

SHOCK DISCOVERY could destroy trust between parties at vital negotiations

Mystery of ANC phone taps at Codesa grows

■ **Crossed wires:** Mysterious telephone tappers have been bugging the ANC at Codesa. While they may have picked up a few secrets the real damage has been the destruction of trust at the vital talks.

BY PETA THORNYCROFT

SOMEBODY, somewhere in South Africa desperately wanted to hear what the ANC was saying on its telephones just before Codesa 2.

So they tapped them, all three lines, and those of the South African Communist Party. It wasn't us, said the South African Police. It wasn't us, said the Ministry of Defence. And the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications didn't say anything at all.

But **INSIGHT** has independent documentary evidence that the ANC's telephones were almost certainly tapped for at least two days just before Codesa 2.

The SACP's lines were also tapped, but for a shorter time.

And, miraculously, the day after interference was discovered, the lines showed up clean.

Trust

Tapping telephones is part of South Africa's culture of the very recent past. Trade unionists, activists, liberal churchmen, journalists and a host of other people deemed to be potential "enemies of the state" all have telephone tapping stories to tell.

But what shocks politicians such as Democratic Party leader Zac de Beer, is that anyone could be under any kind of surveillance at Codesa, where building trust is of the essence.

INSIGHT has established that the ANC suspected it had company on its telephone and fax lines in the run up to Codesa 2. So it called one of a handful of companies in Johannesburg with the expertise and equipment to detect taps.

The company ran some tests and the computer printouts of the results showed someone, somewhere had put something on the lines either inside or outside the World Trade Centre at Kempton Park where the ANC and the Government were locked in negotiations.

When the security company technician discovered what he believed was proof that the lines were being interfered with, he checked them inside the World Trade Centre and also the single junction box in the complex, situated fairly high up in the centre of the building.

Agitated

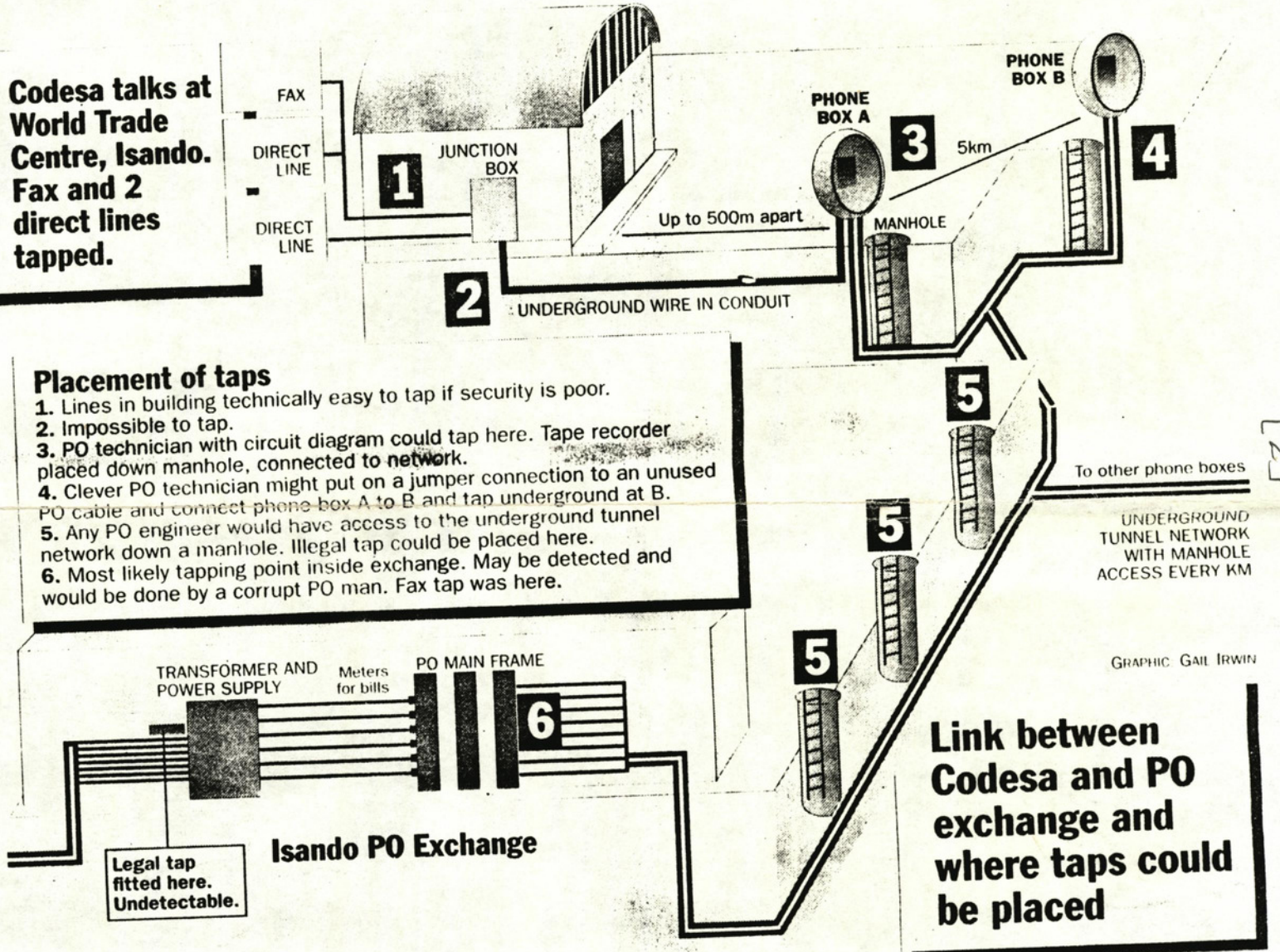
"A Telkom engineer was nearby and offered to get us a ladder. He seemed agitated and then disappeared for about half an hour," said ANC official Joe Cotton.

