

ADDRESS AT THE YOUNG PRESIDENTS' AWARD CEREMONY

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Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honour and pleasure to speak at the Young Presidents' aspiring businessmen's Durban Chapter. If it is indeed possible to highlight any particular event in my calendar year that gives me the greatest pleasure, it is to be invited to occasions such as this where I am able to speak to South Africa's business leaders of tomorrow.

It is on these very occasions that I am able to gain a unique perspective of the depth and character of the South African nation. On a night like this, I am also able to applaud the fact that there are so many young and dedicated people out there who have worked so hard to make our country a better place to live in, and that you have done so virtually in your youth.

It is my firm belief that if South Africa is to pull itself out of the physical and moral morass that it finds itself in, and if we are to build our country into a powerful and respected entity, then we are going to need to harness the potential of our young people in all walks of life and particularly those of you who are in business. This is why it is such a privilege to speak to you this evening.

I would like to remind you of the words of that great writer and poet Robert Louis Stevenson who said that: 'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive and the true success is to labour.' How true this is!

How pertinent is this quote to all South Africans in this time of great uncertainty and upheaval. Despite the incessant talk of free lunches being handed out after the election, it remains true that the only way we are going to succeed in rebuilding our country is to work hard, to work with purpose and to work together. Also, to work together not because we have to but because we have a common purpose and a shared vision.

That common purpose and shared vision should be to rid our country of discrimination, from whichever quarter it may come. It should be to make our country prosperous. It should be to achieve true democracy. In terms of achieving prosperity we are going to need men and women with your kind of business acumen. We in the Inkatha Freedom Party have always appreciated the crucial role that our business community has played in building our economy into the economic powerhouse of the entire Southern African sub-continent that it is today. Your efforts are especially commendable in the light of the fact that they were achieved against great obstacles.

In assessing the achievements of our businessmen it should be remembered that the present National Party Government must rate as probably the most anti-business government the developing world has known. While it was always keen to bestow its largesse on those who were prepared to feather their nest, the larger business community suffered. So instead of nurturing talent, they destroyed initiative and stifled entrepreneurship. Instead of encouraging competitiveness, they promoted slovenliness by putting up their tariff walls. Instead of improving our country's productivity, they destroyed it with their apartheid philosophies and quasi-socialist policies. Our business sector has thus achieved not because of government help, but in spite of government intervention.

It is therefore gratifying for me to note that our businessmen, in seeking to improve their own standard of living, have benefitted our country greatly. This is, of course, the fundamental reality of the free enterprise system. It remains an inescapable fact that without the drive for personal gain, society's welfare cannot be maximised. Until the ANC, COSATU and the South African Communist Party accept this fact, we will continue to run the risk of dooming our country to poverty and deprivation.

Although our award nominees have clearly overcome the obstacles put in their way by the government, many others are struggling to survive. It is the IFP's belief that if we are going to create wealth in our country, then the government is going to have to be more attune to the needs of business. That means implementing a host of legislation which will free our economy from the over-regulation which is only succeeding in strangling it to death.

It means following clear and consistent macro-economic policies which promote fiscal prudence and price stability. It means reducing taxation so that it would make it worthwhile for our businessmen to devote their time, money and effort to wealth-creation activities. It means improving our productivity levels by investing in the human wealth of this country. It means encouraging foreign investment by tackling the root causes of violence, such as poverty, delinquency and political intolerance. And ultimately it means achieving a political settlement which is acceptable to all South Africans.

Sadly, the 1993 Interim Constitution does not meet this requirement. Far from laying the groundwork for a political dispensation which accommodates the needs and aspirations of all South Africa's heterogenous and divided society, it is a fatally-flawed document which represents nothing but the vested interests of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party alliance, and their new-found allies in the National Party.

In drafting a federal constitution for South Africa and the region of KwaZulu/Natal, the IFP showed South Africa what it meant to come up with a federal system of government. The 1993 Constitution in no way satisfies the requirements of a federal dispensation. It represents nothing but an Interim Constitution which can be scrapped by the winner of elections with a majority of just 50 plus one percent, thanks to the deadlock-breaking mechanism which has been written into the Constitution. The winner of the election would then be able to re-write the Constitution as it best sees fit, and will be constrained only by a set of exceedingly vague constitutional principles which have already proven to be compatible with many and divergent constitutional options.

Most disturbing of all is the fact that the Constitution in no way accommodates the South African people's desire for federalism. Far from creating states with a degree of autonomy, the Constitution merely establishes interim provinces with limited interim powers. In any case, most of the interim powers are powers usually exercised by local government. Provinces also do not have full competence over essential matters such as their own provincial civil service, the provincial police and the establishment of local government.

As such the powers of the provinces are less extensive than even those of the present self-governing territories. They are also far less extensive than the powers of "regions" of the unitary states of Italy and Spain. And they by no means compare with the powers exercised by any member state of a Federation, such as that of the United States or of Germany.

When the National Party and the ANC tell you that the 1993 Constitution devolves power to regions, this is not quite true. It must be remembered that what powers are devolved to the regions are held not exclusively but concurrently with central government. What this means is that central government

has the final say on what the regions may or may not do. This is because the powers of the provinces are extremely limited by some of the broadest and most penetrating over-rides ever written into a Constitution.

