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Could Apla be shoving South Africa towards a settlement?

IF YOU insist on remaining an optimist in this hard, dry land, as I do, you have to grow intellectual calluses. You have also to harden your heart, and you must devise a form of logic which devalues the immediate in favour of the eventual. What on earth am I talking about? Apla, that's what. And I am attempting to motivate a somewhat contrary political view on the awful re-emergence in South Africa of soft-target bombings.

Perversely enough the Apla attacks — if indeed they were Apla attacks — have had a salutary effect on the diseased negotiations process.

This is not to underplay the unspeakable tragedy which befell the victims in King William's Town and Queenstown; several lives were cruelly taken and many more ruined. Neither is it to dignify PAC secretary-general Benny Alexander's hollow sophistry about such attacks "mobilising white opinion against violence".

It is to argue that the more outrageous the behaviour from the peripheries, the more the centre will cohere. And the more the centre coheres, the more pressure there will be on the peripheries to play the game to the new rules, or relegate themselves to the sidelines.

In this crucial moment of transition I think we are seeing the concentric circles contracting, and the new South Africa appearing ever clearer in the middle.

In their equal anger against the sudden addition of old-style terror tactics to the already-untenable morass of violence, the Government and the ANC have made powerful common cause. Both immediately condemned and rejected the targeting of civilians in pursuit of political ends, and both displayed a remarkable degree of agreement about the parameters of acceptable transition politics.

Apla has strayed beyond those parameters, just as the AWB did before it.

UNDERCURRENT AFFAIRS

SHAUN Johnson



IT IS extraordinary that one can now talk realistically of the Government and the ANC — in the very same breath — as occupying the political centre.

It is extraordinary that one can now talk realistically of the Government and the ANC — in the very same breath — as occupying the political centre. It is a sign of great maturity in the negotiations process that these erstwhile sworn enemies, whose political programmes are and will remain so different, are agreed on the fundamentals that are necessary conditions for a settlement.

And the effects of the "Apla campaign" go even further: instead of dashing recently revived optimism about a resumption of multiparty talks and the early installation of interim government, the eastern Cape atrocities have hardened the resolve of the two principal actors. In the past two years it has taken very small things to "derail" negotiations; now, a very big thing has happened and the peace train has simply speeded up.

Both President de Klerk and Mr Mandela have insisted in recent days that nothing — including soft-target attacks and secessionist hints — will stop them from marching onwards to settlement. Both have recognised that the atro-

phy of the economy and the incremental breakdown of social order are of such seriousness that the transition can no longer be held hostage by some of its participants.

This recognition is at least a year overdue, but it is welcome nevertheless. This is the kind of visionary statesmanship that South Africa has been crying out for since February 1990, when the current path was first trod.

There is now a widespread realisation that the two central negotiating powers must, believing as they do that they represent a majority of South Africans, ride roughshod if necessary to a preliminary settlement. The spectre of Codesa in its initial form (where participants having little or no support-bases could hold up proceedings on a whim) looms large — and the experiment is unlikely to be repeated. All is being staked on making progress with or without the peripheries in the earnest hope that they will in the process be drawn to the centre. Codesa 3 — or whatever it is eventually called — will be different from its predecessors, a more empowered political animal.

It is not just the Apla threat, of course, that has injected this potent dose of realism into our country's political bloodstream. The sense of controlled panic at the prospect of an unending negotiating hiatus has been a long time coming, helped along by massacres, bankruptcies, the drought, crime, growing international indifference, and much more. But Apla has provided a special spur, and I do not think the major politicians will easily lapse back into the arrogant and myopic inertia which has characterised the past six months.

So are we, in spite of each week's fresh disaster, going to achieve the little miracle that is multiracial, multiparty government for the first time in our country's history? I like to answer that question in the local idiom: "Is Mangosuthu Buthelezi a Zulu?"

IT EVEN becomes a fashion for some civil servants, perhaps worried about their pensions, make hay while the sun shines. We had a fantastically honest civil service, whose ethics we inherited from the British. I think it is still excellent, but judging from the number of court cases I see reported in the newspapers, there is a serious tendency towards graft. But I believe these things are related to the decline in our currency. Perhaps a priority is to make sure the Reserve

Bank is truly independent of this Government — any government for that matter — so that they can get on with the job of rigorously maintaining the value of the rand.

OUR national product is starting to look really shabby. We still have to market ourselves out of this appalling situation. How do we start?

FIRST, you cannot — or should not — advertise a bad product. This will ensure that you will not easily have an opportunity to sell it again. The product must first be right. Then we have to remember that the customer is king. We have to adapt ourselves

to the customer. When a young man joins me, I tell him immediately that he is not working for me but for the customer.

If we are selling overseas we have to be better than our competitors, and they include every country in the southern hemisphere. We have got to be better, more honest, and work harder. We have a lot of competition. What's more, we must decide what are the right products.

IF you had to look at South Africa as a group of companies with diversified product ranges, what would the most attractive of these be?

