arrived Indian Army Training Team

(IATT) to the Lesotho Defence Force command at the Ministry of Defence (MOD)

to Lesotho, Brigadier Jasbir Singh, SM introduced a newly arrived Indian Army Training Team (IATT) to the Lesotho Defence Force command at the Ministry of Defence (MOD) for intelligence, special forces, infantry combat engineering and so forth. The Indian Army has a rich tradition of combat experience; it will be our pleasure to share our expertise with the LDF", said the team leader, Lieutenant Colonel Sandeep Dhawan.

The team's Intelligence Specialist,

Major R.K. Srivasta also commented that whatever intelligence expertise they have they will have to impart to the LDF personnel and that will help make a bond of friendship between the LDF and Indian Army.

"Our training programs will be conducted deliberately, systematically and step by step in a very simple way - the basics and some specialised trainings alike", Maj Srivasta solemnly promised.

The Infantry Specialist, Major Suchindra Kumar who had been an instructor at the unit and brigade level in the Indian Army was also there to express his views, "Lesotho is a new challenge to us. Our aim is to transform the LDF into a professional army and we will strive to achieve that in these two years period".

Brig Singh emphasised that the duration of the training will only be determined by the trainees' reaction and how fast they learn. "Initially, we have to start and then we will be able to tell whether two years will be enough or not. Our aim is to train the LDF instructors so that they can do the work themselves in the future", the Brig said.

Brig Singh further indicated that within these two years he will not change guards since the team members have brought along their families.

The team is expected to meet the Defence Committee prior to the commencement of their training programs scheduled for 1st July, 2001.

Present at this welcoming ceremony were the LDF Chief of Staff, Major General Anthony Rachobokoane Thibeli, the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Khololikane Sebjoe and the Assistant Chief of Staff in Administration, Brigadier Thabo Malikelle. ■



Indian Army Training Team (IATT). Front row from left to right; Sgt. U.S. Bhati, Sgt. M. Kumar, Sgt. M. Singh, Sgt. K. Chand, Sgt. L.B. Mall

Middle row from left to right; Maj. S. Khatri, Maj. S. Kumar, Brig. J. Singh (Indian Army Security Advisor to Lesotho), Lt. Col. S. Dhawan (Team leader), Maj. J. Singh

Back row from left to right; Maj. S. Sethi, Maj. K. Bhushan, Maj. R.K. Srivastava, Maj. S.S. Rawat, Maj. A. Jairam - Pic by:-Pte T Kharafu

in Maseru on the 18th June, 2001.

In his welcome address, the Commander Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng expressed his heartfelt thanks that the long awaited team has finally arrived in Lesotho. "It is indeed a dream come true. Gentlemen, on behalf of the government of Lesotho and the LDF you are most welcomed!" the Gen said.

This 15-strong team comprises 10 specialist officers and 5 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) drawn from various units in the Indian Army.

"We have specialists in logistics, intelli-

"Lesotho is a new challenge to us. Our aim is to transform the LDF into a professional army and we will strive to achieve that in these two years period".

Colonel Nthaila Leoatla's profile

By Pte Ntlele Ntoi

From a tenderfoot boy scout to a no-nonsense army Provost Marshal so reads the story of the Director of Military Police (MP) Colonel Nthaila Leoatla (54) a strict disciplinarian whose primary role is to assist the commander to maintain law and order amongst the LDF personnel.

"I had no intention of becoming a soldier. After I have passed my Std VI in 1967 at the Roman Catholic missionary school at my home village at St. Monica's in the district of Leribe, I had only one thing on my mind - to go to Johannesburg in the Republic of South Africa to seek a job there, my boy", recalls the Colonel.

While Leoatla was still at school he joined the cadet unit and one retired police officer Lieutenant Colonel Baptista Thaka-Lekoala and his fellow colleague Captain John Sehlooho were sent to train them. They were very influential people amongst the cadets and everybody was eager to follow in their footsteps into the disciplined forces.

"No matter how impressive those instructors were, I could not be convinced the other way round, my mind was made up - Johannesburg, the city of my dreams was my ultimate destination", explained the Col. But his masters both Lt Col Thaka-Lekoala and Capt Sehlooho had other plans too. They could stop at nothing to see Leoatla clad in military tunic.

These two police officers approached Leoatla's mother and convinced her that the boy's future was indeed in the military. Leoatla was therefore recalled home and the poor old lady pleaded with him. Finally, Leoatla was obliged to give in.

