Hurd to urge SA antagonists to talk

WHEN Douglas Hurd begins his threeit was during his last visit.

Then, in March last year, he was vulnerable to Margaret Thatcher's sudden outbursts on South Africa. Successive foreign secretaries suffered from imperious bolts from Downing Street - none more than John Major himself when, as foreign secretary at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Singapore in 1989, the statement he had painstakingly worked out with other Commonwealth leaders was promptly repudiated by Mrs Thatcher.

In addition, Sir Robin Renwick, who as British ambassador in Pretoria had a closer relationship with Downing Street than with the Foreign Office, has been replaced. Today South African policy is

firmly back in the hands of the Foreign day visit to South Africa today he will Office. The Foreign Secretary will not at least know that his back is safer than have to look over his shoulder but he rest and wait for sanctions to disappear will still carry the Thatcher legacy. The meeting with Nelson Mandela and a newly reorganised African National Congress will be especially prickly. Mr Mandela will be full of smiles and welcome. His aides will be snarling about British cynicism behind his back.

They will also be watching closely to see how much time the Foreign Secretary gives to Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Inkatha leader. Mr Mandela will urge Mr Hurd not to drop sanctions yet. Mr Hurd will tell Mr Mandela that Britain remains opposed to sanctions and will urge him to hurry to the negoti-

That will be Mr Hurd's message to everyone else too. President FW de

Klerk will be told that should he or his party think for a moment that they can now that apartheid laws have been abolished, they are mistaken. There must be a properly negotiated new dispensation in South Africa before the rest of the world will recognise it as just and stable. The message will be that the way to achieve that is to sit down with Mr Mandela and others and work it . litical prisoners; the government says all Inkatha murder-squads will increase

The visit, which was planned partly to coincide with the arrival of the new ambassador, Anthony Reeve, now falls at a crucial time. The ANC has just emerged from its national conference with a more coherent democratically elected leadership and the issues which South African government feels that ei- ing his best to investigate and control are still preventing the constitutional ther of these issues is important enough negotiations clearly focused. Mr Hurd to hold up the negotiations.

By Richard Dowden Africa Editor

will also report on his visit to the G7 conference in London next week.

The joint ANC and government committee looking at the issue of political prisoners has still to reach agreement. The ANC says there are still 1,972 pohave been released except for 351 bor- suspicions that the de Klerk governderline cases. The rest, the government ment is not to be trusted. Britain's view claims, are criminal. On the return of has been that there may be elements the ANC exiles, the proposals by the within the South African security sys-United Nations High Commissioner for tem which are out of order but there is Refugees have not been accepted by no evidence that the government is dithe government. No one outside the rectly involved, and Mr de Klerk is do-

violence in Natal and in the townships. May the European Community told the pot of aid or investment for the new Mr Hurd will be taking a helicopter Pretoria government in a statement South Africa when it emerges. flight to some of the worst-hit regions that it was responsible for maintaining around Durban but the question is law and order and it must end the viowhether the government is indirectly lence effectively and impartially. All fomenting the violence.

New evidence in The Independent on Sunday that the Directorate of Military Intelligence is funding and training the maverick elements.

Talking on this issue may be tougher

A more serious impediment is the in private than in public. At the end of armed actions to restore order should be banned, the statement said. It offered none of the usual congratulations on political progress.

> Mr de Klerk is always careful never to beg explicitly for the lifting of sanctions, but he will tell Mr Hurd that it is impossible to redress the legacy of apartheid while the economy is strangled. Mr Hurd will give him a sympathetic hearing, although he will want to the sign of wanting to take on the black be reassured that the government has and liberal sanctions lobby while the clear plans to increase spending on battle over the appointment of Clarblack education and housing. The out- ence Thomas to the Supreme Court still look with or without sanctions is grim, rages.

and Mr Hurd can promise no golden

Britain has done what it can to lift sanctions, but the issue may now have little to do with apartheid or South Africa, and be beyond the reach of Mr Hurd or Mr de Klerk. A Danish parliamentary wrangle is holding up the final lifting of European sanctions.

Meanwhile, the more important US sanctions and the Gramm Amendment, which binds the US government to voting against South Africa at the International Monetary Fund, are still in place and the administration shows lit-

ANC set on a pragmatic new course

Nelson Mandela has a fairly elected executive and seems to be softening on sanctions but, John Carlin writes, it is unclear whether unanimity will survive

was the essential message con- to be controlling a phased process. presidential address.

mittee (NEC), the ANC's leader- NEC meetings. ship body.

representative new NEC ranged education will be was provided at up at 3.55am, remarkably alert in a Durban rugby stadium where, members were elected by secret nating the new NEC consisted of and cheerful, to deliver a one- when a list of countries which had hour speech as the new ANC pres- sent messages of support was read been appointed to the top posts country in recent years at the head ident. He paid fulsome tribute to out, the biggest cheers went to on Wednesday. The rest were cho- of the ANC's surrogate, the the outgoing president, Oliver Iraq, the Soviet Union and Cuba sen on the basis of previous elec- United Democratic Front. in the skies for us to be able to shower on him the honour he deserves." And then he proceeded to reaffirm the ANC's now "mandated" commitment to negotiations, making no mention of armed struggle.

