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The President's Visit to the US.

This visit will certainly go down in history as having been one of the most successful of all the visits ever undertaken by any leader of a revolutionary movement or opposition Party especially those committed to the overthrow or replacement of regimes considered friends or strategic allies of the United States. One fully shares the opinion expressed by some that it was not only at the Head of State level but that the exceptionally good press it received puts it even higher than most of these by such leaders including close friends of the United States. Needless to add that it dwarfed and differed from those of Savimbi and Buthelezi whose red-carpet reception at the white House has earned them the discredited Reagan whose policies of constructive engagement and the Iraq Arms deal have been unmitigated disasters.

The reasons for the success include the following;

- (i) It was timely - having taken place when Congress was back from recess. This gave us the opportunity to thank not just the grass-root support groups but also the law makers whose combined efforts recently culminated in the override of Reagan's veto of the Sanctions bill. It gave us the opportunity to have President OR (accused by the conservatives as a terrorist, Communist and stooge of the Soviet Union) to be warmly welcomed, cheered and hailed by the public and the eminent elected officials as a good guy, hero friend and alternative to P.W. Botha.
- (ii) It was planned in such a way as to include meetings not only with the various sectors of the American society but also outstanding opinion-makers and media persons.
- (iii) The nationwide interest was also due to the outrage felt by the American people over the ongoing carnage in South Africa, aggression against and destabilisation of the neighbouring states, the perceived heroism of the people and influence enjoyed by its representative the ANC, and the reasonableness of the ANC as reflected in its demands seen as being accordance with the much talked about American principle of just governments based on the consent of the governed.
- (iv) The presiding meetings with Chester Crocker and Amarcost also helped to publicise the visit and meeting with George Schultz.
- (v) Mainly, the position taken by the Conservative law makers led by Senator Burton who, basing themselves on the findings of Senator Denton's hearing held their own and announced the formation of the Coalition Against ANC Terrorism whose first task was to campaign for the cancellation of the meeting with Schultz. Next came the position taken by Senator Dole, the Presidential Candidate who based his demand for the cancellation of the said meeting on the claim that it was as big a mistake as was the arms deal with Iran.
- (vi) Finally, the character and personality of the President as a truthful, honest and trustworthy person who tells no lies. His response to the grilling questions related to the "ANC's association with the South African Communist Party", the "Domination by the Communists in the ANC Executive Committee where they are alleged to be in the majority" and the domination by the ANC by the Soviet Union" were a head-on type factual and principled.

One could also add the fact that the American public, Media and a growing number of elected officials have come to the conclusion that the writing is on the wall for the Botha regime. The visit provided an opportunity for them to grill, know and understand the man likely to take over power in a country they consider an important ally. If his honest answer to their questions prove he is irreversibly committed to an alliance with the South African Communist Party and friendship with the Soviet Union, the redeeming feature is that he leads this alliance. The other factor is that they see the younger generation becoming more and more radicalised anti-American and more Marxist-hence the need to make haste and help facilitate a negotiated settlement before the radicals replace the current leadership and the ANC occupies the winner-takes-all position.

The cities visited were New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., Los Angeles and Atlanta. Indeed, one other additional factor for the success of the visit is that except for New York, all the cities visited are under Black Mayors whose political support is predominantly anti-apartheid.

On his arrival at the New York airport, the President was received by the Executive Secretary of the OAU who, at the behest of the ANC representation had requested the host country to provide Security during the whole tour. The inhospitable weather had made us to limit the welcome team to our membership - more so because of the confusion that had arisen concerning the date of arrival.

In New York, meetings were held with:-

- (i) The President of the Burrough of Manhattan
- Mr. David Dinkens, an old friend of the ANC
- Black elected officials and Religious Leaders
- Breakfast meeting with Labour Union Leaders

In addition to the moving Proclamation presented to President OR by President Dinkens, the day of the meeting was proclaimed 'President Oliver Tambo Day' in Manhattan.

Other meetings were with:-

- Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State
- Cyrus Vance, the former Secretary of State
- The African Group at the United Nations
- Business men
- David Rockefeller
- Maurie Templesmen
- Fund-raising Cocktail organised jointly by the South African Policy Fund and Peggy Dulany
- Cocktail hosted by ACDA and SunCity Group to hand over 100,000 US Dollar cheque to the President.
- Dinner with Michael Manley and Herry Belafonte at latter's home.

Other highlights were: The exceptionally well-attended and televised 1st Olaf Pelmer Lecture at Riverside Church and the ANC hosted luncheon at the United Nations attended by a select and representative number of Ambassadors, leaders of Support Groups (students, labour, church entertainers etc.), Front Line States and prominent Media persons.

