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ADDRESS BY STATE PRESIDENT P W BOTHA DMS
AT THE OPENING OF THE N P NATAL CONGRESS
DURBAN, 15 AUGUST 1985

Geagte Minister Botha, leier van die Nasionale Party van Natal, geagte kollegas, Provinsiale Leiers uit alle provinsies, Minister De Klerk, Minister Coetzee, Minister Schoeman, kollegas in die Kabinet, Parlement, Provinsiale Rade, Afgevaardigdes van die Kongres van die Natalse Nasionale Party, mede Suid-Afrikanners,

Gedurende die afgelope maande - veral weke - het ek besonder baie raad ontvang. Die meeste van daardie persone en instansies wat raad gegee het en nog gee, se bedoelinge is goed en welmenend. Ek bedank hulle en waar dit praktiese raad is, sal ons dit oorweeg, en word dit oorweeg.

During recent months and particularly the last few weeks, I have received a great deal of advice.

Most of the persons and institutions who offered advice and still offer advice have good and well-meaning intentions. I thank them and where the advice is practical, it is considered.

I almost daily receive hundreds of messages and letters of goodwill and encouragement from all over the Western world and from people in our own country, as well as assurances that people are praying for me. Just before we left for this meeting, a very touching message was received by me from a member of the Greek community from Johannesburg. I sincerely appreciate these gestures of goodwill.

Maar, ek ontvang ook raad van sommige wie se bedoelinge is om my van die wal in die sloot te help. Aan sulke mense wil ek sê - ek het op 'n plaas groot geword en ek ken 'n muishond aan sy reuk. As jy hierdie mense van wie ek nou praat se raad nie wil aanvaar nie, belas hulle jou en jou land.

Die groot Langenhoven het tereg gesê: "Waardeer, o belasterde, die hulde van jou lasteraar. Hy erken dat jy laster waardig is - wellig is hy dit nie". In hierdie woorde van Langenhoven lê groot waarheid opgesluit.

Most of the media in South Africa have already informed you on what I was going to say tonight, or what I ought to say, according to their superior judgement.

Of all the tragedies in the world I think the greatest is the fact that our electorate refrained so far to elect some of these gentlemen as their government. They have all the answers to all the problems. And these answers differ from day to day and from Sunday to Sunday!

Seldom in our past has there been a party congress of the National Party for which so many expectations were raised as this Congress in Natal. Some of the reasons for this are evident, for example the partial emergency situation in less than 14 % of the magisterial districts of the RSA. Other reasons are more sinister, such as the motives of those who have put words in my mouth in advance.

During recent weeks there was an unparalleled scurry from different sources, within and outside South Africa, to predict and prescribe what is to be announced at the Congress. It was also envisaged that worldwide, people are going to be dissatisfied if certain things are not announced as were predicted.

It is of course a well-known tactic in negotiations to limit the other person's freedom of movement about possible decisions, thus forcing him in a direction where his options are increasingly restricted.

It is called the force of rising expectations.

Firstly, an expectation is raised that a particular announcement is to be made. Then an expectation is raised about what the content of the announcement should be. The tactic has two objectives.

Firstly, the target is set so high that, even if an announcement is made, it is almost impossible to fulfil the propagated expectations. Secondly, it is also an attempt to force the one party into negotiations to make the expected decision. If this is not done, public opinion is already conditioned to such an extent that the result is wide-spread dissatisfaction. If you want to read about this tactics, read the book *Nicaragua betrayed* and then you will see the history of some of these gentlemen repeated in South Africa.

This is what has been happening over recent weeks. I find it unacceptable to be confronted in this manner with an accomplished fact. That is not my way of doing and the sooner these gentlemen accept it, the better.

I think we should first reconsider the objective of a party congress.

The National Party in each province is connected to the Party in the other provinces on a federal basis. The Provincial Congress is the highest authority of the Party in each province. One of the major activities of the Congress is to decide on Party policy. It would thus be unwise of the Leader of the Party to confront the Provincial Congress with certain final decisions.

Moreover, the subject of most of the speculations, namely the constitutional future of the Black peoples in South Africa, is of such a nature that it must be determined in consultation with those concerned. We cannot confront them with certain final decisions.

Over the years, that was exactly the criticism against our Government - that we make decisions about people and not with them. Now, suddenly I'm expected to make the decision for them.

I find the attempts from various sources to compromise me and the Government very unfortunate. It is a very dangerous game, and it definitely does not serve the interest of negotiation and reform in South Africa.

I have used a quotation of Langenhoven earlier. I want to quote him again. He wrote:

"If we are in front we can wait for time. If we are behind, it does not wait for us."