On the 1st April 1971 Leoatla was amongst the young men who were called in for the basic military training course at the Police Training College (PTC), 'Tippo' as they used to call it.



Colonel Nthaila Victor Leoatla, PMMS, Provost Marshal Lesotho Defence Force. Pic by:- Pte T. Kharafu

At the end of his basic training session Lt Col Thaka-Lekoala, Capt Sehlooho and the BB Alert Security company boss, retired Superintendent Kokobela Lieta encouraged Leoatla to join the band platoon. After some few years with the military band some of his colleagues were eager to resign and go to greener pastures in the then flourishing mining industry in the SA.

"I wanted to go too. We were impressed by some of the migrant mine workers from Lesotho who drove around in luxurious cars, my boy", the Col pointed out.

They were about to absent themselves without official leave and stealthily go to the mines when Leoatla was subsequently promoted to the rank of Corporal. The promo-

tion served as a very good motivation to the newly promoted corporal and his fellow colleagues that they decided to abandon their planned escape to the mines.

"I stayed in the military band, Piper as you know it my boy, until I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. That was in 1986 very soon after the military had got into power. From there I became the commander of the 3rd platoon, C-company of the then Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF)", he said.

"In the following year I left C-company, which was widely known as 'Mito, I, together with other three army officers left Lesotho for West Germany on a three months Rescue and VIP Protection Course. Among other things the course covered rock-climbing and air-assault, and strong and physically fit as

we were, we all passed it with flying colours”, he gladly said.

On their return Col Leoatla was duly attached to a combined anti-car theft and armed robbery task force under the supervision of the Central Intelligence Department (CID).

“Our mission was to crack down on car hijackers syndicates and deal with them accordingly. Many applauded our good cause, and we swiftly managed to reduce the crime rate in the country. The military regime enjoyed good relations with the South African government and other Southern African states too. Their cooperation was highly appreciated in this task”, Col pointed out.

“The blare of our sirens, my boy used to scare the hell out of the robbers all over the region. They had no place to hide in. With the generous support of the South African Police (SAP) we went as far as Botswana and Namibia tracking down the smugglers and car hijackers”, he boastfully said.

Col Leoatla was recalled to the LDF in November 1990 where he attended a six-month Presiding Officer course. “That move helped bring about major changes in the running of the military tribunals”, the Col put forth.

From there Col Leoatla assumed office as the E-1 platoon commander. But it seemed that the top brass might have noticed his enthusiasm for the tunes and sounds of a trumpet and a beat of a drum. He was therefore ordered back to the military band.

“This time around, I went there with a mission. I wanted to improve the standard of our military band. And I am glad to inform you that I have successfully arranged my boys some advanced courses in Bloemfontein. That has brought about some remarkable improvements to the band,” he smiled. Apart from being the commander of the military band, in 1997 Col Leoatla was also installed as head of MP at the rank of Major. “I am also looking forward to improve the MP so as to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. I have been to the SAPS Dog Unit School in Pretoria on a fact-finding mission. We hope to buy some dogs



Colonel Nthaila Victor Leoatla, then six years, sporting a stylish attire.

once we are in a good financial position. The dogs are good human companions and are vital for tight security operations”, he exclaimed.

“SAPS Dog Unit!” I blurted out. And with a relaxed tone the Col reassured me, “Trained dogs only react to given orders. There is no need to be afraid of them. The MP boasts level-headed personnel. I am sure they will make good dog handlers too”, Col explained.

In the 1998 political upheavals in Lesotho Col Leoatla happened to be amongst the LDF senior officers who were arrested and unconstitutionally expelled by the mutinous junior officers.

“On that fateful day, the 11 September, 1998 my boy, I was at Mafeteng when I was informed about the mutiny in the LDF. I rushed back to Maseru. Unfortunately, there was practically nothing one can do to reverse the situation,” he sighed.

“Anyway”, he added, “I went to Makoanyane Barracks to see how my family was doing. In the evening I heard the announcement over Radio Lesotho that the commander Lt Gen Mosakeng and a number of senior and junior officers including me were discharged from the service. My family was troubled, but I reassured them that for the fact that I was going along with our commander they must be rest assured that I am on the safe side”, so he said making an example of rail wagons which can only make a safe journey so long as they are towed along by the train.

