

Background issues outlined by Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi

ACTION NEEDED NOW

All races and the international community must now join hands in removing apartheid and establishing a democracy in South Africa, says the Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

The State President, Mr F W de Klerk, will "sink or swim" by his ability to establish a new government based on a universal adult franchise system.

Stirring events would be happening in the next unfolding of South African history and there was more fluidity than ever before. There was one certainty and that was there was no prospect whatsoever of a return to Verwoerdian apartheid.

Outlining factors in the current political situation, Dr Buthelezi said that having "moved down to the very centre of gravity of South

"I am ready to be dealt a negotiating hand. If we talk about negotiation taking place within the framework of what I call "centre-stage" politics, then I believe Mr F W de Klerk is not that far away from being ready to be dealt a negotiating hand. Do we sit frozen while others get their act together? Or are we going to be pressurised into participating in negotiations in which there is the revolutionary veto right or the "abandon-the-negotiations-to-destroy-them" element?"

Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, October 1989

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destroy-them' element.

"It is I think becoming clear that Mr de Klerk has won some kind of respite in terms of mounting international pressure against South Africa. There are now heightened expectations of Mr de Klerk doing something or other of significance which will at least make it very difficult to gain international consensus about harshened action against South Africa.

"Britain's Prime Minister, Mrs

Do we sit frozen while others get their act together?

REVOLUTIONARIES WON'T WIN IN SOUTH AFRICA

“There are no prospects of a revolutionary movement bringing the South African Government to the point where it has to sue for peace as in Mozambique and, as it was, Rhodesia.

“There will be no final and definitive military advantage to revolutionaries in South Africa as there was in both Mozambique and Angola. It was such a military advantage that brought the Portuguese and Mozambican Governments and the Rhodesian Government to the point where they had to negotiate for humanitarian reasons.

“These Governments knew they were beaten by the revolutionaries and it was vital for them to capitulate before they were put into the revolutionary shredding machine.

“Nobody in their right mind would look at Mr F W de Klerk and say he is doing what he is doing because he is driven to despair and is trying to capitulate in order to save lives in South Africa.

“Behind Mr de Klerk there is a very vast and yet hardly used military and State might that could be employed to not quite perpetuate, but certainly prolong, the balance of power in the State/revolutionary equilibrium.

“Mr de Klerk appears to be the first State President to be facing up to the fact that the politics of prescription has ended. Mr de Klerk’s predecessor did not consult any blacks when he established an entirely new political constitution for South Africa. He did not consult any blacks before he disbanded the old Provincial Council system and replaced it with what really are despised Regional Services Councils.

“We were not consulted when the South African Government formed the homeland policy which has caused such political strife for so long.

“My guess is that in the very first year of his Presidency, Mr de Klerk will at least attempt to set matters right . . .”

What role will the international community play?

Margaret Thatcher, has adopted a very firm position and this alone must introduce international complications in reaching consensus for even more further and more punitive action against South Africa.

"Inside South Africa there would also appear to be somewhat of what one can perhaps call a loosening up of the political situation. The release of Mr Walter Sisulu and the other seven and the evidence that they are producing that Dr Nelson Mandela is counselling the kind of moderation that is compatible with putting the politics of negotiation on track, is important in this regard.

"I am adopting a cautious position which some would perhaps even call jaundiced. I have been in politics a long time and I am intensely aware of the dangers of regarding facades as new structures. Past political campaigning and what amounts to decades of constant endeavour, have a kind of momentum all of their own. Some politics cannot be switched on and off at the drop of a negotiating hat.

"There is nothing that has yet persuaded me that the ANC is even thinking of taking up its place at a negotiating table as an equal amongst equals. At this stage of development, one can hope for the ANC's inclusion but I am quite sure that politically they intend coming either with a recognised

veto right or with a "departure to wreck if necessary" intention.

The ANC, the UDF and COSATU only have the momentum of whatever politics of confrontation they have generated behind them. When dramatic politics stops, their steam is shut off.

"There are no indications that the ANC/UDF/COSATU trio, or the ANC and the UDF separately, could stomach a constituency-based organisation like Inkatha or have to deal with a white minority which, with Zimbabwean hindsight, will make sure that minority group protection really is that and will remain that for as long as minority groups feel they need protection.

"There are live politics in the air, on the ground, in black townships, in vast squatter areas and in black society generally. There is a kind of political vitriol poured out over me, Inkatha, over any and all black local authorities and indeed over all who caution against political adventurism.

"There are street corner committees, there are groups of comrades, there are the working elements in civic associations, trade unions and other organisations which are out of rational reach. The whirlwinds that have been sown in them will have to be reaped.

"Where you had the then Rhodesian army fighting the army

of the Patriotic Front, you could talk about a cease fire. You could talk about a cease fire between SWAPO with its allies and South Africa with its allies. You can talk about a cease fire between Frelimo and Renamo. But who talks to whom about, for example, the violence in KwaZulu/Natal? I cannot offer a cease fire simply because I am not at war.

"I am also quite sure that there is no constituted ANC/UDF/COSATU high command sending, deploying, recalling and controlling violence against Inkatha.

"There is just a bloody awful mess in which the philosophy of killing for political purposes has already been permeated into active sections of the population and they are proceeding like some kind of killing automatons out of control.

"We really do have to look at realities when we look at how to put a halt to a whole process which has been shaping South Africa up for a winner-takes-all conflict. However far that final conflict is ahead of us down the road, how realistic is it to think of suspending everything and leaping into future defining negotiations?

