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Speech in 2 minutes

MEMORANDUM FOR PRESENTATION TO MR BRIAN HITCHEN, C.B.E., EDITOR OF THE DAILY STAR, LONDON, AND MR BRIAN O'HANLON

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

ULUNDI : NOVEMBER 25, 1993

→ Pattle into
2 Brompton Gosh
19/10/93
9/11/93
Mr Major (April 1993)

Mr Brian Hitchen, welcome to Ulundi. It is a great pleasure to be in the position to reciprocate the kindness and hospitality I received from you and those associated with your newspaper, The Daily Star, at your awards ceremony in London in April. I felt honoured to be asked to participate in such an important ceremony.

I will use this opportunity today to update you on the current affairs in South Africa. As the Editor of one of Britain's leading newspapers, it is vital that you are correctly informed about political events that have taken place in South Africa over the past couple of months. The focus of the media is always on

what is happening now, the immediate present, what will catch the eye of the reader, what stories will sell your newspaper to the public. Unfortunately, in this way much of the detail is lost, and often much of the vital background to events is overlooked.

When the IFP and the KwaZulu Government first joined the multi-party talks at Kempton Park in March this year, we, like everybody else, were caught up in the euphoria of the moment. This was the first time ever in South Africa that such an inclusive group of black and white political representatives had come together to map out a way forward for the future South Africa. Even the

far right, the Conservative Party and the Afrikaner Volksunie; and the far left, the Pan Africanist Congress, were present at this momentous occasion. The mood was one of hope. There appeared to be commitment from all sides that the leaders of South Africa would reach a peaceful and democratic political settlement for the future good of our society.

I did my best to put aside in my mind what had transpired before then. My party joined the Negotiating Council in good faith. We anxiously hoped, as did the whole of South Africa, that the ANC and the South African Government had come to their senses. We wished with all our hearts that both parties

would come to realise that they could not reach agreements on the constitutional future of South Africa alone. We believe that the politics of exclusion will spell disaster for our country.

Mr Hitchen, as an observer who has been visiting South Africa for quite a few years now, it will not have taken you long to appreciate the richness of this country's diverse society. The South African people belong to a myriad of races, cultures, language and ethnic groupings. There is no one political party in this country that can talk on behalf of all South Africans. The religious and

political beliefs of the South African people are as distinct as the racial, language and ethnic categories that exist.

Once the dark veil of apartheid had been lifted, and freedom and democracy became a foreseeable inevitability for all South Africans, the challenge that remained was to reach agreement on a new form of government that would accommodate South Africa's plurality.

Getting rid of apartheid from South Africa's statute books was not nearly sufficient to meet this challenge. The dictatorial mind-set of the National Party

Government has proved far more difficult to remove. The unfortunate result is that the lust of these power-hungry die-hards has rubbed off on their radical opposition. The battle between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' was not going to end in democracy, where the views of all parties would be represented, and all citizens would be equal before a new constitution. The ANC alliance is not interested in a settlement of this nature. They believe that they have a right to take away the central power of the National Party Government and keep it to themselves - concentrated in the centre, armed with a constitution that would allow them to abuse state power in a manner worse than the apartheid oppressors of the past.

In weighing up their options, National Party leaders knew that they could not rely on the South African electorate to guarantee their future dominant role in government. The black electorate would never trust them - it will take many years, and massive reform programmes, before the atrocities of the past will be forgotten. The white electorate, on the other hand, are in the minority - besides, there are many other political parties that are gaining popularity amongst white South Africans, more notably the IFP. The National Party Government decided to enter into a power-sharing deal with the ANC. Forgotten were the needs and future security of their constituency. In the National Party's fight for survival and their drive for personal gain in a new

South Africa, all future constitutional guarantees for a just and democratic government were bargained away.

The details of this conspiracy came to light when the South African public got wind of the ANC/National Party's five-year plan in January this year. This deal followed months of behind-the-scenes talks, and exposed the extent to which the National Party Government was prepared to capitulate to the unilateral demands of the ANC, in exchange for certain key political positions in a five-year transitional government.

For a greater understanding of the ANC/National Party's deal, you need look no further than the interim constitution which is due to be passed at the final sitting of Parliament this week. Parliament is due to legislate into place a constitution that provides the ANC with the tools to establish an ANC-dominated unitary government, with all powers vested in the centre.

When the IFP joined multi-party talks, we suspected that the ANC and South African Government would try to dominate the proceedings, but we sincerely hoped that democracy would prevail. When confronted with the force of their manipulation, we knew our fears were justified.

It did not take long for negotiating parties to reach the crux of the debate. Knowing the ANC's and South African Government's intentions to perpetuate a unitary, centralised government, the IFP came well prepared with arguments for a federal democracy. South Africa does not need a government of force that would protect the interests of one party alone. If there was one lesson to be learned from apartheid, it was that enough lives had been lost and enough communities destroyed to prove that a central, dictatorial regime would never bring about peace and stability in our country.

The people in the regions are fighting for a say over their own destinies. For too long now the majority in this country have been subjected to the dictates of a ruling government. Are they to be denied this right once again through the domination of another party? The IFP said no!

Federalism is the only solution to South Africa's political problems. It is the only form of government that is flexible enough to bear the strains of a divided society. It is the only form of government that could allow the genuine expression of people's needs, wants and aspirations at local and regional level. It is an accountable government, situated closer to the people it serves. Hence,

it would allow for the meaningful representation of all political, cultural and ethnic groups at the highest level - the constitution.