The Colonel has been awarded meritorious and 30 years service medals. And he is due for retirement in the near future. When he is off duty Col Leoatla likes to cook for his family and do other household chores. He is a very prosperous commercial farmer who would like to see his farm rated amongst the best in the country.

He is married and blessed with six children. ■

Official Launching of MARA

By Pte Ntlele Ntoi

Standing in the midst of his fellow army officers and his guests of honour, the LDF Commander Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng held a can of 340ml Coca Cola soft drink in the air.

"All rise!" he called out with a beaming face. "To the success of our newsletter, *Mara*, cheers!" Gen. exclaimed as he opened it up.

"Hurrah!" applauded an estimated crowd of around 300 people who turned out to mark the official launching of the LDF newsletter, *Mara* on the 29th April at Ratjomose Barracks.

Then the festivities began. The music played and everybody helped themselves with some refreshments. Braai, beer, wine and soft drinks were abundantly served, by courtesy of the LDF Mess and Marotholi Beverages.

The official launch began with a 9km fun walk or rather say fun run as it

dren alike, came out to cheer on the participants, some shouting, "*Mara* ha a sena lihloela a oela!" thus reciting the newsletter motto boldly printed on the t-shirts of the passing participants.

The Marotholi Beverages Sales Promotions Officer, Mr Halemakale

ble of buying Coca-Cola could join the great multitudes of merry makers who have always enjoyed it.

"We really hope this will help increase our sales too", Mahlaha pointed out.

At Ratjomose Barracks *Mara* Editor, Captain Tanki Josias Mothae and his



The Chief of Staff, Major General Rachobokoane Thibeli, addresses participants of the fun walk which preceded the official launch of Army newspaper, MARA in April this year. Pic by:-Pte S. Mokgoro



A group of participants and well wishers during the launch of MARA. Pic by:- Pte S Mokgoro

turned out to be to some. It started at Semphetenyane, 10km south of the capital Maseru and ended at Ratjomose Barracks. From 07h30 to 10h00 hours approximately, the Maseru by-pass road was chocked with a large number of participants clad in snow white *Mara* T-shirts walking in pairs and groups of 3 to 6 people at the most.

Scores of well-wishers, adults and chil-

Mahlaha supplied the participants with thirst-quenching drinks of ice-cold Coca Cola all the way from Semphetenyane to Ratjomose.

"Our main objective of being here is to entertain you people and advertise our products as well," Mr Mahlaha said.

He further indicated that consumers needed to try their brew so that even those who never took the trou-

team of reporters gave the participants a hero's welcome. With a handshake and friendly pat on a shoulder they were asked, "How was it, ladies and gentlemen?"

"Oh, it was really tough, man! Anyway, enjoyable too", they would say heaving a sigh of relief as they eased themselves into the chairs arrayed in the tents.

"Job well done!" exclaimed the deputy commander, Major General Rachobokoane Thibeli. "You all took heed of road safety precautions; keep it up ladies and gentlemen and you my dear children. We are all grateful to you," the major general congratulated them.

"*Mara* is the people's newsletter. With it you will be highlighted about the latest developments in the Lesotho Defence Force. So each and every one of you ladies and gentlemen is expected to make some inputs and suggestions

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so as to help us run the LDF with transparency. Long live *Mara*!" Maj Gen Thibeli said to the cheering and ululating crowd.

In the press conference convened thereafter, Lt Gen Mosakeng expressed that *Mara* will not in anyway publish anything which is related to party politics, religious sects indifferences or any issues of racial discrimination.

"*Mara* will only publish every developments in the army including the humanitarian aid projects whereby the LDF personnel are involved and other issues of concern necessary for people's consumption only", so said the Gen.

The maiden edition was for free. Everybody got himself or herself a free copy per person.

"Hey, look at this, man!" exclaimed one admiring participant to another.

"It is printed on a quality paper and it is a well laid out magazine indeed. I think it is good for a start, anyway", the other one replied excitedly.

Trooper Khoabane Mpepe of *Leseli ka Sepolesa*, the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) weekly newspaper, also congratulated the LDF: "This is a step forward. We expect *Mara* to counter and discourage the so-called inner sources or the grapevine in our disciplined forces. We are sick and tired of this wilful misconduct so we would like to see *Mara* publishing any developments necessary for people's consumption in time so as to put an end to this misconduct!"

"On behalf of my fellow reporters gathered here today and on my behalf we wish to say, long live *Mara*! Long live!" Mpepe said.