"I am asking questions which are not rhetorical questions because I do not have the answers. The ANC has not yet revealed a strategy hand. We do not know what decision-making weight the ANC Rivonia trialists will have now that they are released.

"The outside world must be careful in likening South Africa to pre-independence countries like Zimbabwe or Mozambique . . . A great many people regard South Africa as some kind of blown-up version of these countries. They see revolutionaries in exile returning home to become a Government returned from exile and they make the analytically fatal error of judgment of looking at white society in South Africa as they looked at white society, say, in Zimbabwe. White South Africa is not dominated by expatriates who can be repatriated or who have somewhere to go when the going gets tough. South Africa is, for whites in the country, an end-of-the-line country. It is a live, do or die country . . ."

Dr Nelson Mandela is not yet released. Even though there are some indications, there are some hopes, we in fact do not know how he will put his own political act together.

"We do not know about him and his Robben Island/Pollsmoor colleagues in the broader unknowns of what is going to happen now that Mr Oliver Tambo will quite clearly not take up the presidency of the ANC again. The ANC is somewhat hung by its own consultative conference petard. One is due next year. Does the National Executive make their own choice of successor and present a *fait accompli* to next year's consultative conference? If it does not do this and Mr Alfred Nzo continues as caretaker until the consultative conference receives nominations and selects a successor, we have a headless ANC in the critical six months ahead.

"Then of course there is a sense in which the hastier negotiations are put on track, the more parties have to arrive there with whatever they have got. Look at this situation in which the South African Government will be at the negotiating table, supported by whatever facilities there are in each of the Government Departments, the President's Council, the Human Sciences Research Council, the Afrikaans-speaking universities, a hard core collection of top Afrikaans industrialists and, amongst others — probably one of the most important — the Broederbond. Then look at other negotiators around the table and ask fundamental questions about equality and fairness in negotiation.

"If you did some back-of-an-envelope sums and looked at the millions that Scandinavian countries give the ANC, at the millions that come to it and its South African working allies from the EEC; if you look at what churches and interdenominational donor agencies make available to the ANC and its partners, you would end up with telephone number figures.

"If you then looked at any other South African group present at the negotiating table and asked questions about the relationship



Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha.

between equality and fairness in negotiating positions and financial, political, diplomatic and other backing, you would be looking at the kind of gross inequalities which have significant political implications.

"Add to this the absolute certainty that negotiations in South Africa will not be "big-bang"

negotiations" which result from one party suing for peace and the other party being prepared to cut short the time and the consequences of a final defeat in return for at least some give and take, like there was at the Lancaster House talks.

"When I look across all the factors involved and bring each

Will the ANC be prepared to negotiate as equals?

“The State President, Mr F W de Klerk, cannot succeed without blacks and I, as a black, cannot succeed without whites. Both he and I must give effect to the already established fact that political interdependence between black and white must follow the already irreversible economic interdependence that there already is. The President must succeed in doing not what whites want but what blacks demand.”

Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi

into focus and add them all up, I am quite sure that I am right when I say that negotiations in South Africa will be part and parcel of the process in which these very issues are confronted, teased out and their problems solved.

“We do not, however, have even rudimentary consensus on this last statement. We have not even got the mechanisms of achieving rudimentary consensus outside the political process which negotiation will turn out to be. We have to do a lot more thinking about pre-negotiation strategies and I am terribly concerned that attempts will be made to build negotiations on foundations which are nothing but political myths.

“It is a myth that the ANC, UDF and COSATU want to negotiate in the sense that Mr F W de Klerk wants to negotiate. I and Inkatha are already far enough away from Mr F W de Klerk and the National Party in this regard to create awesome difficulties. Those who are political light years further away are talked about as though they are around me and Mr de Klerk.

“These are the kind of background issues and the underlay and overlay of South African politics which led me a couple of years ago now to propose that the international community also be dealt part of the South African negotiating hand.

“I suggested that consensus be reached at international level about which foreign government would represent the merits of what South African party in pre-negotiation jockeying.

“I suggested that whatever government with acceptable bona fides could represent, say, the ANC's interests to a government which represented, say, the National Party's interests, should get together with an international commitment to make the outside world work for peace and successful negotiation in South Africa.

“Negotiation is a process. As this process unfolds, foreign

governments with their embassies in South Africa would be in a position to establish a permanent Secretariat in South Africa which could act like some kind of negotiating ombudsman. At least this way there would be mechanisms of parties in South Africa talking to other parties about the kind of issues I am raising here.

“We could of course say that there is nothing other to do than to run with the balls that are thrown us and catch whatever ball bounces near us and the negotiating thing will work out one way or another. There are a lot of negotiating wreckers who would love to play that game. Maybe we will have to deal with them because playing this game is all we will be able to do.

“I make the point that West European Governments who hold international community trump cards, have not shown signs of being able to deal with South African complexities in the sophisticated way in which these complexities should be dealt with. The blundering of sanctions show this.

“Perhaps we would in fact be better off by dealing them all out of the South African negotiating game. We cannot do so, however, as again the sanction blundering has shown. There is the real prospect that international impatience just wants something to start along the negotiating road in South Africa, regardless of whether it is a good start or a bad start. The international cry is for action and action now.

“The international community is keen to have “something” to start going in South Africa, regardless of what the results may be. The same attitude is shown by the international community on the sanctions issue. The hardships entailed in sanctions for ordinary poor black people is of no consequence to them, as long as sanctions get the international community off the hook from those who are pressurising them both there and abroad.”