

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

MEMORANDUM FOR DISCUSSION WITH BRITISH PARLIAMENTARIANS VISITING
SOUTH AFRICA UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CHAMBER OF MINES OF SA
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One frequently hears statements about how complex the South African situation is because the situation is indeed complex. Complexity, however, does not defy analysis. Right courses of action in simple issues are either/or courses of action. In complex situations the right thing itself cannot be so simple. We have to be conscious of the need to think our way through complexity. Having then understood a complex situation, one is then in an advantageous position of having a multiple choice to make between many things all of which are good and constructive.

It is the complexity of the South African situation which provides that a diversity of inputs can be made to assist in bringing about change. I as a black leader therefore see the complexity of the South African situation as a challenge that can be met. We must, however, get a number of things straight before we do so.

The first thing I think we should do when we consider South Africa at large is to focus on the time element. The need to do so is very apparent when one realises the extent to which Black South Africans in their masses are totally convinced that apartheid is ~doomed and that we will have a new society in which there will be political rights for all. For us apartheid is not invincible. We have both chipped away and smashed away at the granite facade of apartheid as it was in its earlier decades of existence.

Afrikanerdom is no longer monolithic. The National Party is not only irreconcilably opposed to the Conservative Party and vice versa but inside the National Party verlig and the verkrampt factions vie with each other to direct the policy of the State from within the National Party Caucus.

As Blacks we know that it is just pure pipedream for Whites to believe that there can be any unscrambling of the total interdependence between Black and White in the economic field. We know this gives us negotiating power which can only increase as White dependence on Blacks - which is already there - becomes an overwhelming political factor. Economic interdependence must lead to political interdependence. We know that.

When I talk about the need to focus on time, I point to these realities and say that there is a time lag between realities on the ground in this country and perceptions of them. I would put the media, speaking generally, something like two years behind the movement of real politics in this country. They can capture what a politician does today. The media has proved hopeless in predicting what is going to happen in politics tomorrow.

The battle for trade union rights for Blacks was not won on the day that legislation was amended to make trade unions for Blacks legal. The battle was not won on the day on which Professor Wiehan was appointed by the Government to go into the whole question of black trade unionism. The battle for black trade union rights was won before that; these things were all the consequences of victory - the consummation of battles won.

If you read press reports of black trade unionism prior to the appointment of the Wiehan Commission you will find that the press was unaware of the extent to which there would be capitulation on the part of Government.

If you look at the 1975/77 period you will find that the press in South Africa, and the foreign press for that matter, in the first place did not predict the upheavals of 1976 and 1977 and once these upheavals had erupted to astound them, pressmen presented a South Africa in which the South African Government was on the run from unstoppable unrest and violence. In 1977 the press did not predict the commanding position the Government would be in in 1979.

There is an absolute dearth of analytical journalism in this country. The media lives on a day-to-day diet and there is an ever-present tendency to report the dramatic. The dramatic is what is saleable and it is saleable whether or not it proves previous dramatic stories were far-fetched over-reactions or not. There is no evidence whatsoever that the media is actually smarting in the realisation of the extent to which it blundered in 1976 and 1977.

We again had this phenomena emerging in the 1983/84 period when - many people in West Europe, North America and elsewhere perceived South Africa going up in flames and perceived the 'violent left marching unstoppably forward. It is these perceptions which live on even when events quieten down. And when people forget the detail of the false drama reported, they are left with background impressions which continue to work away regardless of what is actually happening in South Africa.

The whole disinvestment scene is one in which this kind of thing is happening. It was the drama of 1982/83 leading to the sensational reporting of 1984 and 1985 and President Kaunda's warning of

holocausts and blood-baths that fired the decisions made in board rooms to disinvest. It was the drama which politicians picked up in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World as sticks with which to beat the West which further internationalised the whole question of whether to disinvest or not. '

The fact that apartheid has run out of steam and the fact that the South African Government can go nowhere without obtaining black co-

operation is irrelevant. I have just been to Switzerland and Germany and the impressions I gained there are that pressure is increasing on board rooms to disinvest. That pressure is going to

continue despite the fact that any objective assessment would show that sanctions have not achieved the objectives that were hoped for.

The vast ' majority of : Black < in . this country do not want disinvestment but this also is irrelevant to the process in which pressure will continue to mount against countries to withdraw from South Africa. You are here as guests of the South African Chamber of Mines and Chamber officials will tell you that the number of Blacks employed on South African coal mines has been reduced by nearly six per cent. That means thousands upon thousands of jobs lost. In turn that means tens of thousands of people who are worse off. Where is the gain they ask me?