OUR biggest and best industry,

which is there for the taking, is tourism. With the game parks rating among the top in the world, we can certainly attract wealthy visitors. But we need to allow companies to arrange extensive charter flights. If Luft-hansa can do it with their Condor airline, so can we. But we need to recognise the mutual dependency of eco-tourism and nature conservation, and then rationalise responsibly these aspects.

YOU have a particular interest in the Peace Park to be established up on the Kruger Park and Mozambique border. What is it like?

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it will happen if they have peace in Mozambique. President Chissano is very keen on it. The land is ideal for game and could comprise various eco-systems.

ARE South Africans showing an aptitude for a sophisticated industry, such as the manufacture of electronic components?

ANYONE with hands can work in this field. If I see the way some African women work, with beading and so on, why can we not train them to do what their counterparts on the Pacific Rim do? Obviously, we'll have to give intensive training of a sophisticated nature. But we can achieve a

high degree of efficiency.

CAN we compete in this area?

THERE is a problem looming, and that is increasing automation. Our workers need to understand this. You ask whether we can compete, and I say yes, but the only way we can compete against automation is with productive wages.

CAN you take union leaders along with you on such a contentious matter?

WE NEED to take these leaders to places like Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia to show them what is happening. Certainly one doesn't want to underpay people, but things get serious when societies undergo radical transformation.

IS NOT one of our problems in South Africa short-term thinking and planning?

PART of our Americanisation has been this quarter-by-quarter reporting. One advantage of family-controlled companies is that one is not under that kind of pressure. If you start a new industry and pay a dividend in the first five years, I think you are bound to fail. Industrialists cannot think short-term.

ON A political level: Do you favour any particular system?

I BELIEVE the Swiss system is the one that could work. We need a federation, not a union. Furthermore, the system needs to be broken down into local units. I don't mind how many there are, but they must be economically viable. Small units would work.

We must look at what is most important to people — what binds them together. Generally, it's things like the church, the school, the local rugby or soccer team, and so on. This is what we must focus on. I am also convinced that our strength lies in our diversity. I would have suggested the motto Diversity is Strength, rather than Unity is Strength, for this country.

YOU have been a great proponent of partnership, which seems to stand you in good stead philosophically for what lies ahead.

IT comes from a basic belief that there is no other way. Partnership has stood us in very good stead and everything we do has been built on that concept.

HOW about your foreign partnerships? You must have had some difficulties there because of local pressures.

IT was difficult. But we are innovators — always cats on a hot tin roof. And we're never satisfied.

WHAT do you want to do in the foreseeable future?

I'M doing what I like doing — nature conservation, small business, the art foundation as well as the other four foundations I'm involved with. I spend most of my time with that. I'm busy now, and interested enough. I only hope that in my lifetime I'll see a flourishing South Africa, a stable society and a stable government.

HAVE you ever failed at anything?

I FAILED in selling the idea of partnership to all and that our strength lies in our diversity. I have tried to encourage change, and I'm thankful it has happened in my lifetime. But I pray the change will not lead to chaos. I don't want to see chaos. I want to see a great, equitable society of which every citizen will be proud.

● This article appears in the inaugural issue of *Millennium*, a magazine published by Churchill Murray Publications of Cape Town for the first quarter of 1993.

I LIVE in the future. One of the problems of my life is that I have probably paid the price for living too far in the future. I saw problems. We have all the problems of tomorrow without the sympathy of the world of today. In the late 40s, I saw what the future was going to hold for us. And, of course, it has happened. It gives me no pleasure to see this.

THE highest priority is for our leaders to reach consensus... Mr De Klerk, Mr Mandela and Dr Buthelezi are high-quality people. But they have to understand that there is no more time.

DR ANTON RUPERT

FW accepts land findings

THE State president has accepted, with few exceptions, the first set of recommendations by the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation, which was established to advise on land claims.

Commission chairman Professor Nic Olivier said the commission had received many claims, and hoped to expedite its work as the Government had allowed an increase in staff numbers.

He told a news conference in Pretoria yesterday he envisaged a tremendous increase in the work tempo. Although the commission had been established a year ago, it had only really begun functioning in March.

Olivier said although the commission's functions were limited to dealing with land owned by the State or State institutions, this did not preclude it from trying to achieve restitution for those who had had to give up their land. — Sapa.

ANC-Govt deal angers IFP

'Tryst' could lead to elections next year

PETER FABRICIUS
Political Correspondent

THE Government and the African National Congress have moved closer to a negotiations deal which could lead to elections in less than a year. But the deal has enraged the Inkatha Freedom Party — and is driving a deep wedge into the National Party.

It is becoming clearer now that in the torrid political love triangle between the Government, the ANC and IFP, the Government and ANC appear to be getting into bed together — and the IFP is feeling jilted.

This has important implications for the likely course of negotiations next year. It now seems that the Government and ANC will push through a negotiations package leading to elections for an interim government before the end of 1993.

IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said after an attempted reconciliation between the Government and the IFP this week that it was like having an argument with his wife. "Once she has had her say and I have had mine, I usually get it out of my system."

But although he — and other disaffected homeland leaders — agreed to get together again in January with the Government, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the political marriage between the NP and the IFP is heading for the rocks. And the divorce papers will probably cite the NP's "dirty weekend" with the ANC at an Ellisras game reserve last week.