Later in the afternoon bulks of copies of *Mara* were dispatched to all ten districts of Lesotho. ■

A13BN re-training course closure

By Pte Ntlele Ntoi

The Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng says nowadays the prevailing political situation in this country is worse as compared to the ancient days of King Moshoeshe I.

When delivering a speech on the official closing ceremony of the 8th Operation Maluti Re-Training Course of the LDF Alpha Company of the 1st Light Infantry Brigade 3rd Battalion (A13BN) at Ratjomose Barracks parade grounds on the 6th April, 2001, Lt. Gen. Mosakeng said the participants should try to figure out what kind of a soldier does the world prefer nowadays. And what action will be taken against the world's most troubled spots?

"Mind you, Lesotho is a landlocked country, so you as the members of its defence force should not take things for granted. There is an on-going territorial gain ambition amongst the communities in the arid deserts in the Middle East, so how much could this be for our beautiful country Lesotho", warned the General.

The Commander also encouraged the grandaunts to see to it that they learn more about the United Nations Security Council's mission and its mandated powers.

"Discuss this issue with your superiors, read more and watch news broadcasts on television. Do not rely on those treacherous people who often get you into trouble and then turn their backs on you when you are being apprehended", the General said.

Lt. Gen. Mosakeng went on to make an appeal for more grants so that the LDF can purchase more arms and equipment. He solemnly promised the Principal Secretary of Defence Mrs

'Matšepo Ramakoae that the proposed arms will be used properly and be well cared for.

Speaking on the same occasion the LDF Brigade Commander, Brigadier Khololikane Sebjoe said each and everyone should always bear in mind the circumstances that led the LDF in this quagmire.

"It is not so long ago when some of your fellow colleagues turned against their superiors and committed crimes that only served to tarnish the good

One of the participants nominated the best student in physical training, Private 'Mako Mokopu had this to say, "It was not an easy task at all. Everybody was intensely competitive, but the contested position could only be attainable to only one man. I whole heartedly attribute this honour to the rest of my company".

Another participant, a female for that matter, was nominated the well-motivated student of all, and that was Private Puleng Lala. "No matter what happened I never put on a long face



The Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force Lt Gen A. M. Mosakeng closing A13BN re-training course at Ratjomose Barracks. Pic by:- WO11 G Nkhetše

image of our military force," Brig Sebjoe reminded them.

"Our Southern African Development Community (SADC) counterparts are still keeping in touch with us and are convinced we are still on the right track and understand our role better," concluded the brigade commander.

Out of 117 participants drawn from various sections within the LDF 109 successfully passed their retraining course.

and I also encouraged others to take it easy as well. Perhaps, that was the reason why I was nominated the winner in this category," Lala smiled.

Amongst the guests of honour, were honourable members of the Interim Political Authority (IPA), the Chief Director of National Security Services (NSS) Mr Boomo Letsapo, the Indian Army Advisor to Lesotho Brigadier Jasbir Singh, the Principal Secretary of Defence Mrs 'Matšepo Ramakoae and other high-ranking army officers. ■



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Exercise "Senna ka Thata" of A13BN

By Ndele Ntoi

Dwarfed by the vast escarpment of the Makhoarane plateau, the three platoons of grim-looking infantrymen laboriously trod along the dusty country road meandering all the way to the top.

At approximately 0800 hours all sections of the L.D.F Alpha Company, 1st Light Infantry Brigade 3rd Battalion (A13BN) were converged on an all round defence by a swampy stream running east of Ha Jobo. A little while thereafter they formed up according to their

and with their rifles held out at a ready position, they subsequently darted forward, dived, rolled and crawled to the covers. Right away they could tell by the crack and thump of the bullets whizzing over their heads that they have been lured into the enemy's effective range.

A chill of fear overwhelmed them and for a moment they all held their breath in panic. One reached out for the strap of one's steel helmet, quickly tightened it up and braced oneself for what might happen.

us," shouting on top of his voice.

The enemy was located 200m in front and cleverly deployed in a position, which could be easily defended. These mighty warriors tried to hit back but their counter-attack failed to get foothold. The enemy forces swiftly outsmarted them.

Meanwhile, a hoarse voice rang through a field radio transmitter, "attention all stations, attention all stations! Point



Orders group: A13BN section commanders taking orders from their platoon commander. Pic by:- WO11 C Lebabo

respective sections and headed south in an arrow head formation.