If the ANC and National Party Government succeed in what they are doing, democracy will be denied to South Africa. Our struggle for peace and freedom will be far from over. The extent of the ANC/National Party's opposition was felt when the IFP tried to table a federal option at the Negotiation Council. Our proposals for discussion were thrown out of the Negotiation Council by an ANC-aligned chairman through a motion of 'sufficient consensus' and the Council proceeded to set an election date before any agreement was reached on

a form of state and on the purpose and finality of such an election. The IFP vigorously protested against this undemocratic process of reaching decisions, but our objections were flagrantly ignored.

The Negotiation Council continued to ignore the IFP's demands for a federal alternative to be considered, focusing all debate on a two-phase transition in a unitary government set-up. In line with a proposition put forward by the ANC's chief negotiator, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, on June 30, the Council went ahead and instructed the Technical Committee on Constitutional Matters to draft an interim constitution that excluded federalism, and an election date of 27

April was set to empower a Constituent Assembly to draft the future constitution of South Africa - not to elect the future government of South Africa. The IFP's objections to this proposal were disregarded in the same unilateral fashion, leaving us no alternative but to walk out of the negotiation proceedings once and for all.

The South African Government/National Party and the ANC/SACP alliance and their Patriotic Front allies, attempted to marginalise all opposition in the Negotiation Council by abusing the standing procedures laid down before the commencement of negotiations. The presiding ANC-aligned chairman applied

the notion of 'sufficient consensus' which did not in any way reflect the original understanding which brought the negotiating participants together. The chairman blatantly misused the agreed-to deadlock-breaking mechanisms to such a degree that participants were relegated to a process which did nothing more than rubber-stamp the decisions taken by the ANC/SACP alliance and the South African Government/National Party.

Following this event, I was appalled at the one-sidedness demonstrated by the media where the IFP was portrayed as a desperate party fighting a democratic outcome while clinging to its last vestiges of power in Natal/KwaZulu. Instead

of appraising the situation objectively, and recognising the flagrant manipulation that was taking place at the cost of South Africa's future democracy, the media chose rather to label my party as the 'spoilers'.

It is only now, after leading academics, local business chambers, and other marginalised political parties, have begun to realise what is in store for South Africa in terms of the ANC/South African Government's interim constitution, that the media has begun to expose the other side of the picture. Much of what is now belatedly revealed to the South African public is exactly what the IFP

has been saying all these months following our withdrawal from the Negotiation Council.

In terms of the interim constitution a Constituent Assembly, elected in farcical elections in the current climate of chaos and violence, would have the final over-riding say over the boundaries, powers, functions and structures of regions. In clear and concrete terms, this process would bring the ANC to government in a constitutional framework which preserves the unitary state and provides no effective guarantees against any abuse of power, but would prolong

the intimidation and ruthless domination we are witnessing in our townships today.

Leaving the finalisation of a regional dispensation to a ruling party in a Constituent Assembly is totally unacceptable. Genuine regional empowerment could never grow out of a central Constitution-Making Body. The ANC is clearly trying to establish a transitional process which will serve to entrench centralised power, ruled by a majority party, with no effective protection offered to minority parties, and with no checks and balances against state power.

Right up to the final moments the IFP continued to voice its objections. We have done everything in our power, and have used all our influence during our bilaterals with the South African Government, to convince them of the folly of their moves. We have demanded that the issue of the form of state, which allows for a federal system of government, must be decided upon before an election is to take place. We have demanded the protection of a final constitution before elections to prevent a future government from using its power to silence the voice of the people.

As time began to run out for the ANC and the South African Government in their desperate attempt to push their joint deal through Parliament this year, so that their April 27 election could go ahead, all pretences of democracy were dropped at the Negotiation Council. The media could no longer ignore the games the ANC and government were playing. The barrage of invective against these two parties by all other political negotiators at the Negotiation Council, drowned any hint of biased reporting.

Last week's fiasco at Kempton Park was something that media reporters are not likely to forget in a hurry. Instead of dealing with outstanding constitutional

issues at the negotiating table, the ANC's Cyril Ramaphosa and the Government's Roelf Meyer arrived to present their joint deal, without first tabling these proposals for consideration by the Council or Technical Committee. There was no choice involved - parties to the negotiation process could take it or leave it - this constitutional deal was going to be pushed through Parliament irrespective of who was prepared to endorse it.

The IFP has no regrets about withdrawing from the Negotiation Council when we did. It is a pity that those who chose to remain took so long to realise they were merely used as pawns in a well-thought out game. They were losers

before they arrived at the Negotiation Council. The fact that they ignored the objections raised by the IFP merely justified the manipulation that was taking place.

Despite the revelations concerning the ANC's and South African Government's preconceived agenda, the process is pushing ahead as planned. The choice facing South Africans will be a difficult one. Those who choose to vote in the April elections will have no influence whatsoever over the outcome. For those who refuse to take part in this undemocratic farce, the battle has only just begun.

It is now more than ever that the South African public and the outside world will rely on the media to present the facts as they stand. A democratic press could act as a catalyst of change. An unbiased press has the power to communicate across all divides in these challenging times, to give the people of our country the knowledge they need in order to make one of the most important decisions they may ever face. Mr Hitchen, I hope you too will play your part in ensuring that truth and justice will prevail in South Africa.

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