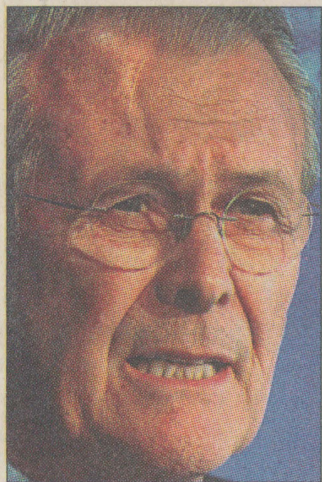


# Rumsfeld backtracks on Saddam /5



# THIS DAY



**STRONG ARM:** Police carry a protester off the Old Potchefstroom Road in Soweto yesterday during a demonstration against the installation of prepaid water meters.

PICTURE: SAPA

## Police use stun grenades to disperse protesters

LUVUYO KAKAZA

JOHANNESBURG — Police, wearing shields, helmets and wielding batons, used stun grenades yesterday to disperse about 100 people who had blockaded the Old Potchefstroom Road in Soweto in protest against the installation of prepaid water meters in the sprawling township.

The demonstrators blocked the

road for three hours from 8am, causing traffic jams in both directions and forcing motorists to use alternative routes.

A policeman was injured after being hit on the head by a stone and had to be rushed to hospital. About 10 protesters were arrested and charged with public violence.

Virginia Magwaza Setshedi, a spokesperson for the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, said the

communities of Phiri and Dlamini in Soweto were opposed to the installation of prepaid meters because they considered these led to water cut-offs.

"In the past residents used to pay an affordable flat rate of R62 for water per month. With the new system residents have to purchase a R20 coupon that buys you 10 000 litres. This is not enough for one household with more than 10 fam-

ily members," said Setshedi.

Phiri was the first township in Soweto to have prepaid water meters when the City of Johannesburg installed them in March.

Residents are already complaining to councillors about leakages.

They say that because of the leaks they end up paying more for water.

Setshedi said several meetings with councillors had produced no

success. "We have been promised that they will come back to us but we've been waiting for too long," she said.

Captain Mbazima Shiburi, a police spokesperson, said the protest was "illegal".

He said the crime combating unit had to be deployed to disperse "the rowdy crowd".

"No one talked to us about the planned march," said Shiburi.