Hardly had they gone for a mile or so when the point section of the first platoon suddenly came under heavy enemy fire. In a flash of a lightning, those wearily looking men and women warriors readily sprang into action.

They broke up their formation hastily

"Are we going to be shelled upon? Perhaps, we are forced to retreat under fire, what will happen to us? Where are other friendly forces now? And what are they up to?" They could not help asking themselves this stock of crazy questions. At the height of this tense moment someone yelled out, "Should anyone see the enemy; indicate its position to

section is under heavy enemy fire! I repeat, point section is under heavy enemy fire," cried out a Company Commander who went further to request more reinforcements from his battalion commander. The enemy's might could only be matched by a mechanized platoon, so the Company Commander had analysed the situation.

Simultaneously, the right flanking Sec-

tion 2 hastily joined Section 3 on the left. Jointly they came to the rescue of the embattled point section and by their accurate fire they were able to keep the enemy's heads down with a hailstorm of bullets. The point section was thus relieved and tactically withdrew some few hundred metres.

While that skirmish was well underway, light armoured personnel carriers (APCs) - five in all - swiftly rumbled into position, getting ready for the final assault on the enemy's positions. All their guns were trained at the enemy's trenches sites and fired accurately. Their support weapons superbly overlapped and intersected. The enemy was pinned down and thus overwhelmed.

The APCs were supported all the way by the infantrymen from the point section; the latter then went back into action. From a distance one could see those gallant men and women swiftly advancing on the enemy lines moving like shadows under a cover smoke. The APCs charged in 3-2 up formation. The air was filled with a choking smell of gunpowder and on and on they charged.

Could it be not for the fact that 'a battle field is like a small crowded club' so the saying goes; I imagined they could have heard the enemy's radio operators' bitter cries of anguish, desperately calling for either more reinforcements or any possible means of evacuation. The dying and the wounded crying out, "Medic, Medic," in awful fainting sobs.

When the APCs drew closer to the enemy's positions both Sections 2 and 3 ceased fire. They grabbed their weapons and quickly got out of the harms way. The APCs were coming. They robustly stormed their way into the enemy's crumbling defences and swiftly charged through. The area was severely devastated. What had been a well fortified enemy's hideout was then rocked and reduced to a heap of smouldering rubble of sand bags and scattered supplies.



*Alpha Company infantrymen make a dash for cover as the enemy laid down a barrage.
Pic by:- WO11 C Lebabo*

They were a few hundred metres out of the killing ground when the APCs quickly turned around and took up the defensive positions around the place. The section commanders went around and checked their men. Only two sustained minor injuries.

A search party was formed and sent back into the heart of the killing ground.

They came back carrying three bullet riddled target boards sprawled on a field stretcher. They were taught in their training, however, that in accordance with the Geneva Convention all prisoners of war and the wounded deserve a fair and humane treatment, and that was exactly what they were portraying.

From there the Alpha company infantrymen formed up with their rifles slung over the shoulders they marched out triumphantly descending the hill to their troop carriers idling along the dusty country road. The final phase of the mock operation, "Exercise Senna ka Thata" was over. Exhausted as they were, they broke into a song glad that their passing out day was just around the corner.

When the *Mara* reporter and his cameraman met Lieutenant Montoeli Ramoqopo and his team of instructors who had been working behind the scenes to make this exercise a success, the smile on his face gave the impression that everything went according to plan.

I had a chance to chat to some of the participants, namely, Privates 'Maphori Manko and Gladys Tšoene, Mothibi Mothae and Seabata Mohoanyane.

Pte Manko voiced her grievances about her male colleagues, "At one stage in this re-training course I once lost contact with my team mates at midnight and I wandered aimlessly until I was found at first light the next morning. Our male colleagues did not give a damn about us." Manko complained.

It was during that night's navigation exercise - an 18-hour long trek from Tšakholo to Matsieng - that Gladys had one of the most terrible experiences of her life. "At one moment our team-mates set a high pace and due to the weight of my kit I could not help keep up with it. I felt so tired that I eventually broke down and cried bitterly. I never experienced such a painful ordeal before. My feet were sore, my heart, head and shoulders were painfully aching too. I felt much better and quite relieved after I had shed some tears. It was so amazing. Anyway I stood up and kept on going until I got to the finishing point safe and sound on the next day," Gladys said.

