

MEMORANDUM FOR PRESENTATION TO H.E.  
AMBASSADOR AHMED ABULKHEIR, OAU OBSERVER TEAM

BY MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER OF KWAZULU  
AND PRESIDENT OF INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY

ULUNDI : FEBRUARY 11, 1994

Mr Ambassador, I have no words adequate enough to thank the Egyptian Government for the reception that

I and my colleagues received in Cairo during my official visit to Egypt. Right from His Excellency, President Mubarak to the humblest Egyptian citizen we met, we were received with nothing but friendliness and brotherhood. My colleagues and I will remain forever grateful for this reception.

We cannot thank you and the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mr Moussa, sufficiently for all that you did to make our visit such a memorable experience. Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Your Excellency, welcome to Ulundi. As a Peace Monitor you are no doubt anxious about the potential for violence inherent in the Freedom Alliance's refusal to participate in the April elections unless our minimum demands have been met. Without evading the issue, I would like to ask the more relevant question: How many observers realise the threat to peace and stability that is posed by the present Interim Constitution?

The 1993 Interim Constitution, as a number of constitutional experts have warned, is a fatally-flawed document which takes no cognisance whatsoever of South Africa's racial, cultural and ethnic diversity. While it is the only constitutional safeguard that the citizens of this country will have after the April elections, it guarantees no powers to the people in the regions. Nor does it prevent a future government from abusing state power or from concentrating state control in the centre. As such, it remains a sure-fire recipe for conflict, and even civil war.

As an observer, and a foreigner at that, you would not have failed to be struck by the peculiar complexion of South African society. It is, in fact, an understatement for me to say that South Africa is a deeply divided country, which is riven along race, class and religious lines. While economics, religion and sport have all brought people together, ultimately it is only federalism which will bring lasting peace to our country.

We in the IFP have always believed that it is only federalism that can accommodate the diversity that is to be found in South Africa. We are sure that it is the only system of government which can give force to the demands of self-determination which are embedded in the Afrikaner, the Tswana and the Zulu peoples, and other racial and ethnic groups. We also know that it is the only system of government that can reconcile the conflicting needs of a strong government to promote economic growth and the devolution of power to satisfy the desire for self-government.

But while most, if not all, constitutional lawyers and academics agree with us, sadly the ANC and the

National Party do not see it in that way at all. They believe in a strong central government which can subjugate the wishes of the regions to the centre. They therefore argue for more power for the centre and not less. In the talks that the Freedom Alliance have had with them it is from this premise that they have usually started their bargaining.

I will not now go into detail as to why the IFP believes that federalism is the only system of government that will bring peace to our country. You, like most non-South Africans, no doubt find the whole federalism debate daunting, if not confusing. But what I would like to say is that I think you and others do not need reminding that accumulating power in the hands of central government is only asking for corruption, poverty and conflict.

Despite this almost self-evident truth, the ANC are adamant that an over-powering central government is needed to bring democracy and prosperity, and have thus set about writing a constitution which would give effect to their beliefs. Finding a willing partner in the National Party, they have therefore proceeded to foist their two-phased transitional process to writing up a final constitution on all other parties. We in the IFP were dead against this two-phased process to the writing up of South Africa's constitution. We knew then, as more and more people are now beginning to realise, that it would lead to the majority party writing the constitution on its own and in so doing destroying any hope of securing federalism.

Armed with this knowledge the IFP objected to this two-phase process. Time and time again, we argued for a single phase to the writing up of a constitution before the election. Time and time again we objected to the setting of an election date before we had even decided on what the form of state was that South Africa was to take. With our calls falling on deaf ears, we then had no choice but to withdraw from multi-party talks. But although we withdrew from multi-party talks we never did withdraw from negotiations with the ANC and the National Party. We appreciate, as well as you do, the need for a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems.

In the beginning of our bilateral meetings with both the ANC and the Government, we discussed ways and means to pave our return to talks. When our efforts to return back to the negotiating table failed, we then turned our attention to making a contribution to the Interim Constitution which had been finalised at the World Trade Centre. That too failed when the ANC and the Government left us behind in the mad rush to complete the drafting of the Interim Constitution by the deadlines that they had set themselves.

Despite the contempt with which the ANC and the National Party had shown us, the IFP persevered in its efforts to have the interim constitution amended. We continued to make the effort to meet the ANC, although they usually refused to discuss any substantive issue save questioning our bona fides in wanting to reach a settlement or our commitment to fighting the election. To illustrate what I mean, after 3 days of talks during December, not one single minute was devoted to addressing the Freedom Alliance's reasonable demands. Instead, the ANC wasted valuable time on nit-picking at the wording of our commitment to participating in the proposed election. If anything, that meeting with the ANC proved once and for all that they were not serious about accommodating our demands.

The Government for its part had taken to reneging on agreements which would have satisfied the Freedom Alliance and paved our way to participate in the elections. At the trilateral meeting on January 19, the Government's Minister of Constitutional Development, Mr Roelf Meyer, made a complete about-face on an earlier agreement which we were completely satisfied with. He flatly denied the status and validity of the proposals the South African Government and the Freedom Alliance had agreed upon in December. He reneged on his own undertakings, stating that the bottom line proposals discussed in December were only to serve as a departure point for trilateral negotiations.

