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Speaker's Notes

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For
RWE

SHARPEN YOUR VIGILANCE!!

The events of the past three months of this year ring like a barrage of fire directed at the ANC and the mass democratic movement. First there was the attack on one of the principal installations of the ANC in Lusaka. This was the blast in the culvert of the driveway to this installation towards the end of January, 1988. Then followed, in more or less rapid succession, attacks in Bulawayo and Brussels in February; Gaborone, Paris, the banning of 17 organisations within the country, the closure of the New Nation (threats of similar closures are hanging over the Weekly Mail, the Sowetan and South), and so on, in March; and finally the attack in Maputo on April 7 1988.

These attacks are quite hefty: the assassination of a senior member of the ANC and its Chief Representative in France, Dulcie September, the loss of other experienced cadres in other attacks and the permanent physical incapacitation of one of the most experienced lawyers of our Movement, Albie Sachs. They are, however, by no means devastating or fatal. For them to be thus the enemy will have to kidnap, ban and liquidate the whole population, as Allan Boesak put it recently.

Rather than cowing our people into submission or slackening our armed endeavours, the enemy has been shocked by the varied response to this repression by our people. New contingents have been thrown into the struggle, new avenues of struggle have been developed: the campuses, churches, mosques, etc. On the battlefield the enemy is being engaged in some of the fiercest encounters in recent times - one such was the military confrontation with soldiers of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the Northern Transvaal a few weeks ago. In this battle, which lasted for more than ten hours, the enemy was forced to throw in wave after wave of his crack troops: helicopter gunships, paratroopers, etc. These were beaten off with heavy casualties and our comrades successfully eluded the enemy and are safe in their sanctuaries inside the country.

But then why these assassinations and attempted assassinations? Is it perhaps the definition by the enemy of new terrains of the conflict? Or is it the behaviour of desperation, of having gone completely crazy?

It will be recalled that our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, has been alerting our people and the international community since December 1986, of a new dimension in the enemy's schemes against the struggle of our people for liberation - decapitation of our liberation movement. The regime in Pretoria has now embarked on this campaign. Hence these assassinations, kidnappings, etc. The court proceedings in London threw more light into these nefarious machinations of the Botha/Malan clique in Pretoria: a hit-list of...

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...the leadership has been drawn, various forces have been prepared to materialise this line of approach - its own special forces, sympathetic elements in the various countries, mercenaries, and so on.

In the light of this situation of madness of the enemy, we need to take much more seriously the intention of the enemy against our struggle and our people. Besides the common sense element of vigilance in the state of war we are in - being wary of suspicious looking letters, parcels, changes in the environs of our residences and means of transport, prying elements in our living and working quarters and around our means of transportation - we need to be even more exacting on ourselves in questions of discipline. There must be a very clear distinction between our actions on a day-to-day basis from those of the enemy elements infiltrated within our ranks.

In order to understand these schemes of the apartheid regime better we need to throw a quick look at the past few years. The regime's Defence Minister Magnus Malan issued a fresh reminder to us only very recently. Speaking on the banks of the Limpopo River in the wake of what they called a rocket attack on a farmhouse in the area Malan said "...whenever the ANC is, we will eliminate it." (Star 20/2/88). He added, "...we are no longer interested in the neighbouring states!" (what a cheek!).

In the past the regime perceived the threat facing it as emanating from outside, particularly from the states in the region. The strategists of the regime held that once closed these alleged bases of the ANC - the regime will then, in peace, proceed with its modernisation programmes of the system of colonisation and exploitation of our people. For once the external launching pads were removed then the so-called encouragement to rebellion of our people will be done away with and the people will then become, as it were, accomplices in their own oppression. The few elements that had been "infiltrated" will be mopped up by its armed forces.

To this end the regime adopted a two-pronged approach - military threats and economic incentives. It set about launching repeated raids against the countries in the region while at the same time offering to conclude onerous and servile security pacts with these countries. In relation to countries far afield Pretoria staged attacks on the representations of the ANC - London, Stockholm.

In the event, the strategy brought limited returns to the apartheid regime - most of the countries in the region rebuffed these schemes.

Against all the previous calculations of Pretoria the armed struggle shot up, both in magnitude and quality. The area defence system that has been elaborated to deal with the armed struggle internally came to naught. The regime was even forced to redirect the thrust of what it designated 'reaction force' - the Permanent Force - from external aggression and deploy it in repression and suppression roles within the country, in the African townships.

On the other hand, the actions of the masses of our people also increased astronomically and consolidated themselves intricately on the terrain within the country. The enemy had lost the political initiative.

This situation spans roughly the period 1982 to the first half of 1986.

In the wake of the failures of this approach the enemy feverishly set about searching for and elaborating other schemes - complete physical annihilation. Internally the regime introduced the kitskonstabel phenomenon - rudimentarily trained armed men (lumpen and unemployed elements) - and, most recently, the cut-throats of its bantustan creations ('independent' and otherwise) as the Pietermaritzburg events so graphically illustrate.

The phenomenon of kitskonstabels and the vigilante concept of both the 1986 and the 1987 to date types, is a clear indicator of the failure of the various draconian states of emergencies in the history of the country now in force. Their introduction mark the setting in of two closely related traits of the situation in the country - the irreversibility of the determination of our people on the one hand, and the equal determination of the enemy to resort even to medieval and barbarous forms of struggle to maintain its rule. Hence the novel concept of the decapitation of the liberation movement and the mass democratic movement.

These occult forms of doing battle with opponents are not entirely new in the history of conflicts. They were resorted to by Hitler towards the end of the Second World War. On the eve of this surrender Rhodesia's Ian Smith turned the fury of his frustration on the leading personnel of the Zimbabwean Liberation Movement in Zambia and Mozambique.

At the end of the day, the determination and vigilance of the forces of liberation buried Nazi Germany and Smith's Rhodesia. The tottering Botha/Malan regime is staring this eventuality in the face. With heightened vigilance let us attack and advance! Not an inch to the racist beast!!!

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