In our relationship with our fellow-South Africans and in our relationship as a multicultural society in South Africa, no spirit of defeatism or hysterical actions will help us to be on time.

We must deal with our relationships and accept future challenges in a balanced way and with devotion. You will find that balance in thinking and devotion in the National Party - the only political party which is representative of the vast majority of White South Africa.

The Party stands for the just and equal treatment of all parts of South Africa, and for the impartial maintenance of the rights and privileges of every section of the population. But, the Party must also deal with the heritage of history. Certain situations in this country were created by history and not by other national parties.

We are not prepared to accept the antiquated, simplistic and racist approach that South Africa consists of a White minority and a Black majority.

We cannot ignore the fact that this country is a multicultural society - a country of minorities - White minorities as well as Black minorities.

While the National Party accepts and respects the multicultural and poly-ethnic nature of South Africa's population, it rejects any system of horizontal differentiation which amounts to one nation or group in our country dominating another or others.

We believe in and uphold the principle of economic interdependence of the population groups as well as the acceptance of the properly planned utilisation of manpower.

In this regard we have advanced very far through modernising our labour laws, the creation of a Development Bank for Southern Africa, as well as a Corporation for the Development of Small Business Activities. We already co-operate in various ways through multi-national ministerial committees, meeting from time to time and working positively in the interest of South Africa as a whole.

It is true that as a result of serious world recessionary circumstances, South Africa, which was also hit by recessionary conditions and overspending in some fields, could not make progress as we would have preferred.

But it is common knowledge by now that the official economic strategy applied in South Africa during the past twelve months has produced excellent results:

- Overspending by the private and public sectors have been eliminated.
- The money supply is under control.

- Government spending is being effectively curbed and soundly financed.
- The balance of payments on current account is showing a surplus of about R5 billion per year - much larger than anticipated.
- The banking sector and private companies have for months now been repaying substantial amounts of foreign debt.
- Our nett gold and foreign exchange reserves increased by R1,4 billion during the second quarter of 1985.
- The prime overdraft rate of the banks has been reduced four times since May, from 25% to 21%. Other interest rates have also declined.
- The rate of inflation is still around 16% but should begin to decline before the end of the year.
- With exports rising strongly and interest rates falling, the domestic economy should move into a new upswing in 1986.

The so-called "economic fundamentals" are therefore at present very favourable in South Africa.

Many of the present perceptions of the South African situation overseas are, of course, quite erroneous. Nobody would deny that we face problems that demand solutions, but every country has. I can name you quite a number of countries who have more problems than SA.

But the perceptions of many overseas observers bear little relationship to the realities of the situation.

People are flocking to South Africa tonight, from neighbouring countries because they are looking for work and health services. Only last week I was in the north of our country and there I had the experience that people were flocking from Mozambique into South Africa in their tens of thousands. How do you explain that? Do people flee to hell?

The Republic of South Africa still remains the leading country in the sub-continent of Southern Africa. If the Republic of South Africa suffers from economic setbacks, the whole of Southern Africa will pay a heavy price. For example, at present 90% of the exports of Southern Africa takes place through the transport systems of the Republic of South Africa.

We in the Republic of South Africa, as well as our neighbours, will in the foreseeable future have to find solutions for our fast growing populations and their rightful demands. We have our responsibilities in connection with proper family planning, health services, the provision of clean and fresh water, training of young people and the creation of work opportunities.

The Government, apart from its normal budget this year, made provision for R100 million to provide people with work, and only yesterday we had a report saying that we are succeeding in our efforts. We have such a vast task ahead of us and such great challenges to create a better future, that we can ill afford the irresponsibilities and destructive actions of barbaric Communist agitators and even murderers who perpetrate the most cruel deeds against fellow South Africans, because they are on the payroll of their masters far from this lovely land of ours.

I have the knowledge because I have the facts. As head of this Government I am in the position to tell you tonight what the facts are. No government in this country or elsewhere in the world can solve all the problems in its country in a given time.

But despite our human weaknesses and our limited powers as human instruments, we can attempt to be on time. We can make serious attempts not to be behind time.

We are suffering in some parts of South Africa from two basic problems.

The first is the problem of unemployment - a problem of the entire Western world, with perhaps to a lesser extent the United States - especially a problem of Africa where people die of hunger, where one of the leaders of Africa in the Organisation for African Unity declared: "Africa, it is time".

We believe that the Small Business Corporation we created is of vital importance in this connection to remedy this problem. I am of the opinion that there are too many rules and regulations in our country serving as stumbling blocks in the way of entrepreneurs. These stumbling blocks must be removed. We are already seriously attending to this problem. Even if I as State President have to take power during the next session of Parliament so as to enable me to deregulate in the interest of the country, I will do so!