We must add that there were other unplanned "meetings", ambushes to be exact, such as the embarrassing arrival of Boxing Promoter Don King at the Riverside Church having just descended on us at our Hotel and insisted on driving the President to the meeting.

Our next stop was in Chicago where the highlight was a rally at Reverend Jesse Jackson's Church and where we met leaders of the Support Groups.

Other events in Chicago were

- (i) The presentation to President OR of the May to the City of Chicago
- (ii) A press Conference
- (iii) The Proclamation (by the Mayor) of the 24th January as South Africa Day and holiday.

From Chicago we went to Washington D.C. where the Free South Africa Movement through Randal Robinson, Congressman Walter Fountroy and Mayor Bradley played the role of host. The first event was a rally at Walter Fountroy's Church where we later met the Washington-based Support Groups and where Cde. OR was intimately referred to as Dr. Bishop Tambo. Other meetings were with:-

- The Labour Union Leaders
- The Washington Post Electrical Board
- Bishop John Wacke
- Wolpe and several Congressmen and Staff
- Several Senators including Kassambaum, Wieker, Moynihon, Kennedy, Paul Simon
- Lunch hosted by Senator Kennedy
- Working Breakfast with Representatives of the Inter-Faith-held at Walter Fountroy's Church;
- Dean of the African Ambassadors accompanied by two colleagues a day after our failure to attend the meeting of all the Ambassadors accredited to the United States;
- Senate Staff members.

In Los Angeles, the delegation had a very impressive series of public and private meetings;

- An exceptionally well attended rally where Cde. OR shared the platform with Jesse Jackson, Harry Belafonte, Maxine, entertainers and Movie stars;
- Meeting with Mayor Bradley and Councilman Robert Farrel.
- Working Luncheon with Los Angeles Times
- Working Dinner in Hollywood hosted by Mark Rosenberg of Warner Brothers and his wife Paula and attended by a galaxy of movie stars;
- Working dinner at Sydney Portier's house in Hollywood hosted by him and Harry Belafonte and attended by a small group of personalities like Jane Fonda involved in the 20 million US Dollar project of a T.V. Series on Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela;
- † Assembly Woman Maxine Waters and Dick Griffi, the President of Black American Music Association;
- Working Lunch in Hollywood hosted and attended by the members of the Hollywood Political Women Association;

The last-minute arrangement to include Atlants on the programme was a wild one and resulted in the following events:

- Working Breakfast hosted by the SCLC headed by Dr. Joe Lowry and attended by a host of community and Support Groups leaders;
- Meeting with the representatives of the Georgia coalition for Divestment in Southern Africa,
- Reception hosted by the President of Morehouse University;
- Solemn and most moving ceremony of the Presentation of the Honorary Doctrate to Cde. President
- A brief visit to Dick Griffi's ranch where he presented Cde. President OR with a horse that he is ready to have shipped to Lusaka.

Other Miscellaneous Events.

(i) Coalition Against ANC Terrorism

The televised hearing which led to the formation of this body by a group of Conservative Law-makers like Senator Burton and several Professors took place during the first week of our visit, the main purpose was definitely to campaign for the cancellation of the meeting between our President and George Schultz. The campaigners became more and more vocal and organised as the days went by. Their campaign included two advertisement in the notorious Washington Times whose request for an interview with the President we had turned simply because of the Papers well-known reactionary track record. The extremely hostile ad was supplemented by a forged photograph showing Chief with Gorbachev before the two actually met.

Using the media and also resorting to the above-mentioned the so-called Coalition Against ANC Terrorism announced that they would have a demonstration before the State Department to protest against the TAMBO-Schultz meeting.

Later in the week, Senator Dole one of the Republican Presidential Candidate joined the campaign also calling for cancellation.

Media Exposure.

Paradoxical as it might sound, the orchestrated formation of the above-mentioned Coalition and its campaign for the cancellation of the meeting with Schultz helped to popularise the visit as well as the President Tambo and what he stands for. The same can be said of the angle taken by some TV and Print Press at the beginning of the tour.

The requests for Television interviews were so many that we had to turn some down because it was physically impossible to accept them all but also because we were already running the risk of over-exposure.

The important ones include the NBS which later (after the interview) offered to make a T.V. crew that would follow and cover our functions on other cities. This was done.

We must also include ABC which again after their interview named Cde. President as "the Person of the Week". In addition to this they had a commentary in which they were responding to the Conservatives and ended up calling on the Government of the United States to provide political and financial support to the ANC.

The rest will be given in the verbal form as well as by the other members of the Delegation.