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CODESA SHOWDOWN LOOMS

With South Africa on the eve port, government spokesman sals, and endless media specuâ\200\224

of Codesa 2, there is no doubt that negotiations have reached a stage of growing caution and that, inevitably, a Codesa 3 will be necessary later in the year. There are now forecasts that talks will last well in to 1993. There is apparent deadlock or direct conflict between parties in almost all the Codesa working groups. However, those involved are satisfied that while progress may not be spectacular, it is sufï-\201cient to warrant hope. But the process must continue beyond Codesa 2 on May15 and 16.

"Fundamental progress is being made, aside from the rhetoric and the sable-rattling," says David GanLchairmanot the Democraticulâ\200\231artyâ\200\231s national council. "Under the circumstances, the Codesa groups are progressing pretty well. If you think of the background, of clash and conflict before Codesa got under way, then things are coming along really well."

Commented Tertius Del-on Codesa: "We are now in a process of getting to grips with the important and difficult issues. Therefore there are bound to be hiccups and difficulties. They all have to be faced and be worked out. As long as we are talking, there is no danger of the negotiations reaching a stalemate." They and others at Codesa have emphasised that Codesa 2 should not be seen as a do-or-die meeting, and have refused to be drawn on a possible election date. "This is not a pregnancy â\200\224 it is a negotiating process," responded Law and Order Minister Hernus Kriel. Like others he said there'would bea Codesa 3â\200\224 or-possibly more until there were not only a agreements, but also consensus on implementation. There is, however, a growing awareness that the public outside the negotiation chambers at Kempton Park is confused. The constant rhetoric and positioning, a weekly flurry of new arguments and bottom-line proposition about the state of play are all taking their toll of public conï-\201dence.

Inkatha Freedom Party leader Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi pointed out that documents are moving so fast they are not being translated into any of the country's African languages. There is no time for political leaders to address their followers on the meaning and significance of proposals before new ideas land on the table. While the media does good readers with information, the black population is by and large illiterate.

If Codesa rushes ahead, there is a real danger that many of the smaller parties almost all of them with black constituencies, could be omitted from any agreement. Already there are fears among them of being bullied into the new South Africa by the "big boys" of the negotiation process. Codesa is the only chance to get it right. Not getting it right can be disastrous.

CODESA 2: THE STORMY WATERS AHEAD

The alarm bells are ringing: Codesa 2 may not achieve all that is expected of it in terms of an agreed transitional government. The reason: there is not yet "sufficient consensus" on the other major issues before Codesa.

Quite apart from consensus, there are enormous logistical problems to be overcome. MP for Simon's Town, Jannie Momborg, who recently quit the Democratic Party to join the ANC, claims there are about nine million blacks without ID documents.

The ANC is apparently determined to speed up the deliberations at Codesa to hasten the event of a "quick-fix" interim government - without clearing up all the specifics that are necessary before such a step. The organisation has promised its followers the speedy introduction of an interim government and is haunted by the ghost of growing disillusionment if it fails to deliver. It is providing headaches too for others in the process, who recognise the obvious dangers.

Democratic Party Leader Zach de Beer has cautioned that the Codesa process may take longer than some players have been suggesting. In the process, it was necessary that the participants maintain a spirit of goodwill - in spite of detours or hiccups.

Discontent in the ranks of the ANC's internal military structures has already led into open rebellion in some parts of the country. Senior ANC sources told SA Dialogue that returning exiles belonging to the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) were "finding it very difficult to adjust", were unable to find jobs and many had turned to crime to make a living. "In certain areas they have become a law unto themselves. They refuse to obey ANC decisions - including those coming from the MK leadership", the source said.

Deteriorating morale has underlined the necessity for an agreement between the government and the ANC on the future of MK before an interim government is in place.

MK chief of operations Tokyo Sixwale told SA Dialogue that its cadres were "highly disciplined" and would not act without the express commands of their superiors.

However, there is mounting evidence that this "discipline" UNRULY MK CADRES REBEL AGAINST ANC LEADERSHIP

has broken down in many areas, particularly on the East Rand and in the Vaal triangle. Historically there has never been strict control by the political chiefs of the ANC over the day-to-day activities of MK. Although the powerful Political-Military Council (PMC) was supposed to coordinate activities and post political commissars to each MK detachment, the "army" has always followed its own agenda.

Nowhere was this more evident than in its 1989 decision to attack "soft" targets such as the Amanzimtoti shopping centre, despite public opposition by then ANC president Oliver Tambo. Small MK detachments were sent into South Africa with open briefs to select targets and were in most cases left entirely to their own devices to find food and shelter. In many cases they turned to gangsterism to survive. Clearly, this trend continues among some returning MK soldiers.