Romantic atmosphere

It was there — in the romantic atmosphere of the campfire and the bushveld moonlight — that the two sides seem to have secretly agreed to drive the negotiation process in tandem and to run the interim government and beyond in a power-sharing deal.

Both sides have been extremely coy about exactly what was decided on. But ANC leader Nelson Mandela said the Government had agreed to elections before the end of next year — after President de Klerk forecast elections only in March/April 1994.

Although the Government denied that any firm agreements had been reached, Constitutional Development Minister Roelf Meyer said at a news conference yesterday that elections could be held before the end of 1993 if all parties co-operated.

Both sides agreed after the bosberaad that they had to accept "joint responsibility" for negotiations — which sounded very like the ANC view that negotiations should essentially amount to an agreement between the Government and the ANC.

The IFP flounced off in a huff and announced its go-it-alone option of launching an anti-Codesa negotiation at which regional powers — not national leaders — would get together to decide how the new South Africa should look.

De Klerk warned Buthelezi that his "unilateral" initiative was jeopardising negotiations and leading to direct confrontation with the Government. His tough response alarmed the National Party's conservative wing, especially the Natal Nats, whose leader George Bartlett is a fervent IFP fan.

It was Bartlett and other Natal Nats who brought Buthelezi and De Klerk together in Pretoria this week to discuss their differences.

Although the meeting ended on an ostensibly optimistic note, with an agreement to meet again in a bosberaad on January 8 and 9, sources inside the meeting said no rapprochement was achieved.

Buthelezi delivered a hostile speech to De Klerk, berating him for acting in an unpatriotic way by doing secret deals with the ANC.

Constitutional differences

De Klerk calmly dismissed the personal attack on himself and focused on constitutional differences, prompting some concern in the NP's anti-IFP faction that the president might be wavering.

But the general consensus was that De Klerk and the Cabinet had decided that the only way to pull off a negotiations deal to save the economy and rescue the country from violence was to join forces with the ANC — dumping the IFP if necessary.

It is understood that at the ANC-Government boraad last week, Bartlett was severely chastised by De Klerk and Foreign Minister Pik Botha for his over-enthusiastic response to Buthelezi's go-it-alone plan.

One of the important "fault lines" in the party was between those who wanted to do a deal with the ANC and those who saw the NP's salvation in a conservative alliance with the likes of the IFP.

The pro-ANC faction seems to have seized the initiative. And the issue that might have tipped the balance was the Joe Slovo-inspired strategy of offering the NP a power-sharing deal with a life beyond that of an interim government.

Body found near rail line

THE body of a man with hack and stab wounds was found next to the railway line between Geldenhuys and Cleveland stations on the East Rand on Thursday. It is believed the victim was attacked on a train before being pushed off. On Wednesday four people were injured in incidents on or near railway stations in the Germiston area. -- Sapa

Bullets outweigh words in propaganda battle

NOBODY seriously imagines the Azanian People's Liberation Army (Apla) is capable of overthrowing the Government by force of arms.

Apla, like Umkhonto we Sizwe before it, is engaged in "armed propaganda" — acts of violence designed to enhance the standing of both the PAC and Apla and to hammer home certain messages to their enemies.

In one sense, the success of this strategy can be measured in the metres of newsprint and

hours of debate that have surrounded Apla since the attack on the King William's Town golf club, and the Queenstown restaurant blast soon after — and there is still no certainty that Apla was indeed responsible.

Two issues have dominated this debate: How big is this force, and what is its relationship to the PAC, which acknowledges parent-hood but refuses to take any responsibility for discipline?

Estimates of Apla's size vary considerably.

Chief Reporter JOHN PERLMAN analyses the puzzling attitude of the PAC to attacks claimed to have been carried out by its armed wing, Apla, and proposes a reason for the ambiguity.

PAC national organiser Maxwell Nmadzivhanani says Apla is "a very large army", but will not be drawn on specifics for "strategic reasons". Law and Order Minister Hernus Kriel this week put Apla's strength at "about 120 in the coun-

try, and a few outside". Political risk analyst Professor Wim Booysse says Apla has "around 800 fighters in total, although only 20 to 30 would be deployed in the country at any given time".

In February, Booysse said Apla had between 350 and 410 well-trained cadres abroad, some of whom had just finished training in Libya. He predicted that these were "likely to start infiltrating back pretty soon".

These figures may not sound all that threatening, but as Professor Mike Hough, of Pretoria University's Institute for Strategic Studies, puts it: "You can teach someone to use an AK-47 and a hand grenade in a day. And if they can lay their hands on a supply of hand grenades and AKs, they can cause a reasonable amount of havoc."

On the second issue, the PAC has insisted that "Apla makes its own decisions". This despite the fact that the organisation's constitution specifies that Apla must at all times consult the PAC leadership.

This ambiguous stance points to a dilemma within the organisation — the commitment to negotiations ranges from keen to cautious to extremely hostile. And that in turn points to the key question arising from the eastern Cape attacks: Does the PAC believe that the militant popular support that may flow from attacks on whites is worth more

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