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OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ROAD BETWEEN
THE MAIN ROAD 47 AND THE BRIDGE

Speech by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi M.L.A.
Chief Minister of KWAZULU -
President of INKATHA
and
Chairman of The South African
Black Alliance

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ULUNDI FRIDAY: AUGUST 1 1986:

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Mr. Master of ceremonies, His Honour the Administrator, the

Minister of Works and other Ministers of KwaZulu present, Senior [2
officials of the Provincial Administration present here today,
other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

My first task this morning is to welcome His Honour the
Administrator and all other guests of honour present at today's
ceremony. I further wish to thank His Honour the Administrator
of Natal Mr. Cadman for allotting me the task of performing the
official opening of the road and bridge which his administration

has just completed for all of us.
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At the first meeting between the Administrator of Natal, Members

of the Executive Council and Senior Officials of the Provincial Administration and the Cabinet and Senior Officials of the KwaZulu Government in Pietermaritzburg some 5% years ago, my Government was invited to present Memoranda regarding matters which were of concern to us and where we felt that the Administrator-in-Executive Council could be of help in solving such matters.

Although there were possibly many matters of concern which we could have burdened our hosts with on that day, we decided to present only one Memorandum which we felt was of paramount importance and that concerned the upgrading of the road from the Ulundi turn-off on the Melmoth/Vryheid Road to Magudu in the North. The reasons given on that day were as valid as they are

today and very briefly they were:-

(i)

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that for years we had requested the upgrading of this
most important road;

no matter how much maintenance was done to the road it
deteriorated within weeks and at times, after a

rainstorm, even within days;

the road ... 2/

(iii) the road was frequently used by His Majesty the King and

Members of the Royal Family, the Commissioner-General
and his staff and KwaZulu Cabinet Ministers and their

Departmental staff;

that this was a much used main road serving thousands

of KwaZulu and other citizens including the residents of
Ulundi (the capital of the Zulu Nation), Mahlabatini and
Nongoma as well as the Nkonjeni, St. Francis, Ceza and

Benedictine Hospitals;

(v) that the cost to the KwaZulu Government and those

persons who were forced to use the road was astronomical as broken down vehicles and wrecks were a daily sight not to mention punctures, windscreens, maintenance

costs, etc.

As a result of our representations I am happy to say that very

positive action was taken by the Administrator and Officials of

the Provincial Roads Department. and an agreement was reached that the Province would pay 20% of the cost of the new road, the South African Government Treasury through the Department of Co-operation and Development would pay the remaining 80% and the KwaZulu Government would pay for the access road to both Mahlabatini and the Nkonjeni Hospital as these were not included in the direct planned route of the new road. At this time the

estimated cost including the cost of much needed new double

carriage bridges over the White and Black Mfolozi Rivers was plus/minus R40 million. The first contract was arranged and at our request, as this affected the development of Ulundi, this contract started at Ulundi and went as far as Mahlabatini and the Nkonjeni Hospital.

Today, 5% years later we are seeing the completion of the second contract from the Vryheid Road turn off to Ulundi including the magnificent new bridge over the White Mfolozi which replaces the single carriage way bridge which was so severely damaged at the time of the Demoina floods in 1984. Mr. Administrator, Ladies and Gentlemen, we in KwaZulu are most grateful for all the efforts that have been made to date but unfortunately we still sit with

the problem that the major portion of the road which has not yet

been started is today, possibly in a worse condition than it has ever been and this is the road from Mahlabatini to Nongoma and Magudu.

I have been told that the reason why this is still so is because, in the present Economic Climate, the 80% contribution to be made by the South African Central Government is just not available. I accept that these are hard times Ladies and Glentlemen, but I feel

certain that if the road in question was one used daily by even

one South African ... 3/

one South African Government Cabinet Minister, it would have been upgraded and tarred not 5 years ago but 10 or 20 years ago - need

I say more?

