

THE PUBLIC SERVANTS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

"THE REALITIES OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA FOR CIVIL SERVANTS"

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

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It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation to address you today. I have come to share thoughts with you. I have come to share the vision of the IFP with you. I have come to talk to you about my own perceptions of the future. I have come to you to share with you and to talk to you as a fellow South African. I have not come to punch party political lines. I have not come to be party political at all.

I believe in my party. And I believe we have an enormous amount to offer the new South Africa. We are doing an enormous amount of good work right now around negotiating tables. The IFP is one of the three major players in the political field and we will remain in play. But I have not come here to talk about the IFP as the standard bearer of the kind of liberal democratic values on which the new South Africa is going to rest so heavily. I have come here to address your concerns and I hope allay any fears you may have about the future.

I believe we need to talk about fears because times of radical transition are always times of danger. I believe that we can put a new South Africa together in which we can live with each other as neighbours. I believe we can put a democracy together that will work. And I believe that we can make it work in constitutional parliamentary terms and also make it work to support an enterprise-driven economy that will do more than increase the standards of living of South Africans. Democracy will do that, but it will do more. It will go on to feed progress and success into the whole of Southern Africa and Central Africa beyond.

We have to put something together here in this country which will make it possible to develop what really will become a Southern African economic community, stretching from Zaire in the North through Zambia, through Zimbabwe and Botswana and finally through South Africa right down to the Cape of Good Hope. There is a huge as yet unexploited mineral back-bone in the sub-continent which will make this possible.

In a sense the whole of Southern and Central Africa is waiting for South Africa to emerge as a working democracy opening the gates of development for the whole of Southern Africa. There is a new mood creeping into African politics. Africa is dumping Marxism. It is dumping one party state philosophies. Zambia is now a multi-party democracy and I believe that the spirit of realism which demands

multi-partyism and which demands the spirit of free enterprise in economies, is going to gather momentum in Africa. Right now members of African cabinets and even Heads of State are converging on Dakar to attend a conference which begins on Monday which is going to look at the modernisation of Africa and its preparation for entry into the 21st century.

I am commencing my address with the wide vision looking beyond what we are doing here in this country right now. Part of that wide vision must be a vision of the macro forces of the sub-continent and the international community which will be converging on South Africa. Another part of that vision is the vision we have of a place in South and Southern Africa for our children and their children after them. We are not simply making a new South Africa to suit our lives as we are living them now. We are making a new South Africa which will feed realism and development and find prosperity in the whole of Southern Africa.

We have got important things to do, you and I. We have got to show the world that South Africa is quite capable of putting its democratic house in order and we will show the world that we need no revolutionaries, no marching armies, no racist government, and no draconian measures to bring peace and stability to this country.

While the ANC was still crying out in the loudest possible voice that there was no hope for reform from within in South Africa, I was saying that this was not true. In the early 80's when things from Black political points of view were the darkest ever because the power of the apartheid state was more powerful than ever, I was preaching hope.

I would have nothing to do with the Tri-cameral Parliament that was introduced in 1983. I opposed apartheid democratically and I campaigned with non-violent tactics and strategies because I saw no need for death and destruction to make South Africa a beautiful place for all her people.

I saw the signs of the times in the early 1980's as indicating the real possibility of change from within. I then already knew that the support base of the National Party was crumbling because vast throngs of ordinary people wanted out of apartheid. I saw the foundations of the National Party crumbling because the whole of institutionalised South Africa wanted an open, multi-party democracy.

The stepping aside of Mr P W Botha and the emergence of Mr F W de Klerk as leader of the National Party and State President, was the first major adjustment that the National Party made to accommodate the emerging realities around it in the country. The break-away movement in the National Party which first challenged the party from within and then from without, was another sign of the times. The break-away movement and the gravitation in thinking in the Dutch Reformed Church towards concurrence with thinking in many other denominations that apartheid was a sin, were all part of the writing of the signs of the times.

When people expressed their concern that Mr de Klerk would yet renege on his former undertakings, I argued very firmly that this was just not possible because institutionalised South Africa was heading a rising groundswell demand for what he promised us he would do. The change that is happening now has its roots in events that accumulated during the history of South Africa ever since 1910. The democratisation of South Africa is an inevitable consequence of what has always been the fact that this is a Christian country filled with decent people who could put a decent society together.