So what are our demands? All that the Freedom Alliance is asking for is that some original powers be vested in the provinces, the fiscal autonomy of the provinces be assured, provinces be given the right to write up their own constitutions and that their autonomy be protected from the discretion of the Constitutional Assembly when that body sits down to write South Africa's final constitution after the elections.

In addition to these four issues, we also made the reasonable demand that the draft Interim Constitution be amended to take into account the amendments which were made after the Plenary Session of the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum. These amendments referred to issues which were previously settled but were reopened because of the last minute deals which were struck between the Government and the ANC. They included the issue of adoption of a single-ballot paper in place of the double-ballot paper, the deletion of the name KwaZulu from the name of the province of KwaZulu/Natal and securing the position of His Majesty King Zwelithini Goodwill ka Bhekuzulu as the Constitutional Monarch of KwaZulu/Natal.

Much has been said of the Freedom Alliance's brinkmanship and our alleged habit of shifting the goalposts. This could not be further from the truth. The press blew our demand for a double-ballot out of all proportion because they, themselves, as liberals, are aware of the threat to democracy that the single-ballot poses. We have never merely asked for the double-ballot. Our demands, as I have just told you, are a package. All are important. All are needed to be met in order to secure a reasonable degree of devolution of power.

Yet this does not stop the press from questioning our commitment to finding a peaceful settlement to our country's problems. I find this deeply insulting. Of all the political parties it has been the IFP who has always fought for a negotiated settlement. When the National Party and the ANC were still intent on destroying each other through war, it was the IFP who were calling for them to sit down and negotiate. Also, the press cannot tell me what mayhem will happen if we do not fight the election: we are already experiencing it on a daily basis! We, more than any other party, have been on the receiving end of violence. The ANC's armed wing uMkhonto we Sizwe have since the mid-Eighties set out to destroy our party. To date up to 360 of our leaders have been assassinated. Thousands more of our followers have been killed. When the press talks of a possible civil war, they conveniently ignore the death and destruction which is already taking place in the East Rand and in this region.

But despite the continued strategy to wipe the IFP off the face of the earth, despite the Government reneging on agreements and despite the unwillingness of the ANC to accommodate our demands, the IFP has along with the Freedom Alliance negotiating partners continued to meet the Government and the ANC in the hope of achieving a breakthrough. In an effort to settle the constitutional question of the Zulu King, I along with His Majesty, met with President de Klerk to discuss His Majesty's demand for federalism and the position of the Zulu King in the new constitution. Right throughout last month, right up to the government-imposed January 24 deadline and beyond, we have continued to meet the Government and the ANC. Indeed, even although a final decision was due to be made at our Special General Conference, we decided to wait and see if the following week would produce a breakthrough. Now, with the election date promulgated by President de Klerk, we have until midnight on Saturday to commit ourselves to fighting the election. Tomorrow we will therefore hold a Central Committee meeting to finally decide on the issue.

It must be emphasised that the IFP cannot commit itself to fighting the election unless our demands have been met. As I have already said, our demands are eminently reasonable and the ANC and the Government should have no problem in meeting them. Yet, ultimately bedeviling negotiations is the fact that the ANC and the Government do not want us to fight the election. The National Party, for its part, can be expected to benefit by picking up the support of our supporters who do wish to vote. The ANC on the other hand, finds it impossible from a propaganda point of view to give in to our demands. Can you imagine how the likes of Harry Gwala, Peter Mokaba and Winnie Mandela will make political mileage over any decision to accommodate us? Whether it is politically advantageous to give in to our demands or not, the fact remains that while these two elites negotiate according to their hidden agendas, our country is burning.

Many people will tell you that it is better to be constructive and fight the election even though it is under a flawed constitution rather than to sit on the sidelines. As an optimist and a liberal democrat I would tend to agree with them in principle. Yet there is much more than principles at stake here. At stake is the prospect of our country going up in flames as our supporters realise that negotiations have

not worked, and  
will not work.

Also at stake is the very prospect for democracy. We in the IFP are very much aware of the ANC/South African Communist Party's contingency plans to seize power if they do not win the election or gain the percentage of votes needed to write the constitution of their choice? While there of course does seem to be commendable efforts to integrate uMkhonto weSizwe into the new National Defence Force, intelligence sources have reported that the ANC/SACP alliance are stashing away caches of arms and have maintained their underground structures in the event of their failing to secure their objectives at the ballot box. In the case where the ANC would gain a simple majority but insufficient votes to write up the Constitution of their choice, the Sunday Times report that they have also hatched a 5-year contingency plan to seize total power by infiltrating the police, public service, intelligence and security forces, as well as the media and rival political groups, including the IFP. By failing to secure the powers and functions of the regions now we believe we would be leaving ourselves to the mercy of the ANC and its Communist allies.

No matter what decision the IFP makes tomorrow, I appeal to you and other observers to respect our choice. Our credentials are irreproachable. Few, if any, will deny that we have fought long and hard for democracy. In fact, it is only because we remain steadfast in our commitment to true democracy that we have been demonised and ostracised. Nonetheless, despite all efforts to marginalise us we remain committed to fighting for the true democracy, peace and prosperity that all South Africans deserve.

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