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A FEW WORDS OF WELCOME TO BARON PETER OF LEE :  
LEE CASTLE, SCOTLAND

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

ULUNDI : JUNE, 17 1993

Lord Peter, it is indeed a pleasure to welcome you to South Africa once again. I wish in particular to welcome your grandson to Ulundi.

If one thinks back a few years to the misery and degradation of the apartheid era, my country has travelled far along the road towards genuine democracy. I say this from the outset, because I believe that whatever trials and tribulations we are now experiencing, and despite the violence that is plaguing our communities and disrupting our family life, there is a way forward for my people.

For the first time in the history of South Africa there exists a truly representative gathering of people - both Black and White, both male and female, ranging from the staunchly conservatives to the radical revolutionaries - who sit together on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to discuss the future of our country. While progress is often slow and tensions high, overwhelming consensus has emerged that apartheid must finally be buried and that Black people must be given a say over their future destinies.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has an enormous role to play in shaping the future government of South Africa. The consistency and pragmatic leadership of my Party offers to this Multi-Party Negotiation Forum, a bridge between the radical and conservative. We are there to ensure that the voice of the people is heard. We are there to ensure that our economy and the future of our children will not be destroyed by the party politicking of power-thirsty organisations.

The IFP will do everything in its power to reach a meaningful, long-lasting political settlement through peaceful negotiations. But with peace and democracy as our bottom line, we need to stand our ground when the fundamental liberty of individuals and groups is threatened. We have demanded that the future constitutional dispensation must address the fears of the nation. In this respect constitutional issues such as the form of state, the principles of representation, the nature and guarantee of the constitution, are of crucial importance to the people in my region.

On the decisive issue of the form of state, the Inkatha Freedom Party believes that a federal state government is the only form of government that could fairly and democratically address the plurality of our nation, with its diversity of cultures, races, ethnic and political groupings.

So for the success of national unity, peace, stability, economic growth and the acceptance of cultural diversity in South Africa, vital issues such as regionalism and the personal autonomy of all South Africans must be constructively negotiated now. Negotiations in this

regard must be all-inclusive and cannot be pre-determined by factions bent on grabbing power at whatever cost.

Therefore the core of our own demands at the Multi-Party Negotiation Forum is that the period of transition makes room for the federal option and must guarantee pluralism in our country to ensure peace and prosperity in our land. The future constitution must protect and entrench the individual and collective freedoms of a plural society, including minority right protection; and checks and balances must be instituted in place to control the role and functions of any post-apartheid government.

At present our teams of negotiators at the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum are witnessing a concerted endeavour by certain major political players to undermine the powers and functions of regional government, while at the same time attempting to preserve the integrity of the present unitary state through a proposed popularly elected Constituent Assembly. This is being attempted through the weekly appraisal and cleverly manipulated approval process set in motion through the central Negotiating Council. As was the case at CODESA, once a motion of this nature is under way, all parties to the process are wrongly construed as agreeing to the proposals tabled, by virtue of the fact that they are tabled.

One thing is clear in my mind. If this country is subjected to the ANC's demand for a popularly elected Constituent Assembly on the basis of one-man-one-vote, it would pave the way for the ANC alone to decide on the structure of the future constitution of this country. This new parliament, or Constituent Assembly, would then draft the new constitution. It would be vested with the powers to overrule any agreed to transitional constitutional principles. These unilateral and undemocratic decisions would no doubt be labelled the "will of the people".. Once a Constituent Assembly is empowered and provided with the strength of popular suffrage, it will recognise no limitation and feel bound by no political promise. Rather, the Constituent Assembly route ensures that all demands for federalism will be silenced by majoritarian rule.

The ruling South African Government is using the ANC's demand for a Constituent Assembly to guarantee its own position in the future government, for at least the next five years. They are threatening to use the current legal system to entrench a unitary system of government to follow a lengthy period of transition. And they have agreed to the ANC's demand for a popularly elected Constituent Assembly, in return for a leading role during the transition - what the National Party sees as the only way this dying echelon of White rule can hold on to the last vestiges of power.

If this five-year transition deal is endorsed by the parties at the Multi-Party Negotiation Forum, the process of exclusion would be entrenched in any final government emerging after the transition. If we were to concede to this high-handed strategy it would leave the most intractable questions - those concerning the distribution and control of power - to an elected Constituent Assembly, to be settled by the South African Government and the ANC alone.

This is why the IFP has demanded that the issue of the form of state be a preliminary issue which must condition any further stage of the negotiation process, and in logical progression we demand that any final decision on the election date will have to be postponed until agreement on the form of state has been reached. There must be the entrenchment of rights

and civil liberties in the constitution through ground-up democracy building processes in the regions before elections are to take place. There is a need to constitutionally entrench a voting system which will remain consistent with accepted democratic practices, and which will in no way impinge upon the rights and prerogatives of the member states to which residual sovereignty is reserved.

So let the reasoning behind the IFP's rejection of a popularly elected Constituent Assembly be clearly understood. Our sole motivation is to protect the citizens of this country. I would be reneging on my role as a responsible leader in South Africa if I were to go along with the notion of a Constituent Assembly, elected in farcical elections in the current climate of chaos and violence, allowing such a body to decide on the boundaries, powers, functions and structures of our region. This would bring the ANC to government in a constitutional framework which preserves a unitary state and provides no effective guarantees against any abuse of power, but would rather prolong the intimidation and ruthless domination we are witnessing in our townships today.

There is enough turmoil and strife in South Africa to warrant the establishment of a just and equitable constitution with utmost urgency. A two-phase process for the drafting of a final constitution and for the election of a final government, as suggested by the ANC and South African Government, which incorporates a lengthy period of transition, will only serve to prolong the misery of my people and increase the possibility of the abuse of state power.

It is therefore imperative that all representative parties make their stand now at the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum, and resist all attempts by the government and the ANC to install a unitary state ruled by a majority government which offers no protection to minority parties.

The drafting of the future constitution for South Africa must be an all-inclusive party affair, not subject to the whims and vested interests of two parties alone.

The IFP has recommended a single phase process where a draft constitution is negotiated and agreed to by all representative parties at the Multi-Party Negotiation Forum. This draft constitution would then be put to the people of South Africa, the ordinary man in the street, in a referendum for acceptance or rejection. And only following nation-wide acceptance, could an election for a future democratic government take place.

In this way South Africa could conceivably hold elections by the end of next year, and have both a democratic government and a just constitution firmly in place. The difference between our proposed constitution and the unilaterally imposed constitution proposed by the ANC and the South African Government, is that ours will have been negotiated and accepted by all relevant political parties and other formations, and hopefully respected and upheld by the majority of citizens and generations to come.

I hope you will leave Ulundi today with a clearer vision of where we are in the current negotiations. I hope that what I have expressed will strengthen your belief in our firm commitment to a negotiated solution - a solution which maps a future of freedom, equality, democracy, pluralism and equal access to opportunities for all.