Why you may ask, this looking back. My response is that for me it is very important that White South Africans realise that they are involved in a changing South Africa because it is historically good and because there really is no alternative. The very best brains in the country were employed to make apartheid work; the brightest of planners, the most able administrators and the most astute political leaders in a National Party could not make apartheid work. Nothing can make apartheid work now. The politics of partition leading to the racist constitution will not work.

It is important for Whites to understand that there are major Black leaders like myself who have never fought Whites. I have only ever fought apartheid openly. When the whole world was more than sceptical about White South Africa's ability to help bring about changes in this country, I was arguing that Whites were not like expatriates in other African states. Whites, I argued, were indigenous Africans and unless we made them part of the solution, there would be no solution. As long as we regard Whites as part of the problem and not part of the solution, I said, there would be no hope for South Africa.

The challenge that faces us is to come together as Black and White South Africans and do what has to be done together. One of my reasons for casting my mind back in addressing you today is to make you understand that I have always had faith in White South Africans and I have always believed that Black and White could come together to establish a country in which we would all be prepared to be governed the way we would be governed under a true democracy.

Black South Africans must face the inescapable truth that we cannot make a democracy work without Whites and we cannot make the economy work without Whites. Whites must come to the reciprocal understanding that they can do nothing without Blacks. This is a multi-racial country. There must be a multi-racial response to our circumstances. Divided, we will fight and kill each other; united we will conquer fear and all adversity together.

Allow me to regress for a moment. When I fly into any of our South African cities at night and see a veritable sea of electric light bulbs below me, I know that each light means that a hand has inserted that bulb into a socket; each light means an electrical system behind it. Then I begin to think of the thousands of miles of electric cable that lie below the earth and above the earth criss-crossing the city to make it a place for people.

Then I think of the electrification process and everything that goes with it; the generation of power, the maintenance of electrical systems, and the on-going business of keeping cities lit. One does not have to go much further than that to see the beginnings of what is a powerful set of vested interests to keep South Africa functioning. Whether we are talking about lights or water or whether we are talking about railway lines or roads, we are talking about the vastness of Southern Africa and the millions of people in it who have vested interests in keeping things functional.

South Africa, I keep telling my friends from abroad, is very different from Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe - to mention a few countries in Southern Africa which have been liberated in recent years. South Africa, I say, does not have a Black population which could be expected to survive off the land while the country makes a transition from one constitutional form to another.

In a place like Soweto alone there are millions upon millions of Black South Africans who could not survive one week without a pay packet. They are amongst the other millions who have vested interests in keeping the city's lights going and maintaining water reticulation and the country's road and rail systems.

Millions upon millions of Black South Africans want us to make South Africa safe for them. They want jobs, they want homes. They want improved prospects for themselves and they want their children to have a better life than they could ever hope for. They are the allies of democratic forces that work in South Africa.

There are the millions who voted with their feet against the armed struggle. Because they never participated in the armed struggle and rejected it, there was no armed struggle. The ANC has never had an army that has fought any battles. Umkhonto weSizwe can celebrate no victories. The people rejected the armed struggle just as they rejected punitive economic sanctions against this country by lining up at the gates of foreign owned factories as they waited with the desperate hope that they would be chosen for employment.

The process of change is bringing out the power of these people. The ANC has no option but to abandon their armed struggle. It has no option but to moderate its stances and at least publicly state its commitment to establishing a multi-party democracy.

My friends, there is hope for this country. We can be sure that there is a 'powerful people factor' at work creating the circumstances in which ideologues and those dominated by ideologies are herded along the road towards realism.

It is important for you to understand that I have this deep faith in our country and in its Black and White citizens. If you do not understand that I have this faith, you will not understand why you can really rely on me when I say that the Inkatha Freedom Party will be there backing reform and making quite sure that we end up with a workable multi-party democracy. We see politics and economics as two sides of the South African coin of development.

