

DAKAR DELEGATION — TH

Dakar Press Statement

WE met with representatives of the ANC in Dakar because of our deep concern at the escalating violence and a drift towards authoritarianism in South Africa.

The conference in Dakar was planned by IDASA but the group consists of people from many walks of life, including academics, teachers, politicians, churchmen, farmers, architects, lawyers, writers, artists, journalists, students and businessmen. Most, but not all, are Afrikaners. What unites us is our total rejection of apartheid and minority domination and our commitment to a multi-party, non-racial democracy.

We never imagined that we could negotiate with the ANC. We do not have the power, nor do we have a mandate to do so. We did not try to speak on anyone's behalf excepting our own. Indeed, we differed among ourselves on many key issues. What we do share, however, is a common belief that serious discussions with the ANC must form part of the search for the resolution of conflict and the transition towards a peaceful and just future.

We believe that as a result of our conference in Dakar, we have demonstrated that such discussions can take place and that they can be constructive. We hope that what began in Dakar will continue inside and outside of South Africa and will eventually involve the South African government itself.

In our discussions, we found it was possible for South Africans, who are in many ways far apart, to have frank and cordial exchanges on crucial issues facing our country. We agreed that we are all South Africans, that

we share one country with a common history and a common destiny and that our commitment was to work towards a non-racial democracy which offers hope and opportunity for all.

In fact, there were many differences between ourselves and the ANC, particularly in terms of strategies towards change. Amongst the issues addressed and explored were the following:

- The ANC's historical commitment to the armed struggle as a response to State repression;
- The dangers posed by the proliferation of uncontrolled political violence from whatever source;
- The problem of White fears and Afrikaner cultural and language concern;
- The serious obstacles to national unity as a consequence of entrenched ethnic, racial, economic and ideological cleavages;
- The importance of a Bill of Rights, an independent judiciary and a multiple party system to safeguard human and civil rights and to ensure a future political democracy;
- The need for distributive justice, the redistribution of wealth and concretely righting the historical injustices which have scarred our nation;
- The importance of economic growth as a determinant in planning a truly liberated economy.

We did not expect to find consensus on all these issues, nor did we. But the importance of these discussions cannot be underestimated.

We realised from the beginning that this initiative would be misunderstood by many. Also that the government would be highly critical and that our objectives would be misrepresented by some of the South African media. However our con-

cern for our country, facing as it does a grave political crisis, outweighs the risks involved. We firmly believe that it is our duty and that of every concerned South African to explore every possibility to find a way out of the ever-deepening conflict in our country.

Finally, we were greatly encouraged by the enthusiastic and warm reception we received from the President and government of Senegal. President Diouf's welcome and encouragement illustrate the readiness of Black Africa to Assist Black and White South Africans in their common search for a non-racial democratic alternative to the system of apartheid.

In the same way the support given by Madame Danielle Mitterand, the wife of the President of France, demonstrates the eagerness of the international community to assist in moving South Africa away from the abyss of violence.

The fact that the ANC was prepared to meet with a group of predominantly White Afrikaners is also a cause for hope. The prevailing myth is that the ANC and the Afrikaners are sworn enemies and can never meet except in conflict and on the battle field.

We have experienced an openness and a readiness to talk and this will redouble our efforts towards a negotiated settlement rather than the inevitability of inconclusive and escalating violence.

FURTHER TRAVEL IN AFRICA

Following the conference in Dakar, the majority of participants visited Burkina Fasso and Ghana. Once again, we were struck by the warm reception we received from the Presidents of those countries and the wide cross-section of people we met during our stay.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION:

What it's all about

AS the official news bulletin of IDASA this publication will appear on a bi-monthly basis. It will be mailed, free of charge, to all our donors, associate

members and our entire mailing list. Copies will also be available from our national and regional offices.

This first issue focusses on news about recent IDASA activities, staffing and pertinent issues related to the Dakar delegation. The next (bumper) issue will be devoted to full coverage of the Dakar encounter. Don't miss it. Should you want to receive it, and further copies, kindly send your name, full address and telephone number to the national office address reflected below. Given that our mailing list is growing to a "ceiling-level",

it is advisable to get onto it while there is still space.

Please note that any letters to the editor, intended for publication, are most welcome. They should be addressed to the editor at our national office, 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray, 7700. We trust you will find this bulletin informative. We launch it in the hope that we can publish — sooner than later — the news about a new dawn in SA, that is a dawn heralding a non-racial, fully democratic society for all!

The Editor

Dakar Communique

1. A conference organised by IDASA took place in Dakar, Senegal, from 9 to 12 July 1987. Participants were made up of 61 South Africans of which the majority were Afrikaans-speaking persons who had come from South Africa and a 17 person delegation from the ANC.
2. His Excellency President Abdou Diouf, welcomed the participants and gave them exceptional hospitality.
3. The participants from South Africa took part in their individual capacities. They shared a common commitment of having rejected both the ideology and practice of the apartheid system. They were drawn from the academic, professional, cultural, religious and business fields.
4. Although the group represented no organised formation within South Africa, their place within particularly the Afrikaans-speaking communities and the fact that that they were meeting with the ANC, invested the conference with an overwhelming atmosphere that this was part of the process of the South African people making history. In similar manner, the international community focussed its attention on the conference. Participants could not but be aware that some of the adherents of apartheid regarded the participation of the group as an act of betrayal, not only to the apartheid state, but also to the community of Afrikanerdom.
5. The conference was organised around four principal topics:
 - (a) Strategies for bringing about fundamental change in South Africa;
 - (b) The building of national unity;
 - (c) Perspectives with regard to the structures of the government of a free South Africa; and
 - (d) The economy of a liberated South Africa.
6. The discussions took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and



Drs. Boraine and Slabbert with Breyten Breytenbach and the President of Burkina Fasso - Thomas Sankara.

7. The group listened to and closely questioned the perspectives, goals, strategy and tactics of the ANC. The main areas of concern arose over the ANC's resolve to maintain and intensify the armed struggle. While the group accepted the historical reality of the armed struggle, although not all could support it, they were deeply concerned over the proliferation of uncontrolled violence. However, all participants recognised that the source of violence in South Africa derives from the fact that the use of force is fundamental to the existence and practise of racial domination. The group developed an understanding of the conditions which have generated a widespread revolt of the Black people and the deep resolve of the ANC.
8. Conference unanimously expressed preference for a negotiated resolution of the South African question. Participants recognised that the attitude of those in power in South Africa is the principle obstacle to progress in this regard. It was further accepted that the unconditional release of all political prisoners and the unbanning of organisations is a fundamental prerequisite for such negotiations to take place.
9. Proceeding from the common basis that there is an urgent necessity to realise the goal of a non-racial democracy, participants agreed that they all have an obligation to act for the achievement of this objective. They accepted that different strategies must be used in accordance with the possibilities available to the various forces opposed to the system of apartheid. They accepted that in its conduct, this struggle must assist in the furtherance both of democratic practice and in the building of a nation of all South Africa, Black and White.
10. It was accepted between the two delegations that further contacts of this nature were necessary. Equally, it was important that such contacts should involve more and wider sections of the South African people in order to dispel misunderstanding and fear and to reinforce the broad democratic movement.
11. Conference expressed profound appreciation to his excellency President Abdou Diouf, the government and people of Senegal, for the warm welcome extended to the delegates as well as the assistance afforded to them to ensure the success of the conference. It further expressed gratitude to Madame Danielle Mitterrand for her assistance in organising the conference and extended thanks to all other governments and individuals who contributed material resources to make the conference possible.