subject of international sanctions, another sacred cow of old, with

AT THE conclusion of the ANC's ric". Hitting upon his central first national conference inside theme, he declared: "We are call-South Africa in 33 years, the ing for flexibility and imagination, course of the organisation was set for an approach which is realisin the direction of a new, mature tic." Mr Mandela's point was that pragmatism, a deliberate effort to sanctions were fading, whatever depart from the revolutionary the ANC did and that more profit dreaminess of recent years. This would be gained from being seen

veyed in Nelson Mandela's closing This is not yet ANC official policy, however, and on this, as on The task of forging a political other questions - such as the organisation capable of taking on weight that should be given to the de Klerk government and the "mass action", a favourite item in formidable state resources de- the ANC mantra, it remains to be ployed behind it will be assisted by seen whether the unanimity Mr the democratic election yesterday Mandela sought to project yesterof a new national executive com- day survives the first round of

Evidence of how great a chal-With a fairly elected and widely lenge this exercise in political rebehind him, Mr Mandela, 72, rose a post-conference rally of 30,000 who received the loudest applause those associated with Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing, with the largely mythical, but powerfully evocative "armed struggle".

The new NEC, expanded in size Mr Mandela expounded on the and purged of half its former members, reflects a finely balanced merger, as Mr Mandela the aim of persuading the organi- noted, of the ANC's different sation "not to rely on mere rheto-strands. Fifty-five of the NEC's 90



Nelson and Winnie Mandela arriving at a rally in Durban yesterday marking the end of the conference Photograph: John Parkin/AP

Women's League, the Youth League and Umkhonto.

In first, second and third places came the established heavyweights: Chris Hani, the military commander, Thabo Mbeki, the di- up to Mr Mandela in full conferrector of international affairs and Joe Slovo, the head of the Comian tendency to impose his will on munist Party. What caused the the internal decision-making progreatest excitement was the dawn- cess. This criticism is widespread ing perception, as the top 50 were announced, that the strand domi-

mously on Thursday, when he had the courage, it was learnt, to stand ence and denounce his authoritarwithin the ANC, but rarely does it find public expression.

For the moment, it was the con- country's non-African minorities.

The better-known former po- ference's success in choosing lead- many nations. But some delegates conference agreed to send proballot this week - five having leaders who have toiled inside the litical prisoners - three or four of ers capable of bridging the chroni- - such as Senegal's - warned tests to these governments. Tambo: "There is not enough rain - in that order. The leaders tions, either regional or within the Perhaps the loudest cheer went prominent leaders of the old NEC grass-roots organisations which guise for merely continuing ning of a struggle". to Patrick "Terror" Lekota, the remained in place. The racial mix holds out the most hope for the undemocratic government, they former number two in the UDF. of the 50 leaders elected yesterday ANC. Mr Mandela himself made whose reputation grew enor- eloquently reflected the ANC's a significant leap across that gap Roman Catholic nun, Sister Ber- weaknesses in the recent past, no-

African leaders set up institute for 'liberation'

POLITICAL leaders from 14 African countries decided yesterday to set up an international institute to promote the continent's "second liberation".

After a three-day conference near London they agreed that the "with its political instability, economic decline, social uncertainties Africa had to be freed from its ty- mer Tanzanian cabinet minister. rants as well as from its economic and political dependence on the ference are in exile, like King developed world.

most awful truth is that there has ernment. often been far greater personal pressor," he said.

By Benjamin Pogrund

said, urging that a study be made of the most effective means of ensuring true democracy.

The conference sponsors were institute was needed because of led by King Moshoeshoe II of the continued crises in Africa Lesotho who was sent into exile in Britain last year by his country's military rulers; the Anglican Archand under-development". The bishop of Central Africa, Walter first liberation had been the end Makhulu, who lives in Botswana; of colonial rule, they said. Now and Professor AM Babu, a for-

Some of the leaders at the con-Moshoeshoe. Others are in active Spurring them on in their dis- opposition in their own countries: cussions was a message sent by one leader reported that he had Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "Af- been arrested nine times for rica is bleeding," he said. "The organising action against his gov-

As a reminder of what the new freedom in the much-maligned International Institute for the colonial days than now. All that Promotion of Pluralist Democracy has changed for the ordinary peo- and Human Rights in Africa is ple is the complexion of the op- intended to counter, two governments - Kenya and Lesotho -The conference agreed that blocked local leaders from getting there was a direct link between to the conference. In Kenya's Africa's crises and the state of case, it was the well-known oppodemocracy and human rights in sition figure, Oginga Odinga. The

them rather too old, perhaps - cally wide gap of the past 18 | that merely ending one-party rule As the meeting ended, King and long-term exiles rose to the months between the previously was not enough. A multiplicity of Moshoeshoe hailed it as "the benew NEC and the more publicly self-elected NEC and the diverse political parties could be a dis- ginning of a long road, the begin-

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commitment to what it calls the in his speech when, in a pointed | LAGOS (Reuter) - Nigeria's army has been urged to maintain discinon-racial principle - seven mea culpa, he acknowledged as | pline and help ensure the smooth return of civilian rule after playing a Asians, six whites and four mixed- fair the complaint that he had pivotal political role for much of the last 30 years.

race Coloureds were voted in. been conducting negotiations with | "As members of a disciplined body that believes in democracy, we Nine women were chosen too, in- the government in excessive se- must ensure that we link our organisation to the national cluding Winnie Mandela and a crecy. He also confessed to serious | democratisation process," the chief of army staff, Lieutenant-General Salihu Ibrahim, said on Saturday. The military government has set in tably a lack of sensitivity to the | motion a programme to restore civilian rule to Africa's most populous country, ruled by the army for 21 of the past 30 years, in October 1992.