However, it would appear that my Minister of Works through the Secretary of his Department, Mr. Isherwood, has come up with

another suggestion to try and get the rest of this road completed

as soon as possible. This includes borrowing plus/minus R40

million from the Development Bank so that contracts can be awarded immediately by the Provincial Roads Department for the completion

of the road to Magudu, hopefully within the next 18 months. My

information is that the Development Bank have agreed to lending

the money required and that both the Province and the Department of Development Aid have agreed in principle to dealing with the matter in this way but that the financial authorities have still to agree on the servicing of such a loan by the Department of Development Aid. Apparently a meeting is to be held next week to try and finalize this aspect and should problems arise I am given to understand that as we have come to expect, our good friend the Commissioner-General will take the matter up on our behalf, at the

highest possible level.

This certainly makes me feel more hopeful that we will still see the fulfillment of our wishes within a reasonable time as I was beginning to wonder whether this road would be completed in the

next 10 years.

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I am delighted to be at today's function for it symbolises our return to sanity in this part of South Africa. The road system of KwaZulu and Natal is symbolic of the inter-dependence of two artificial creations, and for the need for them to be united, administratively and politically, into a single unit. The economic unity of the whole region has long been demonstrated. The road system is the arterial system through which the economic life-blood of the region is pumped. To have two separate road systems would be as foolish and unthinkable as designing a human

body with two separate hearts, and two separate blood streams.

The need to recognise this unity between KwaZulu was highlighted by the Buthelezi Commission. Since then some progress has been made

through co-operation between the two administrations, and the

proposals for a Joint Executive Authority which were presented to the Government earlier this year. It is my understanding that these proposals have been accepted by the Government and will be approved by Parliament when it resumes its sitting late this

month.

This legislative approval will be another important step forward. However the most important, by far the most important, challenge

is the establishment of a single legislative and administrative

body for4/

body for the whole KwaZulu/Natal region. As you are aware, the KwaZulu Government, together with the then Natal Executive, initiated the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba in April. Our hope and intention was that the Indaba should produce recommendations for the meeting of this challenge. We knew that we were embarking on

a complex and a challenging task.

The task that was set the Indaba was not an easy one. In a society as divided as South Africa it is difficult enough to get people of widely different persuasions to sit down and talk, let alone agree. On the positive side, the Indaba has now been

meeting for four months. It was never my view that it could find

agreement in a few weeks, or a month or two. Despite our interdependence, the people of KwaZulu/Natal and of South Africa have been growing apart for many decades. It would take more than a miracle for the damage that has occurred to understanding and trust, to be eliminated in a short period of time. I am pleased to say, however, that reports I receive from the Indaba indicate that the scar-tissue of mistrust, and misunderstanding and alienation is gradually being dissolved by the process of the Indaba; that participants at the Indaba are getting to know each other and understand each other, and are beginning also to understand their fears, frustrations and hopes. That they are beginning to understand that our destinies as different race groups are so inextricably intertwined that in fact we do not have separate destinies, but one common destiny.

This is an important process because people who do not know each other will never understand each other, and people who do not understand each other will never trust each other. In this, I believe, is an important lesson for the whole of South Africa. People and especially leaders, must get to know, and understand, and trust each other. Of course such knowing, and understanding and even trust does not guarantee instant agreement at the Indaba, or at any other forum to discuss the future of a part, or of the whole of South Africa. But it is a virtual pre-condition for the possibility of compromise and agreement.

To achieve compromise and agreement it is also essential that people have the will and determination to find agreement. That they do not simply re-state long-held positions but actively

search for new ways of accommodating their needs and the needs of others. It is vital that they do so because the alternative is horrible for both Black and White, in KwaZulu/Natal and in South Africa as a whole. We in KwaZulu had our eyes open when we played our part in the launching of the Indaba. We realised that the Indaba was not guaranteed to succeed, but our commitment to

peaceful change and development persuaded us to try.

If the Indaba does not succeed it will not damage us or even particularly surprise us. We knew before we started that we faced a difficult ... 5/

a difficult task in persuading Whites and others to give up their privileged political, administrative and economic status and to share with their fellow human beings. On our side we understood the fears of minority groups and undertook to seriously consider

all ways suggested for the alleviation of these fears.

If the Indaba fails a unique beacon of hope for peaceful change

will have been extinguished. It will be that much harder or even impossible to light similar beacons in the future. Blacks will be even more determined to gain their rights. Whites will retreat further into the Tlaager. It would be foolish for Whites to do

SO. Time is on the side of Blacks. There is no better deal

awaiting Whites one, three or five years down the track. They will face greater, not lesser demands at any future negotiations.