You can also believe what I am saying and trust in my leadership because on any day of the week you will find that IFP members and leaders are sacrificing their lives in the pursuit of the objectives I am putting before you today. In recent years over 200 IFP leaders have been assassinated simply because they were pursuing the objectives which go with the philosophy of life and politics about which I am talking to you.

I am not talking about IFP leaders who have somehow or other been caught up in violence and have died. I am talking about IFP leaders who have been marked for death and hunted down and killed - very often brutally through necklacing, decapitation or through being stoned to death. You can be quite sure that one of the messages for you that violence has in South Africa is that you can believe in the future because the decency you want is being defended even to death.

There will, of course, be no democracy while the present levels of violence continue to be what they are. The IFP will see to it that there is no election while high levels of violence make the politics of intimidation the order of the day. We are not going to risk our future and your future by rushing into an election which can only distort the real will of the people. We say unequivocally that the ANC's Umkhonto weSizwe must be disbanded before there can be any election.

The IFP is totally committed to ensure that whatever we do in the process of bringing about reform is done with the highest possible degree of constitutional continuity. We are totally opposed to the leap into the constitutional and political dark that the ANC want us to jump into in their proposal to make a rapidly convened Constituent Assembly the constitution-making body of South Africa.

This is where Black and White I believe should really find each other. Whites look to Africa and the extravagance of political power in some parts of South Africa which have resulted in destruction and death and they want immunity from that kind of fate. They do not want to be dominated by Black despotic rule which seeks vengeance or the years of White minority despotic rule.

Whites are not prepared to leap into any constitutional darkness and simply hope that somehow things will turn out alright. Blacks understand this, and the vast majority of Blacks also do not want to leap into constitutional darkness. We never again want to see any government after apartheid amass the kind of monolithic power around it that successive National Party governments amassed around themselves.

We want a democracy that will work because the voting public are empowered to place a government in position and remove them from office if they do not fulfil the promises made to get into power.

We in the IFP have held out in CODESA for the acceptance of the need for whatever interim phases we might have to go through to be transitional phases under a firm constitution, transitional if need be, in which individual and group rights are guaranteed and in which there is an entrenched Bill of Rights which makes infringements of human rights justiciable.

We are particularly adamant that the new constitution will not be drawn up by an elected Assembly of whatever brand. For us a constitution has the prime purpose of curbing the ability of governments to take on excessive powers. No party in power should ever be trusted with legislating restraints into position under which it says it will live. Look at what is happening in Zimbabwe. During negotiations it was agreed that rights to the ownership of land would be entrenched and that there would be no nationalisation of privately owned land.

After some years of rule the Zimbabwean government decided to scrap these constitutional restraints and appropriate privately owned land from its White ownership. Land owners objected and took the matter to the Supreme Court which upheld their rights only to find that the Zimbabwean government ignored the ruling being fought on the grounds that they were executing the will of the people.

The same issue is beginning to emerge in Namibia. There, the Namibian government is appropriating privately owned school property in defiance of the constitution on the grounds that the Supreme Court cannot challenge legislation passed for political purposes.

We in this country must never allow power to go into the hands of any political party which does not come into power through constitutional roots which is not elected into office with elections properly run under well worked out electoral laws.

In some parts of the region from which I come, there is a saying that "Even a big boy can take a bird out of a small boy's hand". We are aware of that and we are aware that any power devolved from the centre of a unitary state to a regional local authority structure can be withdrawn at any time. It is virtually impossible to entrench the power of regional local government or even the power of the rights of the electorate in a unitary state. No elected government in a unitary state will ever be bound by legislation passed by a previous government. Indeed no government is actually bound by its own legislation. It is the government that can make laws and rescind laws.

If we elect an interim government into position, once that government is in power it could rapidly set about entrenching itself. An elected Constituent Assembly could well become a permanent Assembly and the ruling party in it which could well be made dominant because of violence and intimidation and could become the ruling party in a one party state.

The answer the IFP says lies in Federalism. In a Federal system Federal states decide amongst themselves what powers they are prepared to forego and devolve to the Federal government. The power they remain with are original powers, they are not devolved powers which could be withdrawn.

