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MEMORANDUM FOR PRESENTATION TO MR HARRY OPPENHEIMER

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

MILKWOOD : 18TH JANUARY 1993

Mr Oppenheimer, it is a real pleasure to be with you for discussions about our South Africa and what needs to be done to make it the place of which we have often dreamed together over the years. In thinking about the years we have known each other, I find myself remembering the extent to which you, Sir, have never been afraid to remain in step, while the whole Battalion is out of step.

Quite obviously you did not succeed in business because you only did what others were doing. It was the same with politics. You backed reform and stood behind those who were going up front in politics to challenge apartheid and bring about a better South Africa. You dominated the mining industry with new thoughts and progressive labour practices. You were a son of South Africa, bold for your country.

More than anything else I remember the extent to which you stood powerfully alone in the 1983 referendum. To your everlasting credit you said no, and you said no for the whole world to hear. It was, I believe, your no which influenced so many other industrialists to see what their yes vote for the Tricameral Parliament resulted in, and to change their minds.

The importance of the swing away from support for Mr PW Botha can not be overstressed. When industrialists lost faith in the

Tricameral Parliament, and what it was attempting to achieve, they had no choice but to turn to preparing for a new South Africa in which there would be no apartheid.

The business sector's withdrawal of support for Mr PW Botha struck at the very foundations of the National Party's support system. The advent of Mr FW de Klerk's leadership can, in important part, be traced to business turning its back on apartheid and demanding a race free society.

These are not just friendly words, Mr Oppenheimer. You will find these sentiments expressed in many of my speeches made since February 2 1990. I have said for a decade that I have faith in South Africans. I have always known that it would be the people of South Africa who would bring about change. South Africa was not beyond redemption, and the ANC was wrong in their view that change would have to come from without.

You saw this a long time ago, Mr Oppenheimer. You supported the establishment of the Inkatha Institute, and you supported the Buthelezi Commission. You saw the merit in the negotiations we had with the then Natal Provincial Administration, and you saw the sense in the KwaZulu Natal Indaba. The Joint Executive Authority arose out of what you supported.

We hope, with a great deal of fervour, that you will now support the next move in that chain of events which started with the

formation of the Inkatha Institute. After the JEA, there must be a Joint Legislative Authority. The Constitution of the State of KwaZulu/Natal embodies all the ideals and wisdom sieved out of South African experience by the Inkatha Institute, the KwaZulu Natal Indaba and the Joint Executive Authority.

I launched the Constitution in the full ripeness of time. At a meeting held on Saturday, between the Natal National Party members of Cabinet and Natal NP members of parliament, and the

IFP, it became very apparent that the tabling of the constitution was very timely. It is a constitution commanding respect for the serious document that it is. It is forcing the South African Government to declare where they stand on many crucial constitutional issues. It is hastening the preparation of the next phase for all parties to move away from preliminary skirmishing and disclose their hands.

It is also setting the pace for liberalising the whole negotiation process by making the inclusion of South African regional voices in the negotiation process, essential.

Above all though, it is setting very high standards in constitutional thinking. Its provisions, on all levels, represent the best in global thinking about plural societies. It is the product of 20th Century thinking about man in society, in circumstances such as those prevailing in South Africa. The

declared respect for its technical and political worth, by the Government delegates at our Saturday meeting, was-gratifying indeed. - - -

The Constitution actually sums up what I have been saying for many years about what we need in the future. It is the product of my reflections on Inkatha's experience of government and society. We added to our experience the technical expertise of constitutional lawyers. It incorporates the wisdom of the

collective leadership of Inkatha. It is a home-grown Constitution generated by South Africans for South Africans.

It is a compendium of all I have advocated in the last 20 years as a way forward for this Region and for South Africa. One of the lawyers involved in helping me produce this Constitution is Mr Joe Matthews who is seeing you with me today. It really puzzles me when I have been very consistent and constant in my beliefs, that the media and certain publications in South Africa

suddenly see me as no more than a puppet of a coterie of Whites around me. I have always believed in a non-racist South Africa, and I think it is inverted racism to say that anyone with a white face around me is my adviser and that his or her white face turns me into his or her puppet. I have been in politics longer than more than 99 per cent of those around me, be they White or Black.

Mr Oppenheimer, I come to you today asking for your full support for what we are doing in the KwaZulu/Natal region to promote sound constitutional developments. The only democracy we will ever have is democracy under a federal constitution. We need to popularise federalism as such, and we need to popularise this particular Constitution as a constitution which will unite the people of this region.

Powerful forces for economic development lie locked up beneath the political disputes in this region. The Greater Durban Area and the Thukela Basin will yet combine to a greater share of the gross national product than any other area. Its proper political constitution is critically important to the whole country. This region must be allowed to become an adjunct to the ANC/SACP's political interests.

Your bold support for what I am doing will set standards of response, not only by big business, but all sorts of opinion-makers. We need very substantial support to promote the Constitution, and make its provisions understood and appreciated by people at all levels of life and in all race groups.

I have already given you quite a pile of documents before this meeting which encapsulate my thinking on the major issues we face today as a Nation. I thought that this would make our discussion

today meaningful. We are trying to do what is meaningful in the midst of hideous violence. We realise that our economy is in a parlous state. This is partly because certain organisations have used the economy as a battle-ground - something that I have warned them against for decades.

There are suddenly efforts now for a quick-fix. In the quest for this quick-fix, people are clutching at straws in the spirit of anything will do as long as it cures our economic ills. Nothing

will last that is foisted on a population which is already involved in a low-intensity civil war. We need consensus solutions. We need an all-representative forum. Dr de Beer, the leader of the Democratic Party and others, have nurtured the dangerous view that we should be satisfied with bi-polar negotiations, especially when he made his famous remark that any consensus between the Government and the ANC is sufficient consensus. As long as people approach negotiations in this mould of mind, then we are indeed skating on very thin ice.

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