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DINNER WITH HOST COMMITTEE

An Expression of Appreciation by Mangosuthu Buthelezi  
Chief Minister of KwaZulu, South Africa  
and President Inkatha Freedom Party

ATLANTA. 15TH JUNE 1991

The South African situation is so confused and the issues are all so complex and there are so many different problems and each has so many different answers, advocated by so many different people, that it is small wonder that pressure groups and media representatives make what they will out of South Africa.

When I go abroad I easily discern what Embassies in South Africa are telling their governments. I hear the questions which arise out of the information that flows from those Embassies. When I go abroad and read newspapers, I see that editorial opinion and the slanting of news reports paint the same kind of picture which governments have of South Africa. There is a hanging together of Western views of South Africa 'which is the end product of diplomatic despatches, newspaper reports and the development of preconceived ideas over time. :

I find that very often simple truths about South Africa either astound listeners in North America and West Europe, or alternatively they are totally disbelieved. The truth that upsets preconceived ideas is never welcome and it is least welcome when the truth challenges not only ideas, but action that flows from those ideas.

Let me take one example screaming out for redress - sanctions. At no time ever has there been Black worker and Black dgrass root support for sanctions against South Africa. They have not been sanctions against apartheid; they have been sanctions against the economy which provides people with jobs. Tens upon tens of thousands of people have lost jobs because of sanctions. For each lost job, there are 10 or 12 dependants who suffer. Hundreds of thousands of Black South Africans have been battered by sanctions they did not want.

Sanctions are indefensible because ultimately they are not the last-resort measures which can be taken before a violent conflagration develops. Sanctions are a first step towards

violence; sanctions back violent programmes. Sanctions always have been most championed by those who have been most committed to the armed struggle. Sanctions are championed most by those committed to the politics of confrontation in South Africa. Sanctions have most been argued for in South Africa by those who have committed themselves to making South Africa ungovernable through the employment of confrontation and violence.

They are not wanted; they never were wanted and the ANC which most argues the need for sanctions has never consulted the people about them. Only committees sanction sanctions. Mass meetings condemn sanctions.

Yet across the whole of the Western world, Western consciences have been assuaged by support for sanctions. Pressure groups against governments of the day have been kept at bay by governments adopting pro-sanction stances. Across the world, First World/Third World problems have been avoided by the West bowing to the call for sanctions.

I do not believe that the sanctions issues were decided by the best sense in the American legislature when sanctions action became controversial and President Reagan was confronted with action from the legislature. That action came from pressure groups; that action came from interest groups; that action came from lobbyists who were not paying attention to what was good or bad for the people sanctions would hurt most.

Friends, I did not come here to deliver an anti-sanctions speech to you. I have come to express appreciation for the very hard work all of you have done to make this trip possible and to make the arrangements so that I can make inputs into American thinking.

I am simply using the sanctions issue as an illustration of how preconceived notions brought into being by forces extraneous to the real issues in South Africa take hold and become unshakeable.

The kind of trip that all of you have arranged for me, and the kind of discussions which will now be possible for me, really are sorely needed. I should stay here and debate and talk and build up lobbies and gather support for the causes that I pursue in South Africa.

They are worthy causes and they are causes which actually sum up the best that there is in the Great American Dream. They are causes of democracy and freedom and multi-Partyism and the rule of law, and the causes of blending economics and politics to ensure that an enterprise-driven economy ends up generating the wealth that democracy in South Africa will need.

As I say I could spend the next six months doing nothing but lobbying and talking and cajoling and arguing and persuading. Unfortunately that is just not possible. The urgent action that needs to be taken is action at grass root level in South Africa.

Inkatha Freedom Party is fighting fit when it comes to establishing democratic structures in South Africa. There is no political Party with anything like the grass root structures that the IFP has. IFP leaders really are elected to positions by grass root people. Each and every year this happens at local and regional level. And every five years it happens at national level.

No amount of theorising and no nice sentiments and no noble aims and objectives will achieve results in South Africa unless they are underpinned by people at grass root level. The challenge in South Africa is to make politics accessible and directable by the man and woman in the street and by the man and woman at grass root level in rural areas. Politics in South Africa will be totally destructive unless it becomes that which empowers the people to write the destiny of the country.

It is that which I am here to explain. It is the need to take account of people and to regard them as the fundamental building blocks of society and democracy that I am going to argue when I am in the United States. We do not want Communism or any other kind of ism which purports to know what people need and what they want.

We are fighting for a multi-Party democracy. We are fighting for the normalisation of South Africa as a modern, Western-type, industrial democracy. We are fighting for the empowerment of

people and we are fighting for the generation of wealth through an enterprise-driven economy which an empowered South African people will need to put right that which apartheid has made so wrong for so long.

We really face life and death issues now. The destiny of the country, and the destiny of millions of people, hang in the balance. We must get it right in South Africa the first time. We will not have two or three chances, and we will not even have a second chance to establish a true democracy to replace apartheid. If we are wrong in our first attempt, we are going to be thrusting South Africa into a long, typical, African and Third World crisis of attempting to recover from a series of revolutions and counter-revolutions. '

We must calm souls. We must direct minds and we must employ people. We must gather people together so that they talk with one national voice and so that they move to one national destiny

together. We must heal the wounds of apartheid. We must depolarise South Africa and we must bridge the chasms apartheid has created between Black and White in which hatred and fear breed to affect both sides of the chasm.

Thus in saying thank you for all the hard work, friends, I am saying thank you for millions of Black South Africans who want to make their contribution towards a new South Africa which will renew the whole of Southern Africa which will then set in motion South and Southern African developments which will reverberate across the whole continent.