At the moment they face a majority of Blacks seeking change

through peace. This will not always be the case. On the other

hand, if the Indaba succeeds it will be that much easier to light similar beacons of sanity around the country. The light of hope for peaceful change will glow that much brighter. The entire western world is beginning to look at those who tell them that only violence is the answer to South Africa's problems, as heroes. The multi-million dollar propaganda of those committed to violence is beginning to bear fruit. Violence has been so glamourised in the media even here, that if there is no move on the part of the government towards fundamental change, violence will soon be seen as glamorous to more and more of our misguided youth. I am

satisfied that the State President and his Ministers fail so far

to appreciate just how urgent it is for South Africa to convince the world that the government is prepared to go much further than just the changes which Mr. Botha has introduced so far. I say so as one who has been prepared to be insulted, denigrated and even

to be threatened with assassinations, for giving credit to Mr.

Botha for some of these changes as more than just 'cosmetic' as

some people describe them. But these changes will pale into insignificance by day so long as the government shows reluctance to move towards real change. The fate of South Africa may well be decided this week end, when the Commonwealth Prime Ministers and Presidents meet in London on Sunday. They will be assessing the report of the Commonwealth eminent Persons Group. Their recommendations plus the return of Sir Geoffrey Howe empty-handed

from South Africa this week are to me ominous. I just think that

it is tragic that it was not possible to give him something, even as little a thing, as the release of Dr. Nelson Mandela.

One thing is certain, there could not be a better time to succeed. I am referring here to the success of Indaba. As I travel around the region and speak to Blacks, Coloured, Indians and Whites I hear remarkably similar messages from people of all groups. The

vast majority do not want violence. The vast majority want

peace. 6/

peace. The vast majority want economic growth and development. The vast majority want human rights protected. The vast majority want the Indaba to succeed. This, incidentally, seems true of millions of South Africans of all colours across the length and breadth of the country.

This remarkable confluence of attitudes will not last forever. In view of the forces building up within South Africa and overseas, it will not even necessarily last for very long. That is why the Indaba is so important. It may turn out to be a unique opportunity to harness the forces of goodwill to start solving our problems peacefully. If South Africans are not prepared to give

peaceful change, any chance that is a matter for them to decide.

On my part I remain fully committed to peaceful change and to

non-violent strategies and tactics. However as I have stated over and over before, my people's options are my options whatever they may be. I am a servant of my people who is prepared to serve the interests of my people and our country whatever this may cost me. I pray that white intransigence should not continue to exist as to cause the time for peaceful change to pass. If we do not succeed with the Indaba that may well be a signal that the time

for peaceful change has passed.

We are grateful to the Natal Provincial Administration for the cooperation between us and the Natal Provincial Administration

which is an example of black-white cooperation.

We all recall the inconvenience that we suffered at the time of DEMOINA and IMBOA when the Mfolozi bridge was washed away. I was assured by His Honour the Administrator that this new bridge will prevent a repetition of the cutting off of road communications to ULUNDI as happened following those floods. Once this road is completed we will have a route which will be an all-weather spine road running from South to North through the heart of KwaZulu. The section between the Empangeni-Vryheid road R34 and ULUNDI replaces a winding "south-sealed" road which was originally black-topped in 1979. As we all know that that black-topped road was in very poor condition in places.

The old bridge over the White Mfolozi River was overtopped and the main span washed away by the floods resulting from the cyclone

Demoina in 1984. We recall the inconvenience from which we were subjected when Ulundi was cut off from the South several times when the bridge and the temporary causeway were repeatedly washed away.

The contract for this work included the White Mfolozi Bridge and 14,3 km of road at a total cost of R8 million. The work included over 200 000 cubic metres of earth to be moved, over 100 000 square metres of roadway to be surfaced and seven large culverts.

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This new road will therefore provide a high standard road link from the South to Ulundi.

We are grateful to the Minister of Works and the Secretary for Works and their staff where they provided cooperation that was essential to complete this project. We are grateful to the Director of the Natal Roads Department for all the arrangements he has made.

It is now my privilege to declare this road between Main Road 47 and Ulundi, and the bridge now officially open.

