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P.W. BOTHA QUILTS HIS PARTY IN DISGUST OVER APARTHEID TALKS
JOHANNESBURG, MAY 6, REUTER - FORMER PRESIDENT P.W. BOTHA
SAID ON SUNDAY HE HAD QUIT SOUTH AFRICA'S RULING NATIONAL PARTY
(NP) AS A PROTEST AGAINST THE APARTHEID REFORM PROGRAMME OF HIS
SUCCESSOR F.W. DE KLERK.

BOTHA TOLD THE AFRIKAANS-LANGUAGE RAPPORT NEWSPAPER, WHICH
HAS CLOSE LINKS WITH THE NP, HE HAD DECIDED NOT TO RENEW HIS
MEMBERSHIP BECAUSE OF HIS DEEP DIFFERENCES WITH THE PRESENT
PARTY LEADERSHIP UNDER DE KLERK, WHO OUSTED HIM LAST YEAR.

HE SAID THE FINAL STRAW WAS THE INCLUSION OF SOUTH AFRICAN
COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER JOE SLOVO IN THE AFRICAN NATIONAL
CONGRESS (ANC) DELEGATION WHICH HELD HISTORIC TALKS ON
POWER-SHARING LAST WEEK WITH DE KLERK.

SLOVO, FORMERLY THE ANC'S TOP MILITARY COMMANDER, WAS
BRANDED PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE UNDER BOTHA'S PRESIDENCY.

DE KLERK SAID IN A STATEMENT BOTHA'S DECISION WAS BASED ON
WRONG INTERPRETATIONS.

HE SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE HE WOULD ONCE AGAIN BE FORCED TO
REPUDIATE THE FORMER PRESIDENT.

+IT IS A PAINFUL TASK BECAUSE OF THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION
MR BOTHA HAS MADE TO THE NP AND TO SOUTH AFRICA,+ DE KLERK SAID.

A SENIOR NP SPOKESMAN SAID BOTHA'S RESIGNATION WAS TRAGIC
BUT WAS OF NO CONSEQUENCE BECAUSE OF HIS MEDICAL CONDITION.

BOTHA, 74, WAS FORCED TO RESIGN THE PRESIDENCY AFTER
SUFFERING A MILD STROKE, FROM WHICH HE HAS NOT FULLY RECOVERED.

IRONICALLY, THE NP LAST WEEK PAID TRIBUTE TO BOTHA'S PART IN
LAUNCHING THE REFORM INITIATIVE WHICH LED TO THE SUCCESSFUL
TALKS BETWEEN THE ANC AND THE GOVERNMENT.

BOTHA LAUNCHED THE NP ON THE ROAD TO CONCILIATION WITH THE
BLACK MAJORITY BY HOLDING TALKS WITH THE MOVEMENT'S DEPUTY
PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA WHILE THE ANC DEPUTY PRESIDENT WAS
STILL IN JAIL.

DE KLERK AND THE ANC DELEGATION, LED BY MANDELA, SAID IN A
JOINT STATEMENT ON FRIDAY THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH A PRELIMINARY
ROUND OF TALKS IN CAPE TOWN ON REMOVING OBSTACLES TO FULL
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN WHITES AND THE BLACK MAJORITY.

THE EXTREME RIGHT-WING CONSERVATIVE PARTY (CP) SAID BOTHA
HAD QUIT BECAUSE HE HAD CORRECTLY JUDGED DE KLERK TO BE SOFT ON
COMMUNISM.

CP LEADER ANDRIES TREURNICHT SAID SLOVO AND MANDELA AND
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ANC DELEGATION WERE ALL GUILTY OF TREASON
BECAUSE OF THEIR SUPPORT OF A LOW-LEVEL GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST
THE WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT.

+MR BOTHA COULD NOT STOMACH IT ANY LONGER AND THAT IS WHY HE
HAS GIVEN UP HIS MEMBERSHIP. IT IS A VERY SERIOUS BLOW FOR THE
NP AND MR DE KLERK AND REFLECTS ON HIS LEADERSHIP,+ TREURNICHT
TOLD THE SUNDAY STAR NEWSPAPER.

REUTER ADS HP PS
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