The next day the lines were all clear. **INSIGHT** obtained the printouts from the ANC. But the organisation would not say which company had undertaken the tests for "ethical" reasons. "We undertook not to identify them," said Joe Nhlanhla, head of security. So **INSIGHT** sent the printouts to Andy Grudko, technical director of the private information agency INEQ and president of the South

Codesa talks at World Trade Centre, Isando. Fax and 2 direct lines tapped.

Placement of taps

1. Lines in building technically easy to tap if security is poor.
2. Impossible to tap.
3. PO technician with circuit diagram could tap here. Tape recorder placed down manhole, connected to network.
4. Clever PO technician might put on a jumper connection to an unused PO cable and connect phone box A to B and tap underground at B.
5. Any PO engineer would have access to the underground tunnel network down a manhole. Illegal tap could be placed here.
6. Most likely tapping point inside exchange. May be detected and would be done by a corrupt PO man. Fax tap was here.



African Council of Civil Investigators.

He confirmed that the equipment used to test the lines was sophisticated and that tests had been carried out to check voltage and current as well as more subtle measurements.

He disagreed with some of the technical conclusions — for instance, where the taps could have been connected for two of the ANC's lines — but agreed that the results of the tests indicated something was wrong.

He also agreed with the company hired by the ANC that the location of the bug of the fax machine could have been in the Isando exchange, but that the other two could have been anywhere on the underground cable between the box outside the World Trade Centre and the Isando exchange.

Grudko said he was always cautious about being categorical, but given the results of the tests, and the fact that the readings changed from day to day on three different lines when no faults had been reported, he would have told the ANC, had they been his clients, that he suspected their lines were being tapped.

INSIGHT's investigations established that the taps were not officially sanctioned by the authorities. A legal tap is permissible only when state security is at stake and cannot be detected.

A permissible tap would be placed at a point which is electronically isolated from the

subscriber's circuit between the exchange and the telephone. There is no known equipment that can pick up a tap which has been placed where there is sound but no electrical impulses.

However it is widely accepted in the security industry that some companies have acted for Government agencies when it was anticipated that official sanction for a tap would be refused.

In addition, well-placed sources in the industry said there have been, and almost certainly still are, Telkom technicians who will put taps in place both in the exchange or under the street box to supplement salaries as low as R2 000 a month.

Sanction to tap the ANC at Codesa would never have been official v sanctioned, and the analysis of the tests on the ANC's line indicate that as at least the tap on the fax machine was in the Isando exchange, and maybe the other two lines as well, evidence points to the endeavours of a Telkom technician.

Shocking

Only a Telkom engineer would have had circuit diagrams to show him which of the underground cables to tap into, and Grudko said it was unlikely that a security company would have been foolish enough to put a tape recorder inside a street box where it might have been discovered by any number of people.

"It is difficult to deduce from the evidence exactly what happened," said Zac de Beer. "But if it is true that any agency connected with government caused the ANC lines to be tapped, then it would be a shocking breach of the sort of mutual trust which is absolutely essential to good faith in negotiations."