The underdeveloped part of the economy is mainly that of different non-White communities. There are historic reasons for this, just as there are historic reasons for the plight of Africa in general. Instead of the Whites paternalistically trying to do everything for the Blacks, they must rather be allowed to help themselves - in the informal as well as the formal sector of the economy.

When I met with President Machel some time ago on the border of South Africa and Mozambique, I told him he must not expect from South Africa the same policy which destroyed Africa under the leadership of the West and Russia. I told him that we are not coming with aid programmes, but we want co-operation and he interrupted immediately and said: "Africa is tired of aid, provide us with co-operation, and help us to help ourselves." Consequently, I shall go out of my way to see to it that more substantial funds are made available to the Small Business Development Corporation.

Secondly, I refer to the problem of housing, caused mainly by our population explosion in Southern Africa, as elsewhere in Africa.

It is a fallacious belief that the Government must do everything for all. We must help the people to help themselves, to build and upgrade their homes through their own efforts. We have decided that land should be made available where possible, and site services supplied. We have already accepted the principle of ownership rights for Blacks in the urban areas outside the National States. Just as important is the principle of ownership rights to people in the National States.

But the State must mainly take responsibility for the infrastructure such as fresh drinking water, sanitation and roads and leave it to the people to provide their own homes.

The Government intends setting aside R1 billion during the next five years to improve underdeveloped towns and cities, not only in metropolitan areas. Our policy of decentralisation will be actively continued, and you know for a fact that we have advanced very fast in this direction. Get the facts, and the people who know the facts will support the Government in its efforts.

On the question of influx control - I can only say that the present system is outdated and too costly. The President's Council assured me that they are at present considering this matter and will probably report on it in the near future, while the Government itself is also at present considering improvements.

But of course - we shall need the closest co-operation from the private sector. I hope they will stand up and be counted as they did in the past when I called upon them for their co-operation.

When I was Minister of Defence and the world started an arms boycott against South Africa, I called upon the private sector to support the Government in providing our own arms which they did successfully. I now appeal to them again to stand together for South Africa, not for any other interest.

I now wish to deal with some other aspects of our National Life.

It is my considered opinion that any future constitutional dispensation providing for participation by all South African citizens, should be negotiated.

But let me point out at once that since South Africa freed itself from colonialism, democracy has already been broadened and millions of people who never had a say in Governmental affairs under the British Colonial system, have it today.

I am pressed by some who mean it well and those who wish to destroy orderly government in this country, to make a Statement of Intent. I am not prepared to make it, not now and not tomorrow.

I say it would be wrong to be prescriptive as to structures within which participation will have to take place in future.

It would also be wrong to place a time limit on negotiations. I am not going to walk into this trap - I am responsible for South Africa's future.

However, I believe that the majority of South Africans as well as independent states, which form our immediate neighbours, have much in common apart from our economic interests.

We believe in the same Almighty God and the redeeming grace of His Son, Jesus Christ.

And I know what I am talking about, because only a few months ago I stood before an audience of 3 million Black people, proving the truth of what I am saying now. I don't know whether one of our critics ever saw 3 million people together in a meeting. I did.

We believe and wish to uphold religious freedom in South Africa. This is a country of religious freedom.

We believe in democratic institutions of government and we believe in the broadening of democracy.

We believe our great wealth of divergent population groups must speak to each other through their elected leaders, not self-appointed leaders.

We believe that our peace and prosperity is indivisible.

We believe in the protection of minorities. Is there anybody in this hall who would get up and say he is not for the protection of minorities? Let me see how such a fool looks.

We know that it is the hard fact of South African life, that it will not be possible to accommodate the political aspirations of our various population groups and communities in a known defined political system. We will have to find our own unique system, because our problems are unique.

We have often found that our efforts to find solutions have been impeded and frustrated because of different interpretations of the terminology that we use to describe our particular form of democratic solutions.

Some years ago, with the best intentions on my part, I advocated a confederation of Southern African states to co-operate with one another. The idea was belittled and prejudice was created against it and that is why I say I am not going to fall into that trap again, before I had the opportunity to discuss with the elected leaders of other communities in South Africa the structures we jointly agree on.

Now let me state explicitly that I believe in participation of all the South African communities on matters of common concern. I believe there should exist structures to reach this goal of co-responsibility and participation.

I firmly believe that the granting and acceptance of independence by various Black peoples within the context of their own statehood, represent a material part of the solution. I believe in democratic neighbours, not neighbours that call out elections and then stop them in their mysterious ways.