In fact, the competence of a province will fade away every time the central government so wishes for reasons of national and economic policies, maintenance of economic unity, protection of the environment, protection of inter-provincial commerce, protection of common market, co-ordination by uniform norms and standards, including but not limited to uniform standards for the rendering of public services, and in numerous other situations.

Of paramount concern to the IFP in the light of the fact that KwaZulu/Natal has been under-funded for decades by the National Party Government, is that the regions will have no independent financial and fiscal resources to allow them to exercise their powers. In the final analysis, the allocation of all provincial revenues are decided by the central government only. Even user charges, such as government schools or hospital fees, will be regulated by the National Assembly, and by the central government's Financial and Fiscal Commission.

So I say to you: do not be fooled when President de Klerk tells you that South Africa will have a federal system of government after the elections next year. For once, rather heed the words of Communist Party head, Mr Joe Slovo, whose speech to the SACP is quoted in the latest copy of 'The African Communist': He says:

"The very question from the start was: Who writes the Constitution? Our opponents wanted a "one-stage process", that is for the Constitution to be drawn up in the multi-party negotiations themselves. Our approach was for "a two-stage process" in which an elected Constituent Assembly would draw up the future Constitution. This we have won. Apart from the Constitutional principles (which we support) everything in the Interim Constitution can be re-written by the democratically elected representatives of the people.

We have always stood for a united South Africa. Our opponents hoped to weaken a future democratic state by imposing federalism. We have won a united South Africa which does not exclude important decentralising measures. In all critical areas however, the future democratic state will have over-riding powers. If you look at the finance provisions of the whole dispensation, you will see that the purse-strings are firmly in the hands of the Central government. In regard to the armed forces, at least on paper we have won the battle against federalisation."

These are but a few of the victories that the ANC/South African Communist Party have achieved. There are many others which time does not permit me to mention. The question thus remains: can South Africa afford a constitution which represents a total victory by just participants to the negotiations process? Are we not merely repeating the mistakes of the past? Time will surely tell.

I was in Cape Town this morning where I addressed the International Press Institute's 43rd Annual General Assembly. I dealt with the issue of whether the media can be trusted to convey the information that is available accurately and comprehensively. I debated whether the media is in fact doing this, as far as what is going on in our country right now is concerned. I expressed my doubts about this.

I am sure you are aware of the extent to which they have conducted a concerted and consistent campaign to misrepresent the IFP's point of view, either by not adequately reporting, or deliberately distorting, our point of view to present us as irresponsible 'spoilers' who are obstructing the

democratic process. I do not know how many of you are aware that Mr Joe Slovo has admitted as much, as you heard in the statement I have just read, that because the ANC/SACP alliance was opposed to a federation, they have managed to prevent this happening in South Africa.

You should not be bluffed by any amount of pep-talk by President de Klerk and some of the National Party leaders in Natal, who claim that the fatally flawed constitution of 1993 is a federal constitution. It is nothing of the kind. For me, this came as no surprise as Mr Mandela himself told me on the 23rd of June last year that he was opposed to a federal South Africa. He stated that the most he would settle for is a constitution which has a unitary system with a strong provincial constitution. The constitution we have before us does not even provide for a strong provincial system. In fact, the KwaZulu Government as it operates today, has more powers than the Provinces have under this Interim Constitution.

This Interim Constitution does not even protect the free enterprise system. I however notice that many of our businessmen are trying to overlook this fact in the hope that there will be a lot of investments from abroad. While I applaud the investments that our businessmen are making, there is no way that we are going to have any significant foreign investment if the future of this country is as uncertain as it is at present. What is happening at present in our country - the ongoing violence and the possibility of a socialist future - will not result in many multi-national companies finding our country an attractive area for investment.

We in the IFP believed in a one-phase process where a final constitution would be negotiated, after which elections would be held. The ANC/SACP alliance have been committed to a two-phase system in terms of the Harare Declaration which they authored before they were even unbanned. This is the triumph that Mr Slovo is speaking about, that the election we are due to have under this Interim Constitution is not about a government of South Africa, it is about who will write the final constitution for the country.

Many businessmen are being carried away by the false belief that once there is an election in this country, everything will blossom in the garden. If you look at what is happening in Angola, you can see that an election there did not herald any peace or prosperity. This happened in spite of the presence of so many international monitors. Do not be fooled by those who say that an election under this fatally flawed constitution will bring any peace or prosperity in our troubled land.

I have not abandoned hope that there may still be a way forward if the National Party and its partners in the ANC/SACP alliance take seriously the representations that have been made by the Freedom Alliance, as well as those made by His Majesty the King, and those we are making with the PAC, the DP and other parties on the single ballot.

I have always been committed to peaceful means of bringing about change in this country. I am still committed to peaceful means and negotiations even now. We are however under threat. Mr Joe Slovo has stated to those of us who do not fall in line that "army tanks will roll." We have for years refused to bow before what was militarily the best equipped country in the world, and we were not intimidated by their being armed to the teeth. This is why I am hoping that even at this late hour there might be a change of heart and a meeting of minds.

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