In the Vaal Triangle, according to ANC sources, there is "open warfare" between MK cadres and the leadership of the ANC's political structures.

n In Katlehong on the East Rand, the ANC's political structure is said to have "lost all control" over gangs of MK youths prowling the streets.

1: In nearby Phola Park, MK cadres have joined local criminal gangs.

Senior ANC sources at Codesa concede the "irresponsible activities" of unmlly MK elements are giving the movement headaches at the negotiating table. "What is particularly worrying is that they have taken over some self-defence units, set up by the ANC in 1991 as an honest attempt to 'assist people to protect their lives and property," said one source.

However, ANC sources also maintain that agents provocateur of the security forces have also infiltrated: selfdeâ\200\230i-â\201Ã©n'ceu units to stir up trouble in order to weaken the hand of the ANC during negotiations. Cl

EXPULSION OF MPâ\200\231S STUN S DIVIDED CP

The summary expulsion of Overvaal MP Koos van der Merwe, from the Conservative Party in April sent shock waves through a party struggling to come to terms with its humiliating defeat in the March 17 referendum.

The party leadership, he said, had no plan to counteract the negotiations taking place at Codesa. Van der Merwe, long an advocate of negotiations, stressed that he wanted to be part of the solution and not the problem. And, he added, he wanted to go to Codesa to put the case for an Afrikaner homeland, shom of the racism which, he said, was a thing of the past.

Hard on the heels of that attack came a blunt broadside from Koos Botha, a second expelled member of the CP, who now faces charges of blowing up a Pretoria school that was to have been handed over for use by ANC exiles.

Botha claimed he had in part been driven by the "culture of violence" within the CP - and that Treurnicht was aware of what he had done but had said nothing.

As one senior CP caucus member put it: "The same questions that faced us after the 1989 general election remain today. We havenâ\200\231t moved and we would not have moved, had the referendum result not precipitated a crisis."

Already there are indications that some MP3 are planning to retire because they see no future in an armed struggle and are unwilling to negotiate at Codesa.

Others will try to push the CP in the direction taken by Van der Merwe and, if they fail, opt to join him at Codesa putting the case for an Afrikaner homelandi-â\202

INTERIM GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

The Government may ditch its proposals for interim government if agreement can be reached on a working document which empowers an elected parliament to draft a new constitution. The document, drawn up by a steering committee of Working Group 2, shows some dramatic shifts in emphasises within Codesa. It recognises the strongly divergent regional interests within South Africa - and for regional, the word "ethnic" could readily be substituted.

The government and ruling National Party were due to present their proposals for interim government before the end of April. But then the working document was presented by the steering committee, a body appointed from "personalities" within Codesa and not representing their respective parties.

The document avoids specifics, but sets out broad principles and concepts. There should be a general election for an interim constitution, on the basis of proportional representation, with half the seats being allocated through national lists and half through regional lists.

Decisions on all constitutional issues should require a special majority. On matters relating to regional structures and the division of power between the central, regional and local levels of government, a special majority of the regional representatives would also be needed. In effect, regions would have the right to veto. Codesa should determine, in advance, a set of general constitutional principles. These should be embodied in the interim constitution and form the basis for a new constitution to be drafted by the elected National Assembly.

It remains to be seen how far the working group's general principles will be acceptable to the 19 political groupings at Codesa. At this stage it appears to have the broad support of at least half the delegations.

IT'S TIME FOR A CLIMATE OF TOLERANCE

Political changes in South Africa have been

' occurring at a pace few observers a few years ago

i would have thought possible. Not even the most

incurable optimist would have dared to predict

; in February 1991 that the country would have

' been so far down the road towards attaining real democracy.

cracy 15 months hence.

There are ample reasons why this process should not be unduly delayed. There is an urgent need for the momentum, built up during the early months to be maintained and to prevent the talks from getting bogged down through deliberate obstructionism.

However, there is another side of the coin. That is the real danger of coming up with half-baked constitutions or hastily cobbled together compromises that will not be able to stand the test of time.

The politicians at Codesa should take their time in forging a new constitution. After all, they are entrusted with devising a system that will intimately affect the lives of every South African for decades to come.

This is not a call for petty obstructionists to be given carte blanche to delay the process indefinitely. Or for minorities to hold the majority to ransom over petty issues. It is rather an appeal to those entrusted with designing the new South African to go about their task in a considered manner.

Matters such as the separation of powers, the pros and cons of a two chamber parliament, the debate over federalism and regionalism versus a centralised state and the crucial question of a future economic system are, surely, matters that cannot be dealt with in a hasty or haphazard fashion.

That speed is of the essence in designing the new South Africa cannot be denied : the present political uncertainty must be brought to an end. There is nothing with a bigger potential for wrecking any political solution for South Africa than the chronic violence afflicting the country's towns and villages.

Once agreement has been reached on the contents of a new constitution, the next phase of the process will entail active electioneering by the various parties to solicit support for their respective programmes of action. Already the various parties are gearing up and have started campaigning.