Both Ptes Mothae and Mohoanyane encountered some problems too but they bore it all with stoicism.

"We treated our female colleagues as our equals. They showed up a great competitive spirit every step of the way. We are proud of them," so they said. ■

LDF opts for a better judicial system

WO II Selebalo Sebe

The Military Justice System of Lesotho Defence Force, differs from that of the state in that it is a jury system". This was said by Lieutenant Justice Nkuebe Sekhonyana of the Defence Force Legal Department, during a recent interview.

He said that like in the American system, the Lesotho Defence Force has opted for the jury system because on the panel, there are at least three people to decide the fate of the accused member.

"The Judge Advocate advises the panel only on matters pertaining to law, otherwise the judgement is decided by the panel." "They may even have to vote", said Lieutenant.

Lieutenant said that since the Judge Advocate may be a civilian, he may

only advice on law technicality, and the panel being expects of military discipline code, decide the fate of the accused, based on stipulated sentences for offence. "The voting is usually make in favour of the accused."

Lt. Sekhonyana also said that the office of the Attorney General has a big say in the military justice system. "He advises the convening authority, the Minister of Defence who becomes the confirming authority after sentence have been passed, legally on to drafting of documents relative to both convening and confirming authorization.

He said the main role of the legal office is to prosecute all members irrespective of their ranks and or designation. "We can prosecute up to

the highest rank, with the higher ranks possibly requiring a bigger panel," he said.

He said that the peak of the system is the court martial appeal court, convened with two judges of the high court ordered by the Chief Justice and a retired military officer with legal experience. "This marks another say by the Ministry of Justice into our system", the lieutenant added.

Lt. Sekhonyana said although his department has such a big responsibility, it has no primary jurisdiction on some outstanding cases like murder, culpable homicide, treason and rape.

He went on to say that the military leads such a life that what would otherwise not constitute an offence in public life, may constitute an offence in the military. "The accused person will often be found guilty", he said. ■

Crime soars in the capital

Pte Rapele Mphaki

Why is crime so rampant in the capital town of Lesotho? Robbers trade in stolen goods, shoplifters are engaged with their evil activities, girls and young women dump infants into the toilets. Is it because the thinking of our forefathers was different as compared to today's thinking or is it because of congestion of people from the rural areas who are seeking jobs?

When one passes adjacent to any huge building he/she sees a group of three to five dirty boys aged between 14 and 18, wearing dilapidated, torn, dirty clothes, asking for twenty cents from anybody who passes by.

What do they want? Do they make themselves available in the streets simply because they want to rob workers of their money and cell phones?

Are the policemen on foot patrols in

the streets still keeping an eagle eye on lawbreakers?

According to the Police Public Relations Officer Superintendent (Supt) Sekoateng Serabele crime has a tremendous impact on the economy of any country, and that the declining of crime contributes to economic growth.

The superintendent further asserted that as compared to the previous years crime rate in Maseru has declined because they (police) had to change strategies as an attempt to combat crime early this year.

"Initially we used to patrol Maseru by vehicles from Maseru Central Charge Office and Maseru Police Head Quarters (PHQ), but this year patrol vehicles from all Maseru out stations have been included to patrol the big town", stated Superintendent

ent Serabele.

Superintendent Serabele was mainly concerned about the porous nature of the legal systems in Lesotho, which allow culprits to go free through the bail system and ultimately interfere with the investigations.

"It is not easy to combat crime because some elements within the police are corrupt, thus they are easily bribed by the criminals and they give sensitive information to law breakers", he emphasized.

Supt Serabele recommended that strict laws should be proclaimed with the purpose of eradicating corruption in this country. He urged Basotho people to abide by the law.

A member of the public who did not want his name to be divulged concurred

cont. on pg 29

A day in the life of ... a factory worker

By WO II Seleballo Sebe

Maleshoane, a factory worker at Thetsane Industrial Area, wakes up at 04'oclock every day of her life to prepare for the most difficult journey to Thetsane Industrial where she sometimes has to foot it during the bad days of a month. "Due to pressure from the family problems and some personal needs, one does play sick sometimes to get relieved and attend to them", she disclosed.

She says when she started working at the factories she could hardly believe herself to be working under such conditions, which she could not get used to. But with time she got acclimatised to her new work environment. "What can one do? At first it was a bitter pill

to swallow but I am getting used to it now", she says she goes to bed at 10.00 o'clock at night, but often at 12 midnight depending on whether she would be delivered first or last from the overtime.

