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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN CERTAIN REPRESENTATIVES OF BIG BUSINESS
AND OPINION-MAKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ANC, HELD ON 13th SEPTEMBER
1985 IN ZAMBIA.

1. The meeting came about through the good offices of the President of the Republic of Zambia. President Kaunda welcomed participants to the discussions.
2. The visiting delegation consisted of GAVIN KELLY of Anglo-American Corporation, Dr. Zach de Beer of Anglo-American, Tony Bloom of Premier Group Holdings, Tertius Myburgh, editor of the Sunday Times, Harold Parkendorf, editor of Die Vaderland, J. de L. Peter Sordor, Director of South African Foundation and Hugh Murray, editor of Leadership South Africa. The A.N.C. delegation was led by comrade President Oliver Tambo.
3. The ANC and the visitors agreed that the discussions were not to be construed as negotiations, that the coming together of the two groups was not intended, whether directly or indirectly, to serve as talk about talks with the South African regime. The basic purpose was to come together as South Africans to enable the participants to get to know each other, and to look at the problems facing South Africa with a view towards understanding their different positions with due regard to the urgency with which the apartheid problem needs to be speedily resolved on the basis of the complete removal of apartheid which, beside being totally unacceptable to the people of South Africa, was a constant destabiliser in the whole Southern African region.
4. Although the discussion revealed certain fine distinctions in the views of the visitors their over-all position can be summarised as follows:
 - 4.1. There is a general mood of change in South Africa on the part of the regime to move away from apartheid in favour of reform. In this regard, P.W. Botha was firmly committed to reforms and the visitors held forth the expectation that more reform was on the way. That is, P.W. Botha was sincere in his commitment to reform.
 - 4.2 At the same time, P.W. and his regime were uncertain about what they wanted to do and the direction in which they wanted to move.

- 4.3 Furthermore, the visitors were of the opinion that the more the Botha regime was put under pressure, the more they tended towards hardening into positions of intransigence.
- 4.4 The visitors therefore represented a view that reform was a process undertaken by the regime and was already underway. They therefore saw the role of Big Business in terms of maintaining good relations with the regime in the expectation that they could continue to quietly nudge the Botha regime towards more reform (a view which could be characterised as the internal counterpart of Reagan's Constructive engagement policy).
- 4.5 At the same time, Big Business is manifesting tendencies which accept the possibility that the Botha regime may not survive and therefore are simultaneously entertaining ideas which constitute a search for a "middle ground" in the South African body politic. The visitors tended to blur this concept in terms of, firstly, the building up of a grouping which would exert pressure on the Botha regime around certain specific demands such as the release of Nelson Mandela and political prisoners, an end to the State of Emergency etc., and secondly, in terms of a "middle ground" political grouping between the policy positions of the Nationalist regime on the one hand and the ANC on the other. They however pointed out that this search for 'middle ground' was unable to generate any momentum because most of the forces were reluctant to become involved in the process because they wanted to be sure that their participation would have the approval of the ANC. Secondly, they felt that a gathering together of this 'middle ground' would require the participation of Gatasha Buthelezi and that most of the other forces that were being canvassed in the country refused to join the process because they objected to his participation and, more important, because such forces were aware that the ANC did not look at Gatasha with any degree of favourable consideration.
- Another variation of this search for a 'middle ground' position they advanced ran as follows: They raised the view that sooner or later apartheid will go but that it would be "oddrastic a swing if the ANC were to take over power. However no 'middle group' could take power without the approval of the ANC. It would be an act of statesmanship on the part of the ANC if the ANC could sanction such a development in order to ensure that S.A. does not become permanently ungovernable. This line of argument in our view tied up with the recent PFP-Buthelezi initiatives regarding the Convention Alliance.

5. Within this context of their reading of the situation they raised the Botha objections to negotiate with the ANC, viz.
 - 5.1 The ANC commitment to the armed struggle.
 - 5.2 The ANC alliance with the SACP and reliance on assistance from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries,
 - 5.3 They added to these question-marks their own concern about ANC economic policy with regard to a future South Africa.
6. The discussion noted the various positions that Big Business has been taking with regard to the current situation and the ANC viewpoint presented at this meeting was aimed firstly, at disabusing them of some of the major misconceptions they had about the nature of the struggle and the positions of the ANC. Secondly, persuading Big Business and the opinion-makers that whilst we welcomed some of the positions that they were taking, we nonetheless were disquietened by the role that Big Business had been playing over the decades, as well as over the current crisis. Thirdly, to urge that as South Africans, there was an urgent need that Big Business take a more positive position.
7. In this context, and in direct relation to their perception of the problems, the ANC positions were outlined as follows:-
 - 7.1 A special characteristic of the crisis facing the Botha regime was the mass uprisings which were spreading throughout the country despite the State of Emergency and from which it was evident that the masses of our people found apartheid intolerable even if it meant sacrificing their lives to destroy it.
 - 7.2 That economic growth did not necessarily imply betterment of the conditions of life of our people and the removal of apartheid. On the contrary, the greatest industrial boom in our country (from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies) led to the most profound entrenchment of apartheid and repressions.
 - 7.3 That although the issue of change was in the air, the Botha regime had reached a point where it has no strategy except repression for handling the crisis and that we questioned even his sincerity with regard to his commitment to 'reform'.