I would, however, like to restate my Government's position in this regard, namely that independence cannot be forced upon any community. Should any of the Black National States therefore prefer not to accept independence, such states or communities will remain a part of the South African nation, are South African citizens and should be accommodated within political institutions within the boundaries of the Republic of South Africa.

This does not exclude that regional considerations should be taken into account and that provision be made for participation in institutions on a regional and/or group basis. We must be practical in this regard.

But I know for a fact that most leaders in their own right in South Africa and reasonable South Africans will not accept the principle of one-man-one-vote in a unitary system. That would lead to domination of one over the other and it would lead to chaos. Consequently, I reject it as a solution.

Secondly, a so-called fourth chamber of Parliament is not a practical solution and I do not think responsible people will argue in favour of it.

We must rather seek our solutions in the devolution of power and in participation on common issues.

But I admit that the acceptance by my Government of the permanence of Black communities in urban areas outside the National States, means that a solution will have to be found for their legitimate rights.

The future of these communities and their constitutional arrangements will have to be negotiated with leaders from the National States, as well as from their own ranks.

But let me be quite frank with you - you must know where you stand with me. I have no unfulfilled ambitions in political life in South Africa. I am standing where I am standing because people asked me to stand here. Let me be quite frank with you tonight, if you do not like my way of thinking, if you do not like the direction I am going in, it is the right of the Party Congresses to state whether they agree with their leader or not.

I am not prepared to lead White South Africans and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide.

Destroy White South Africa and our influence, and this country will drift into faction strife, chaos and poverty.

Together with my policy statements earlier this year in Parliament, I see this speech of mine as my Manifesto for a new South Africa.

In my policy statements in January and June of this year, I indicated that there would be further developments with regard to the rights and interests of the various populations groups in Southern Africa.

Since then we have had to contend with escalating violence within South Africa, and pressure from abroad in the form of measures designed to coerce the Government into giving in to various demands.

Our enemies - both within and without - seek to divide our peoples. They seek to create unbridgeable differences between us to prevent us from negotiating peaceful solutions to our problems. Peaceful negotiation is their enemy. Peaceful negotiation is their enemy, because it will lead to joint responsibility for the progress and prosperity of South Africa. Those whose methods are violent, do not want to participate. They wish to seize and monopolize all power. Let there be no doubt about what they would do with such power.

One has only to look at their methods and means. Violent and brutal means can only lead to totalitarian and tyrannical ends.

Their actions speak louder than their words. Their words offer ready panaceas such as one-man-one-vote, freedom and justice for all. Their actions leave no doubt that the freedoms that we already have - together with the ongoing extension of democracy in South Africa - are the true targets of their violence. Is this type of Government really such a wonderful example that they wish to have? Why do they not organise the investors of the Western world to invest in Lesotho and Mozambique? Why do I have to appeal to people to invest in Mozambique?

I have a specific question I would like to put to the media in South Africa: How do they explain the fact that they are always present, with cameras et cetera, at places where violence takes place? Are there people from the revolutionary elements who inform them to be ready? Or are there perhaps representatives of the reactionary groups in the ranks of certain media?

My question to you is this: Whose interests do you serve - those of South Africa or those of the revolutionary elements? South Africa must know, our life is at stake.

From certain international as well as local quarters, appeals are being made to me to release Mr Nelson Mandela from jail.

I stated in Parliament, when put this question, that if Mr Mandela gives a commitment that he will not make himself guilty of planning, instigating or committing acts of violence for the furtherance of political objectives, I will, in principle, be prepared to consider his release.

But let me remind the public of the reasons why Mr Mandela is in jail. I think it is absolutely necessary that we deal with that first of all. When he was brought before court in the sixties, the then Attorney-General, Dr Yutar, set out the State's case inter alia as follows:

"As the indictment alleges, the accused deliberately and maliciously plotted and engineered the commission of acts of violence and destruction throughout the country...

The planned purpose thereof was to bring about in the Republic of South Africa chaos, disorder and turmoil...

They (Mr Mandela and his friends) planned violent insurrection and rebellion."

The saboteurs had planned the manufacture of at least seven types of bombs: 48 000 anti-personnel mines, 210 000 hand grenades, petrol bombs, pipe bombs, syringe bombs and bottle bombs.

A document was produced during the Court case in Mandela's own handwriting in which he stated:

"We Communist Party members are the most advanced revolutionaries in modern history...The enemy must be completely crushed and wiped out from the face of the earth before a Communist world can be realised."