The advantage of a Federal system is also that you do not have one all-powerful central government which can dictate events for ever. In a Federal system numerous checks and balances can be established. The separation of the executive power from the judiciary and the legislature can be made very effective and politically very water tight. The head of state, normally a president, can only exercise powers which are prescribed by the constitution. Under a Federal system we will also have the additional advantage that the executive of government may be limited to what can only be done with funds approved by the legislature.

We must remember that the most successful democracies in the world are Federal states. The United States and Germany of course lead the field. In recent decades there has been a global trend to move away from majoritarian power in a unitary state towards shared power in a Federal state. Consensus politics can only really be enforced under a Federal constitution.

Federalism the world over is replacing unitary states in countries which have the diversity which we have in South Africa. Consensus politics in Federal states works much better in plural societies. The full might of the Soviet Union as a world super power could not finally ensure the submission of the ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. Everywhere group dynamics are defeating even the harshest of powers wielded by majoritarian governments in unitary states.

South Africa is a country of great diversity. Regionalism is fundamentally important to us. We must regionalise democracy. There is no prospect ever again of entrenching racist legislation to provide the cornerstones of an equivalent to apartheid government. Regionalism need not go with racialism in a Federal solution. All you have to do is to look through the recommendations of the Buthelezi Commission and the constitutional recommendations of the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba to see this.

Federalism from a White point of view will divide Black power so that there will be no monolithic national force capable of backing Whites into revenge submission for apartheid. For Blacks Federalism will divide White power so that there will never again be a monstrous system such as apartheid.

The IFP of course conceives of Federalism as that which will be protected by the principles of multi-partyism in politics. I really do hope that every South African hears me when I say that the multi-partyism that the IFP will ensure is vitally necessary. If we had a negotiating table with two sides to it with Dr Mandela and Mr de Klerk sitting facing each other with all the other political parties lining up behind one or the other of them, there would be total disaster for democracy.

If ever we allow such circumstances to emerge, power politics would be brought into play every time the ANC could not get its own way in negotiations. ANC negotiations would thump the desk and storm out in the streets to organise mass action, stay-aways and strikes until opposition crumbled and they got their own way. They would have a very unfair advantage because Mr de Klerk could not go to the streets to make South Africa ungovernable in order to get his own way.

There must be a multi-party democracy and the multiplicity of parties that there are in South Africa must be involved in producing the new South Africa for us. The IFP has argued very strenuously at CODESA that its base is insufficiently representative for it to actually be tackling the tasks that it has set for itself. Unless the full political spectrum is represented in CODESA you will not end up with a constitution under which we will all be prepared to be governed. I have urged the CP and the PAC to participate in CODESA so that its broadened base could be of greater legitimacy.

The IFP will remain committed to multi-partyism and we will ensure that we do indeed end up with a multi-party democracy. We are also committed to make quite sure that it is a democracy in which there will be the rule of law, the freedom of speech and the freedom of association. There will also be a free press and freedom of religious expression.

It is against these back-ground remarks that I want to turn now to look more specifically at the civil service as such. Let me say initially that there can be no hope of making a successful transition from apartheid society to a democratic society if political leaders and parties do not ensure that all the necessary steps are taken to guarantee sound administration during transition and after transition.

It is said that many a general has lost a battle because his administration was bad and he could not serve his front-line troops. Unless the ruling political parties of the future take all due care to preserve the proficiency and the integrity of the civil service, the whole process of policy implementation will flounder.

Obviously from what I have said I envisage a Federal Republic in South Africa with each state having its own civil service under its own civil service commission. IFP delegates at CODESA are under instruction to make quite sure that civil servants in TBVC states which may be reincorporated into South Africa will lose nothing in the transition. The same instruction will be given to IFP delegates dealing with the regionalisation of the civil service. Every state in a new Federal republic of South Africa will rest on legislation which guarantees its original power and includes provisions for separate tax bases and separate civil services. We want government to be hard, lean and efficient and this can best be done by making government smaller and minimising bureaucratic tendencies.

The IFP is well aware that it will be with considerable difficulty that we finally achieve parity between race groups and between the sectors in each race group. It will be easy to pass legislation forcing parity on the civil service or civil services of the country.