Recently President de Klerk was prevented by thugs from addressing future voters at a rally in Mitchell's Plain.

The new South Africa should be built on foundations of political tolerance and respect for the opinions of others. Unfortunately, what is happening at present, does not augur well for the future. Political leaders should accept responsibility to educate their followers in the culture of tolerance.

WILL BUROCRACY SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL?

There's growing concern in business circles that Codesa's unseemly haste to agree on constitutional change is side-lining what may well be a far more important issue - the post-apartheid economy and cost of government.

Both the government and the ANC pay endless lip service to the importance of a sound economic under-pinning of a new democratic state, but neither has been so far able to articulate a practical proposal to achieve this.

A strong case can be made for future economic policy - particularly the financing of government at all levels - to be debated either by another Codesa working group or by a multi-party forum working alongside Codesa.

Sections of South Africa's private sector and many potential foreign investors are unimpressed by constitutional plans that don't take full account of economic consequences. Concern is centred on two specific related issues:

:1 Economic expectations of ANC supporters have been allowed to rise to levels the new government will be unable to meet. This could exacerbate rather than ease social unrest.

:1 The disruptive potential of the labour movement, which is apparently becoming increasingly dissatisfied with concessions to moderation being made by the ANC at Codesa.

A serious confrontation could occur between labour and ANC leaders at the ANC's policy conference in Johannesburg at the end of May.

While in general the labour movement's economic proposals are unacceptable to the private sector, it's obviously vital that unions, government and business have at least an amicable working relationship.

A democratic South Africa has virtually no hope of social stability and economic growth if the three groups are at loggerheads over political and economic policy. There will have to be compromise on all sides.

There is already broad agreement among the key players at Codesa on two important constitutional issues: a unitary state incorporating

strong regional government and the reincorporation of the homelands. Yet no one has addressed the profound economic implications these developments will have for the next government.

Having been burdened for decades with the costly constitutional mistakes of successive Nationalist governments, the private sector is understandably wary of any new plan for fragmented administration that isn't backed by a sound and affordable economic plan.

DP STARTS MOPPING UP THE POLITICAL CENTRE

The defection of five Democratic Party MPs to the ranks of the ANC hardly came as a surprise - all were well-known as members of the pro-ANC camp within the DP. The defections were effectively forced by a conservative group within the DP, which finally succeeded in persuading DP leader Zach de Beer to act against the "Gang of Five".

A second split to the right, by MPS favouring closer ties with the National Party, was effectively halted by President F W de Klerk when he bluntly stated that he had no intention of disbanding the NP to form a centrist party. The DP knows that a system of proportional representation will wipe it out at the polls, unless it embarks on a heavy recruitment campaign across the colour spectrum. To some extent this is happening. Branches in coloured areas have been formed in the Western and Eastern Cape, and inroads have been made in black communities in the Free State, Natal and the Transvaal.

What the DP hopes to do, although no hard-and-fast policy has yet been spelled out, is to mop up the centre - those who for historical reasons cannot vote for the NP and those who are worried the DP.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY DELAYED

about the ANC's economic policies and its commitment to civil liberties. ANC links with the South African Communist Party are cited as another reason for its unacceptability. Even then it may not be secure. While De Klerk has so far ruled out any suggestion of forming a new centrist party, he may still be persuaded to do so if he believes he can seize support earmarked by

A range of factors beyond South Africa's control has wrecked its chances of emerging from

economic recession this year. The country now faces the prospect of a transition to democracy without

the safety net of relatively strong growth needed to under-pin social stability.

Although some economists believe the economy has already entered a very mild recovery phase,

general consensus is that the outlook is far less healthy than was being predicted late last year.

CASHâ\200\224STRAPPED SACP CLINGS TO ANC

The South African Communist Party (SACP) has made few attempts to establish a separate identity for itself since it was unbanned on February 2, 1990.

Little wonder: The SACP is seriously short of cash and lacks the kind of grassroots organisation necessary for a major membership drive throughout the country. Its membership stands at some 20 000, its organisation is essentially a mess and it would be embarrassed if forced to fight an election as an independent party right now.

Opinion polls show it lacks significant support with only one in 100 urban blacks identifying strongly with the SACP. Having intertwined its membership with that of the ANC and Cosatu, the SACP is in a unique position to act as an independent political party when therâ\200\230need arises; or, elseâ\200\230simply - ride on the back of its stronger allies.