In passing sentence at the time, the Judge, Mr Justice De Wet, remarked:

"The crime of which the accused have been convicted that is the main crime, the crime of conspiracy, is in essence one of high treason. The State has decided not to charge the crime in this form.

"Bearing this in mind and giving the matter very serious consideration, I have decided not to impose the supreme penalty which in a case like this would usually be the proper penalty for the crime."

The violence of our enemies is a warning to us. We, who are committed to peaceful negotiation, also have a warning to them. Our warning is that our readiness to negotiate should not be mistaken for weakness.

I have applied much self-discipline during the past weeks and months. I have been lenient and patient. Don't push us too far in your own interests, I tell them. Reform through a process of negotiation is not weakness. Talking, consulting, bargaining with all our peoples' leaders is not weakness. Mutual acceptance of and joint responsibility for the welfare and stability of our country is not weakness. It is our strength.

Our strength is the courage to face and accommodate the problems bequeathed to us by history. The reality of our diversity is a hard reality. We face it, because it is there. How do we accommodate it? How do we build a better future out of cultures, values, languages which are demonstrably real in our heterogeneous society?

We are resolved, we are committed, to do so in two fundamental ways.

Firstly - by letting the people speak. By letting the people speak through their leaders.

By negotiation between all these leaders. I go out of my way, and my colleagues know that I am working all hours every day of my life. Negotiation in which we will all endeavour to improve our common well-being. Negotiation in which there will be give and take. We will not prescribe and we will not demand - to do so would be to take only. We will give so that others can also give - towards a better future for each and everyone.

Secondly - the over-riding common denominator is our mutual interest in each other's freedoms and well-being. Our peace and prosperity is indivisible. Therefore, the only way forward is through co-operation and co-responsibility.

If we ignore the existence of minorities; if we ignore the individual's right to associate with others in the practice of his beliefs and the propagation of his values; if we deny this in favour of a simplistic "winner-takes-all" political system - then we will diminish and not increase the freedoms of our peoples. Then we would deny the right of each and everyone to share in the decisions which shape his destiny.

Between the many and varied leaders in this country, in the National States and the independent states neighbouring on our borders, in our urban areas I recognise this, but I also know that their love for South Africa is intense as my own. I am therefore in no doubt that working together, we shall succeed in finding the way which will satisfy the reasonable social and political aspirations of the majority of us.

The work of the Special Cabinet Committee is bearing fruit. At the correct time other heads of Governments and I, together with other leaders of goodwill, will also be able to take part more directly in this process. But it cannot be solved overnight, not in South Africa.

We have never given in to outside demands and we are not going to do so now. South Africa's problems will be solved by South Africans and not by foreigners.

We are not going to be deterred from doing what we think best, nor will we be forced into doing what we don't want to do. The tragedy is that hostile pressure and agitation from abroad have acted as an encouragement to the militant revolutionaries in South Africa to continue with their violence and intimidation. They have derived comfort and succour from this pressure.

My Government and I are determined to press ahead with our reform programme, and to those who prefer revolution to reform, I say they will not succeed. If necessary we will use stronger measures but they will not succeed.

We prefer to resolve our problems by peaceful means: then we can build, then we can develop, then we can train people, then we can uplift people, then we can make this country of ours a better place to live in. By violence and by burning down schools and houses and murdering innocent people, you don't build a country, you destroy it.

Despite the disturbances, despite the intimidation, there is more than enough goodwill among Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Asians to ensure that we shall jointly find solutions acceptable to us.

But I say it is going to take time. Revolutionaries have no respect for time, because they have no self-respect. Look what they have done to Africa, a continent that is dying at present. I can tell you, because I know what is happening in many of these countries. I have the facts and I am not going to hand South Africa over to these revolutionaries to do the same to this lovely country.

I am encouraged by the growing number of Black leaders who are coming forward to denounce violence. Any reduction of violence will be matched by action on the part of the Government to lift the State of Emergency and restore normality in the areas concerned.

Moreover, as violence diminishes, as criminal and terrorist activities cease, and as the process of dialogue and communication acquires greater momentum, there would be little need to keep those affected in detention or prison.

The implementation of the principles I have stated today can have far-reaching effects on us all. I believe that we are today crossing the Rubicon. There can be no turning back. We now have a manifesto for the future of our country, and we must embark on a programme of positive action in the months and years that lie ahead. The challenges we face call for all concerned to negotiate in a spirit of give and take. With mutual goodwill we shall reach our destination peacefully.

We undertake to do all that man can possibly do. In so saying, I pray that Almighty God would grant us the wisdom and the strength to seek to fulfil His Will.

I thank you.