There is no such thing as limited disinvestment as far as a black worker is concerned. When one man loses his job his whole world is shattered and in the high dependency ratios of non-workers on workers, this means something like ten to 15 or more of the worker's family and relatives have their world shattered.

The glib media treatment of the drama in today's news does not unearth the basic ongoing political process in the country.. In that process black bargaining power has grown because of structural factors in politics and in society. You cannot have an expanding industrial economy in which the minority are White and the majority are Black and keep Blacks hewers of wood and drawers of water. Economic expansion alone ensured that Blacks escaped the fate of being drawers of water and hewers of wood.

The normal distribution of skills and aptitudes are there in black society as well as white society and when efficiency demanded merit, Blacks with the right skills had to be brought in and had to be trained. The Apprenticeship Act had to be scrapped and the regimentation of migrant labour had to be abandoned in favour of scrapping Pass Laws and Influx Control Regulations. Black mobility came with black skills and the de facto black presence in so-called white cities made nonsense of apartheid's dream.

All sorts of factors began evolving outside the view of the drama-hungry media. Black society began changing and there was an outreach by Black to Black across all the barriers apartheid has attempted to establish not only between Black and White but between Black and Black as well, and everywhere nuclei around which black bargaining power would begin to evolve came into existence. I now actually laugh to myself when the Government is sometimes so earnest in presenting plans of what I know to be impossible.

The Tricameral parliamentary system cannot work now and it had no chance of working right from the beginning. It has radicalised black politics. It has deepened black anger and it has brought no political gains for Whites. I now know beyond all shadows of doubt that the present constitution will be scrapped. I know that the ruling National Party already knows this but the national and international media continue reporting as though that is a battle still to be won. It is already won in the sense that we now know that the scrapping of the constitution is inevitable. It was won because we opposed it.

All sanctions can now do is to curb the underlying political process in which black bargaining has been growing and before which apartheid has been rolled into a precarious political existence. I am not saying that the struggle for liberation has been won. The going is going to get a lot tougher than it has ever been before. All I am saying is that we are ready for that toughness and we know that it will be the toughness of the final push to victory.

This is not idealism or wishful thinking. It is political realism. I know that the politics of negotiation is going to succeed because when I look around me I see the armed struggle having failed and continuing to fail as far as we can see ahead. It is the normality everywhere where you look in the maintenance of essential services and in keeping the country's transport, electricity and water supply systems entirely intact, that will call forth the politics of negotiation.

Nothing that violence can now do will change that. You can be quite assured that every possible effort already has been made by revolutionary forces to bring the South African Government down and to make it impossible for the politics of negotiation to succeed. South African revolutionaries want a revolutionary victory and nothing else. They are no different to revolutionaries anywhere else in the world. Now, however, they have to make hideous onslaughts against Blacks as well as Whites and that has produced all sorts of backlashes.

The time-lag I am talking about is there dating perceptions among the disinvestment lobbyists. As President of Inkatha I lead the largest black political constituency ever to have emerged 'in the history of this country. Inkatha has the largest youth and women's brigades that have ever existed in the history of South Africa. Over 1.6 million Black South Africans have already put their hands in their pockets to take out the cents they can ill afford to become card-carrying members of Inkatha.

Inkatha's leadership is elected by these ordinary grass-root people. Inkatha's policies are determined by these ordinary grass-root people. Each and every year Inkatha's leaders are held accountable to members at an Annual General Conference and each and every year policy is reviewed. Inkatha is black people alive and well in politics doing their black thing under black leadership pursuing black objectives. Inkatha says no to the armed struggle; Inkatha says no to disinvestment. And when Inkatha says no, it is not a few leaders expressing personal views. It is a voice of a very significant sample of the Black people of South Africa who speak when Inkatha speaks.

South Africa is complex and I ask you to take what I say about time seriously and to look at structural realities in politics and in society at large rather than be guided by the short-term view drama of the media. Not a factory in South Africa is closed now because black politics is intent upon destroying the whole South African way of life - the free enterprise system, a multi-party democracy and all else that goes with them. Black politics does not want to do this. Black politics wants to enter the status quo and to transform it.

Inkatha will be there next year; it will be there the year after and it will be there when the cookie finally crumbles. The vast majority of Black South Africans will pursue the time-honoured objectives of gaining entry into all those areas Whites want to keep sacrosanct unto themselves. We will gain entry into government and we will command government. Of this we have no doubt. Do not adopt dramatic acts conceived in desperation because you believe that South Africa could go up in smoke, or even worse, believe that apartheid can go on and on and on.