At Codesa, for example, the SACP acts as an independent party, and has representation on the steering committees of three out of five working groups. It not only plugs its own viewpoint, but is in a position to act in concert with the ANC and other supporting parties against the National Party and its allies. More importantly, because many members of the ANC hierarchy enjoy dual membership of the ANC and SACP, the party exerts considerable influence within the ANC. The same applies to Cosatu and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) - the armed wing of the ANC - whose chief-of-staff Chris Hani, held dual MK-SACP membership until recently when he quit as chief-of-staff to succeed Joe Slovo as secretary-general of the SACP. Despite pressure from the government and big business, the ANC remains adamant that it will not split with the SACP. It is estimated that nearly 50% ofâ\200\230theâ\200\230e: ANCâ\200\230s national executive belong to the SACP and itâ\200\230 would be suicidal to attempt to force members to choose between one organisation and another at this stage. Another reason is the fear, expressed privately by the ANC, that a substantial num-

ber of its supporters are illiterate and have no experience of the electoral system. Should both the ANC and SACP appear on the ballot paper, there is a risk that many could vote for both parties, thus rendering their ballots invalid.

Most of the ANC's national executive will be on the national slate for this country's first non-racial elections - and are virtually assured of election to parliament. With some 50% of them also members of the SACP, that gives the party a healthy representation. Such a situation boils down to "representation by stealth" and despite the fact that members of the coloured and Indian communities are likely to shy away from the ANC because of its ties with the SACP the same cannot be said of the African i majority, where SACP leaders: such as Chris Hani and Ronnie Kasrils enjoy enormous popularity

SUPPORT FOR WINNIE EVAPORATES

The ANC's troubles with former welfare chief Winnie Mandela, are far from over. The next crisis facing the movement is the decision of the Appeal Court - expected within two months - whether to uphold her conviction on charges of kidnapping and aggravated assault.

Although Winnie Mandela has already been convicted and sentenced to six years in prison, some of the "key" witnesses in her defence recently admitted they committed perjury to provide her with alibis and protect her from murder charges. ANC insiders told SA Dialogue that Mandela refused to resign from her position as head of the movement's department of social welfare. She was ordered on two occasions by the movement's National Working Committee to submit her resignation or run the risk of being fired. "She did not jump. She was pushed", one source said. Her isolation grew when her husband, Nelson Mandela, withdrew his protective hand.

According to ANC sources, she also recently lost the support of her other major ally, SA Communist Party general secretary Chris Hani. They fell out after Hani - a former chief of staff of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe - criticised the welfare department's handling of the return of exiled MK cadres.

Winnie Mandela was recently re-elected chairperson of the PWV region of the ANC's Women's League. However, ANC insiders claim the extremely poor attendance at the meeting is an indication of the disillusionment among rank-and-file members of the organisation.

There is, however, concern in the ANC that her militant views and fire-brand speeches may appeal to radical youths and unemployed MK members

SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRADE

The man who was once one of apartheid's arch-foes believes that once a settlement is achieved, South Africa's economy will be bolstered by a massive injection of foreign capital. He is General Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria and ex-chairman of the OAU. ' Obasanjo, now chairman of the New York-based African Leadership Forum, was in Johannesburg on a private visit and delivered the keynote address at a conference on trade, tourism and investment in the southern region of the continent. Obasanjo has not changed his convictions. But he looked down from his podium at businessmen and diplomats from many parts of Africa and announced that apartheid had thrived as a bastion of Western security against communism. Now, since the end of what he described as the cold war, I "behaviour and conduct within a civilised society has become a condition for full and unrestricted participation (by South Africa) in world trade".D

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MORE ROADSHOWS FOR DE KLERK

'200\230 Bad planning in conjunction with unruly behaviour of a small but vociferous ANC crowd of slogan chanters recently cut short President F W De Klerk's roadshow, aimed at wooing coloured voters in Mitchell's Plain near Cape Town. But the National Party remains undaunted and officials plan to return to the Mitchell's Plains and the Sowetos of South Africa to demand their democratic right to state their case. The NP believes it has a new trump-card up its sleeve - the newly-elected Nationalist leader of the Transvaal, Foreign Minister Pik Botha, whose support among the coloured people is legendaryD

PAC'S FEAR OF REVOLT

' A bitter struggle between radicals and moderates in the Pan Africanist Congress is delaying a decision whether: to-participate in the negotiating process at Codesa. !' ' Although the majority of PAC leaders faxed their participation - subject to certain conditions - they fear a rebellion among rank and file members if they move too fast. . The ANC, meanwhile, has consistently rebuffed PAC attempts to schedule a follow-up meeting to the Patriotic Front conference in September last year. i A report-back meeting was due to have taken place before the end of April. Senior ANC spokesmen

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'200\230 said, however, that they were "too involved with Codesa" to find time for a meeting with the Patriotic Front.

RIGHT POISED TO JOIN TALKS

, Formal participation of white rightwingers in constitutional negotiations is now a foregone conclusion after the expulsion of the strongest supporter of such talk, Mr Koos van der Merwe, from the Conservative Party. Van der Merwe will almost certainly join up with extra-parliamentary groupings and formally apply for representation at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa).C1

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