Unless however, movement towards parity is accompanied by increased efficiency and productivity we will face an enormous bureaucratic problem which will consume vast amounts of money.

I see civil servants as professionals who should be treated as professionals. I am also very committed to the whole process of privatisation not least of all because it will lead to purposeful and efficient administration. This means that we will have to be proactive in making quite sure that civil servants actually gain by privatisation. We cannot have a simplistic approach in which we say that we have to do what has to be done and go ahead and do it.

Under an IFP government civil servants can be quite sure that their associations will be treated with the greatest respect and that real negotiations will take place to make whatever transition there will have to be at civil service level as beneficial to civil servants as to the State.

I am also quite sure that the steps that we will have to take to make the economy efficient and productive will have implications for increased efficiency in the civil service. Civil servants ultimately will gain because they are participants in the changing South Africa and are making it a more prosperous place to live in.

Nowadays the household expression is the "New South Africa". Our concern and your own concern is the role of the civil service in the new South Africa. As a politician I appreciate your association's attitude as expressed by your General Manager, Mr J C Olivier, on 26 March 1991 on the theme "Civil Service in the New South Africa":

"There is no longer any job reservation for Whites. The Public Service Act is neutral in respect of colour. Discrimination against the recognition of non-white employee organisations has disappeared. The PSA and other employee organisations have opened their membership to all population groups. The only criteria for employment are the principles of merit and competence. Salary disparities according to population group have been eliminated".

Mr Olivier also expressed the concern of your Association about the personnel composition in the public service. He said:

"In South Africa the White : non-White ratio is about one to five...

- (a) For every White labourer, there are 146 non-White labourers, but for such non-White there are more than three Whites in the Administrative cadre;
- (b) Only 27% of all clerical posts are held by non-Whites; and
- (c) In respect of the traditional Public Service, there are slightly more than two Whites for every non-White.

There is therefore an "imbalance" of Whites against Blacks and this could be unacceptable for a future balanced multi-national government dispensation which might wish to enforce a more realistic balance of nations."

Your association was declared by Mr Olivier as "the last organisation that would ever suggest that the Public Service, under a changed Government dispensation and a more balanced representation of nations, will in quantum lose efficiency and efficacy."

I have quoted Mr Olivier of your Association at such length because he reflects your Associations's optimism about the future government. I agree entirely with the view of your Association.

You know as well as I do that many political parties operate in South Africa. Secondly a large number of public servants belong to this or that political party or organisation. Thirdly we are heading for a multi-party democracy in South Africa. We in KwaZulu are democrats and realists. Our focus is, therefore, on a future South Africa which will, believe it or not, have a public service and public servants. The form of government which will emerge from a new constitution does not matter so much now. But the role of a public servant does.

The role of the public servant will be placed between the government of the day and a democratic society. This role will be severely tested. The future public servant needs to make himself aware of the political demands and challenges he has to face now and in the future. A public servant needs to be equipped with the necessary political and constitutional knowledge including expertise if he has to function effectively in the new South Africa. The purpose of a well-trained, organised and disciplined public service is and will be to implement the policy of the ruling party. The rendering of efficient service to the society is and will be entrusted to public servants who must be loyal and impartial. Public servants must have the ability to co-operate with politicians who belong to different and rival political parties. The performance of public servants must be beyond reproach, free from corruption and not in conflict with public expectations. This is an ideal public service and public servants of the new South Africa.

The KwaZulu Public Servants Association is recognised by us as a Government. However our service is young and our Association still lacks the experience and the expertise your Association has. I do not understand why communication, liaison and consultations between yourselves now in preparation for the new South Africa have not been established.

I and the IFP are going to be striving for the kind of democracy in which you as civil servants will find the greatest professional and personal fulfilment in whatever you are doing. The civil service of South Africa is going to be put through enormous stresses and strains as the new South Africa unfolds and as we all make our contribution to make the unfolding beneficial not only for the world we live in but for the world our children and their children after them will live in.

I started off my address to you emphasising the need for faith and hope. The future is yours. South Africa is your country. Add to the vision of your leaders by making it more possible for dreams to be realised because you add efficiency to the implementation of the measures that will be needed to make changes which are inevitable as beneficial as possible.

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