Maleshoane says she has very little time to attend to her husband and children because of the working conditions in factories. "If one talks about a family problem, she is told to choose between work and family", revealed Maleshoane. She said her husband complains about these conditions, which affect both their children and him. He only has to keep a law profile because he is also working for a very little salary which if his wife can sit down, he can not afford the ever ris-

ing needs of life.

"In this strenuous life, there is not even time to go on leave. One may only rest during the Easter holidays or during the Christmas vacation when the bosses also go abroad for holidays," regretted Maleshoane.

One may understand that overtime work is done voluntarily, but it is not the same with factory workers. Let us hear what makes factory workers to be always doing overtime work. "We are paid the minimum wages at the factories, so as to get to average or maximum we are obliged to work longer hours so than we may get a better salary at the end of the month", clarified one elderly woman. Is that a life to be? ■

"Operation High Light" against border crime

WO II Ntele Masoetsa

Lesotho Defence Force, in conjunction with Lesotho Mounted Police service joined forces to combat rampant crime in Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek district from the 3rd to 8th June 2001.

Patrols were conducted from

Litšoeneng area of Mafeteng to Makhaleng (Mohale's Hoek) along border of the Republic of South Africa and Lesotho.

There had been reported incidents of illegal cross-borders, stock theft, car theft, dagga smuggling which resulted

in exchange of firearms brought from South Africa and related crimes.

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) also conducted patrols along their country border. Both forces also worked closely with the police serv-

cont. on pg 30

Crime ...

cont. from pg 28

with the Police Public relations Officer regarding the issue of criminals who bribe the police.

Another member of the public who also wanted to remain anonymous lamented that he was once robbed of M700.00 at Maseru Bus stop early this year, and immediately after the incident he reported the matter to the police.

"I haven't got my money back and I am very astounded why the police have not yet arrested those robbers because they are familiar with them,

but absolutely nothing is being done to them", complained the robbed man.

He appealed to the government to deploy military personnel in the streets of Maseru in order to deal intensively with Criminals because according to him if the number of criminals increase, what is at stake at the end of the day is the economy of this country.

The latest official figures starting from the 1st January to February 2001 on murder, robbery and car theft are 41,13 and 18 respectively. The figures from January to December 2000 are

550 cases of murder, 727 of robbery and 450 of car theft. 152 vehicles have been recovered between January 2000 and February 2001.

Is eradication of corruption or combating of crime a one man's task in this country or should all people at different levels from different organizations such as the government, members of disciplined forces, churches, non-governmental organizations, chiefs, politicians, teachers etc come together for negotiations and ultimately come up with good resolutions? Or what exactly has to be done? ■

SPORTS

“LDF Football Club” to beef up their squad with young Lads



Pte Sakeng Lekola

The Assistant Coach and a player of LDF FC Corporal Motheo Mohapi (Six to Six)

says young men aged 18 to 22 can build tough and strong teams.

Cpl Mohapi explained that they lost most of the games in the tournaments which were held at Setsoto Stadium on March this year due to several reasons including players who were injured some were too old to play against teams which were participating in that

tournament and some were selected to play for the National Squad which was to play against Zimbabwe at the end of March this year.

The Assistant coach appealed to supporters of LDF FC not to give up for their ambition is to win. He promised that now that most of his players are young men, he would not lose even a single game.

“ I have learned a lot in that tournament, if such tournaments are held again, I promise not to lose I can face

any team”, Cpl Mohapi promised. He mentioned that he was not happy about the results of that tournament because he was expecting to win.

In that tournament held at Setsoto stadium, where four teams including Green Mamba of Swaziland were participating, LDF FC took the 4th position. The Deputy Director of Sports in the LDF, Major Melato Lehloka said that the aim of holding that tournament was to give Green Mamba a good practice for it was preparing to represent Swaziland in the Cosafa games. ■

“LDF Netball Team” urges for support

By Pte Sakeng Lekola

The assistant Coach of LDF netball club Mrs Mamahali Moalosi says if LDF throws its support behind her club, many people from outside the LDF can support the club as well.

Mrs. Moalosi said netball is not supported in the country because there is lack of sponsorship. She added that lack of suitable playgrounds and proper training equipment affect the team's performance.

The assistant Coach mentioned that the club consists of nine players, six

of whom are in the national squad. She further said that the club is considered the best in the country.