- 7.4 That the actions taken by the Botha regime had destroyed all his credibility with regards to his capacity both to initiate "reform" and his being accepted as presiding over the process of dismantling apartheid.
- 7.5. The ANC held a contrary view with regards to Botha's intransigence and did not accept the thesis that part of the problem was that the greater the all-round pressure applied to the Botha regime the more intransigent he became. The problem, rather, was his commitment to apartheid and white domination and that, whatever changes he is prepared to entertain, however insignificant they are, are precisely the results of the all-round pressure including economic sanctions and that our strategy was to escalate the struggle.
8. With regard to certain specific questions ANC policy was outlined around certain specific problems that they had raised. These included:
- 8.1 The armed struggle. It was explained that we do not relish violence, that it was state violence and the closing of all other meaningful avenues of change, which made the armed struggle necessary. Therefore to expect the ANC unilaterally to abandon the armed struggle was to ask us to abandon our people's aspirations. It is the ANC and its allies who have faith in the real democratic process.
- 8.2. It is the starting point of the ANC that we wish to create a political framework in which the will of the majority will express itself through normal democratic procedures based on one man one vote in a unitary South Africa.
- 8.3. That our premise is that South Africa belongs to all who live in it and that our concept of democracy rests on the right of individuals; perpetrating racist structures and a racist approach.
- 8.4 That our perspectives at the economic level were based on the Freedom Charter which requires the nationalisation of the monopoly industries, banks and the mines and required a re-distribution of the wealth of our country in contrast to the present economic order which is characterised by extremes of wealth co-existing with gross mass poverty. The precise ways in which such a policy would be implemented would depend on the democratic processes. Our conception recognised that there is a role in the transformations which we seek for various levels of private enterprise.

At the sametime, it was important to appreciate that the new State would need to be able to command the economy and control its resources in order to carry out our commitment to attend to the well-being of our people.

8.5 On the question of talks. It is Botha who is not willing to talk. His public criticism of Big Business coming to meet us emphasises this point. Talks assume that a state of war exists and that in our case the forces are the racist forces represented by the Botha regime and the democratic forces represented by the ANC. The ANC believes that we have not reached the stage where we can even talk about talks. The Botha regime has to take concrete steps in order to create the atmosphere where even talk about talks can be entertained. Such concrete actions would have to include,

8.5.1 First and foremost the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners.

8.5.2 The lifting of the State of Emergency, the release of all arrestees and detainees and the abandonment of the treason trials.

8.5.3 Troops and police must be removed from the black townships and ghettos.

8.5.4 Lifting the ban on the ANC and removal of laws which would prevent us from organising the masses freely.

8.5 The above were cited as some of the principal changes which would have to take place before we reach the stage where negotiation can be seen as a practical possibility.

8.6 The question of the ANC's alliance with the SACP was explained as follows:

- Assertions regarding communist control and domination of the ANC would need to be substantiated if we are to adequately deal with these.
- However we offered an explanation in terms of the South African experience which led to the formation of the ANC in 1912 and the SACP in 1921.
- Our experience was concrete, namely,
 - The Freedom Charter was adopted at Kliptown in 1955 and based on widespread canvassing of our people in all walks of life. It was then adopted by the ANC.
 - The SACP has accepted the Freedom Charter as a policy guideline for the present phase of our struggle.
 - Individual communists have always been members of the ANC; some of them serving in the highest organs of the ANC. Their conduct has always reflected commitment to the programme and policies of the ANC. As members of the ANC they have shown complete loyalty to the ANC.

- 9.7 We explained the relationship between the ANC and the Socialist countries. We receive financial and material assistance from various countries in the west. The Socialist countries do not provide funds but have always willingly provided material assistance including arms. In all our dealing with the Socialist countries we have not once experienced a situation where they have tried to influence our views or tell us what to do.
9. Within this context, Big Business has a role to play specifically,
- 9.1 They need to publicly increase and step-up the pressure on the regime especially with regard to the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners and in relation to the steps which we have pointed to in paragraph 8 above.
- 9.2 South Africa is in the grip of a permanent series of crises. Mass activity including strikes and other forms of industrial action by our workers is taking place and will increase. Certain voices in Big Business recognise that industrial action by workers will include political dimensions of action. Whatever the case, Big Business needs to visibly distance itself from the regime and handle such issues without calling in the army and police, without resorting to measures and institutions created by repressive legislation and without exploiting the special disabilities arising from the migrant labour system which is underpinned by the bantustans.
- 9.3 Hitherto, Big Business has actually played a role of reinforcing the apartheid state e.g. Armscor which has made South Africa self-sufficient in armaments has direct input by Big Business both in terms of personnel and production capacity. 60% of Armscor's production comes from Armscor contracting out to private enterprise. Big Business therefore requires to begin to visibly detach itself in such cases.
10. The discussions were held in a cordial atmosphere. No definite positions were arrived at No negotiations, whether direct or indirect, took place. The basic positions were such that participants gained a better understanding of each other's positions and participants on the side of Big Business and opinion-makers felt the need for greater contact with the ANC.

Lusaka

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