"I hope this matter can be fully resolved in a very short time because otherwise it may well have an adverse effect on the vital negotiations which we are now entering."

The SAP, which usually motivated taps in the bad old days, says it has had nothing to do with the ANC's lines. Police Minister Hennis Kriel said shortly before Codesa 2 that the ANC requested permission to sweep its offices for bugging devices, and nothing was found. He did not mention telephones.

However Andy Grudko had some advice for the ANC. "Use those lines for disinformation to throw the other side off balance. See who reacts and then you'll know for certain who ordered the tap." Or, he said, the ANC could buy a scrambler, a la John le Carre or the CIA, for a cool R50 000, and then no-one would be able to listen in.

An Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) delegate to Codesa, Bruce Anderson, said he thought tapping the ANC at Codesa was shocking. "But we all know it goes on here." The IFP had routinely had its lines checked at Codesa but gave up after a while.

GRAPHIC: GAIL IRWIN

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**Western Cape Region****URGENT**

4 June 1992

The Head
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For attention: Zola Skweyiya

Dear Zola

re: STATE VS DAVID DLALI

Cde David Dlalali, a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe is charged in the Cape Town Supreme Court of being in possession of certain weapons, namely:

1. A Baretta and Makarov pistol;
2. 1 AK-47 rifle;
3. 4 handgrenades;
4. 2 limpet mines;
5. 30 AK-47 bullets;
6. 29 x 9 mm and 2 x .22 bullets.

It is alleged that the above items were found in a room in the backyard of certain premises situate at No62, NY 137, Guglethu, the premises of Cde Dlalali.

Cde Dlalali was arrested on Tuesday, 7 April 1992 and within a period of one month a trial date was set in the Supreme Court. This is obviously a show trial. Cases of this type are normally held in the Regional Court and it is the first occasion on which a trial involving these offences is heard in the Supreme Court.

It is common cause that Cde Dlalali that Cde Dlalali was a member of MK and we cannot dispute or deny this fact. We also cannot dispute the fact that he was in possession of the above weapons.

If convicted of these offences Cde Dlalali obviously faces a term of imprisonment and more than anything else we fear that this trial is being used by the state for propoganda purposes. In fact the lawyers are convinced of this fact.

We believe firstly that every effort should be made to keep Cde Dlalali out of jail and secondly an attempt should be made to counter the propoganda.

The People Shall Govern !

The lawyers involved in this case are of the view that the following persons should be called as witnesses:

1. Persons who can testify at the trial as to the character, work and educational record of Cde Dlaki. We may add that Prof. Jakes Gerwel has agreed to be one of the witnesses. As Cde Dlaki is a trade unionist employed by FAWU, somebody in the trade union movement will testify as to his work record.
2. Somebody who can testify as to the meaning, import and significance of paragraph 3 of the DF Malan Minute. The aspect of our evidence in mitigation is vital. There must be some evidence on record which brings to the attention of the Court in clear terms what the ANC and the government have in fact agreed to particularly in regard to weapons already in the country at the time of the signing of the agreement.

In the latter regard the lawyers have strongly recommended that the following witnesses be called:

- (a) Pravin Gordhan, who can testify as to the fact that bilateral talks are being conducted between the government and the ANC with regard to the question of arms, etc and that this process is taking place within the context of Codesa;
- (b) Thabo Mbeki, who can testify as to the terms of the various minutes and agreements reached at a bi-lateral level. There are no witnesses in Cape Town who have direct personal knowledge of these issues.

We have considered this matter and we feel that it is important for our organisation to be seen to be supportive of Cde Dlaki. The issue is a highly emotional one in our area particularly within the ranks of MK as there is a feeling that the organisation has abandoned them. We strongly urge that this issue be treated appropriately with due regard to its sensitive nature.

This matter commences in the Cape Town Supreme Court on Tuesday, 9 June 1992. In the circumstances an urgent response is required.

We look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Yours in the struggle

Willie Hofmeyr

Willie Hofmeyr
Assistant secretary

cc: Secretary-General, ANC; President, ANC; The Commander, MK Cde Joe Modise, Thabo Mbeki and P. Gordhan.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Western Cape Region

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No of pages (including this one) 3

Attention Cde Pravin Gordan

From Willie Hofmeyr

Message See attached letter

In the event of unclear or faulty transmission, please phone 021-4485651