She showed the importance of self-sufficient team, because at the present time LDF has only 9 players and always has to borrow three from other units, which results in inconsistency within the team.

One of the players, Lerato Malefetse said that a good player should always dream of winning and therefore train hard to fulfil that dream. Malefetse is considered the best defender in the country.

In the ESALO games, which were held in South Africa on March this year, the LDF netball club took the third position. It was its first time to participate in such games. According to the Deputy Director of sports in the LDF Major Melato Lehloka, ESALO games will be held again in September this year at Bloemfontein in South Africa and LDF will be represented. It will again participate in All African Military Championship, which will be held in Kenya on February next year. Major Lehloka mentioned that sports within the army promote friendship between the LDF and other forces. ■

“Operation High Light” against border crime

cont. from pg29

ices to apprehend the perpetrators of these crimes.

The whole operation was a success. “Our presence deterred these unlawful acts and the local population was quite happy,” said the overall commander of the operation, Captain Khethisa ‘Mota of the LDF.

Captain ‘Mota said it would be best

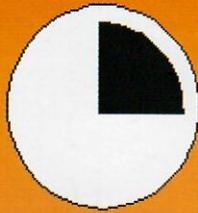
to conduct regular patrols of this nature from time to time. Even though the locals were happy about the presence of these law enforcement agencies, Captain ‘Mota was concerned about people who were scared of their lives to reveal the names of these perpetrators for fear of being victimized.

2/Lt Makhabane Kholopane of Lesotho Defence Force said a permanent deployment of troops should be established at Mafeteng that would regularly patrol the borders. He said community policing should also be

put into regular practice in conjunction with village anti-crime committees. ■

Letters to the editor should be directed to

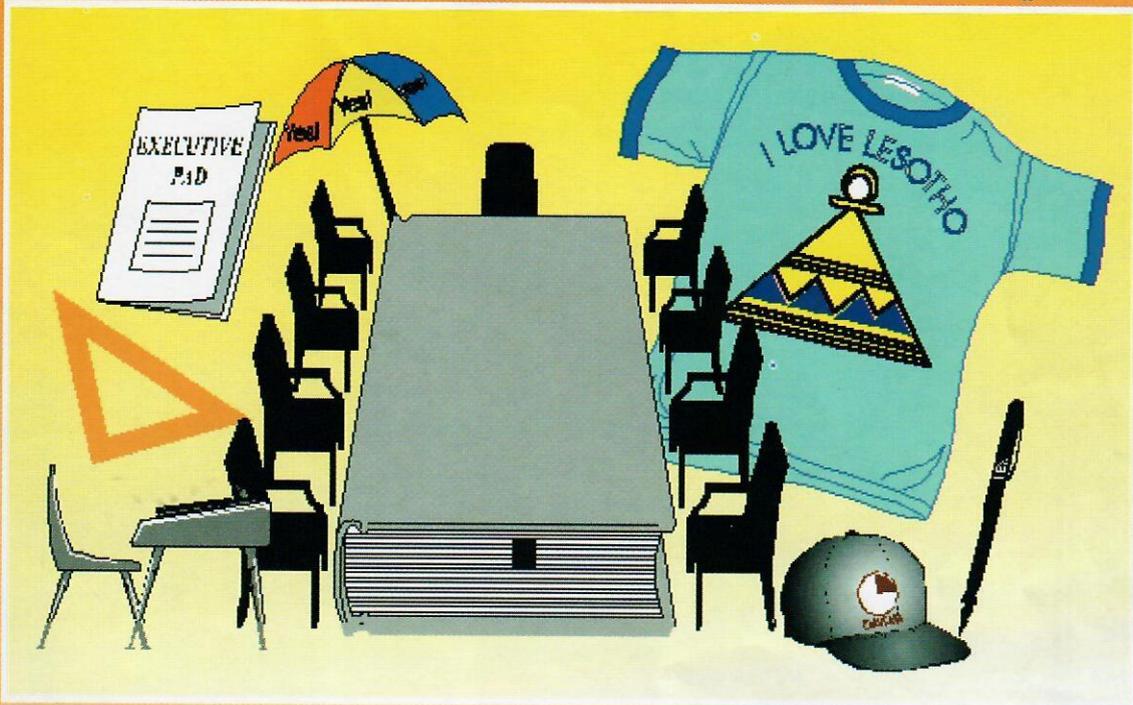
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