

# WHITE HOUSE

**“... disinvestment and the economic isolation of South Africa will bring about increased immediate hardships and starvation and will increase disease in the short term — without medium and long term gains to balance deprivation and suffering ...”**

THE following is the text of the thoughts expressed to President Ronald Reagan by Chief Buthezi during their White House meeting:

Mr President, Sir, the time that you can afford to devote to the South African question must be counted in minutes per month rather than in hours or days.

Politically you are the most powerful man on earth and your responsibilities extend into a multitude of domestic and foreign issues and are global in scope.

That you have taken the initiative to invite me to meet you here in Washington and are now devoting time to talk to me is a signal to every decent Black South African that you are genuinely concerned to do something constructive to bring about change in South Africa.

On behalf of Black South Africa, I thank you for inviting me here and for the interest you are displaying in our plight.

It would appear to us that the constructive engagement policy will necessarily involve the United States in a carrot and stick approach, and we have taken heart at glimpses of the stick in your recent statements.

You have said: “There are occasions when quiet diplomacy is not enough ...” And you have remarked that the United States “... has said on many occasions that we view racism with repugnance ...” Mr President, we appreciate this forthright condemnation of apartheid.

You Mr President must go down in our history as the first American President who had the courage to clutch the thorny South African nettle boldly and

publicly. The United States never had a South African policy. It now has one. Those who follow in your footsteps will inherit your initiatives and will have to build on things that you have started.

Your assessment is correct, Sir, that it is now time that the South and Southern African situation was placed permanently on the American political agenda.

Because your policy is about us and our country and because it is about our future and the future of our children, I have a duty and a democratic right to weigh up what you, Sir, are aiming to do and to comment publicly on the merits of what you and your administration are attempting to accomplish.

You will hear conflicting voices from Black South Africa - some made strident by the medi

# TALKS



Chief M G Buthelezi at a meeting with President Ronald Reagan, Washington, February 4, 1985.

amplifying machine and others made cautious and sober by the demands which are placed on real leaders with mass followings. I hope, Sir, that you will listen to the latter, even if you have to take cognisance of the former in your own domestic party political situation.

The United States is a great democracy and the American people should feel obliged to give added weight to the views expressed by leaders who involve themselves in constituency politics where they sink or swim on their ability to gather demonstrable Black support which can be directed towards political objectives.

I, Sir, founded Inkatha as a liberation movement a short ten years ago and in the space of one decade Inkatha has grown to have nearly a million paid-up

members.

I am a leader chosen by millions of ordinary Black South Africans from every walk of life and I represent people in both rural and urban areas. In addition, I am a leader by hereditary right and history itself demands and I remain as a committed leader in the struggle for liberation.

What I say to you, Sir, is acclaimed by millions and on behalf of Black South Africa I constantly reiterate that we need Western involvement in the development of South and Southern Africa. We need American engagement if it is constructive.

Western leaders should not gamble the future of South and Southern Africa nor should they jeopardise the role that the West can play in developing and stabilising Southern Africa as a region on the strident and dubious voi-

ces expressing radical rhetoric so often amplified by the media.

I ask you, Sir, to continue weighing up your responsibilities and the responsibilities of America against the background of what effective Black leaders with real mass constituencies have to say.

History has taught me and Black South Africa that past Western democratic posturing and verbal condemnation have left apartheid intact. I see today in the United States an upsurge of genuine concern about apartheid. But I also see a great upsurge of verbal condemnation of apartheid and the kind of posturing which has been of such little significance in the past.

There is a storm brewing in the

*Continued overleaf...*

United States about American responses to apartheid and I think that time will tell that many of those who are involved are serving double agendas.

They may well be indignant about the lack of even minimal human rights for Blacks in South Africa, and they may well be genuine in their indignation. For this indignation and genuineness I am deeply grateful.

They may, however, have other agendas in which apartheid is being used as an issue to beat you, Mr President, and to discredit your administration.

Some are making a political football out of our suffering, and I ask you to stand firm and to do whatever you can to de-politicise the question of what America can do to aid those who are not involved in the struggle for liberation.

Apartheid has a kind of evil virulence and it has a proven durability. There are many who are making the tactical error of attempting to encapsulate this virulence in an isolated South Africa shut off from Western influences.

The indiscriminate economic, social and political isolation of South Africa, applied mindlessly and regardless of consequences for each action, will deeply and adversely affect the non-violent democratic struggle to bring about radical change. The total isolation of South Africa would favour those who aim to bring about change by violent means and to establish a socialist or even communist state.

It is indisputably true that Whites cannot manage mining, industry and commerce on their own and that the sustained economic growth to which they aspire can only be achieved by moving towards parity between Black and White.

White political apartheid is now under very real siege by economic reality and the non-violent transition from apartheid society to a society based on the principles of open democracy will be greatly enhanced by a sustained high rate of economic growth.

Disinvestment and the economic isolation of South Africa will bring about increased immediate hardships and starvation

and will increase disease in the short term, without medium term and long term gains to balance deprivation and suffering.

I am acclaimed by millions when I say that while the struggle for liberation in South Africa needs Western inputs, it is primarily a Black South African struggle which we ourselves wage for our own future.

I speak for millions when I say that we see tactical and strategic advantages in a rapidly growing economy. The West, Mr President, must allow us to determine our own tactics and strategies and to charter our own course into the future of our choice.

Black South Africa knows that there are no easy solutions to the apartheid problem, and we certainly know that an armed struggle which continues to fail and which exacts terrible prices will destroy the foundations on which we will one day have to build a future.

Quite apart from the moral issues involved, and quite apart from the fact that an armed struggle tends to shape society for authoritarian governments of the future, I have other concerns about the use of violence.

Black South Africans know that without bases in neighbouring states, and without international diplomatic, logistic and material support and, furthermore, without areas inside South Africa which can be liberated, the armed struggle must fail.

Whether, Mr President, your bold grasping of the South African thorny nettle in your formulated constructive engagement policy will bear the fruits that all democrats hope for, remains to be seen.

Experience gathered over generations makes me and my fellow Black South Africans sceptical about the role of the West in our struggle.

I believe you are right in formulating a South African policy. I believe that within this framework Dr Chester Crocker has played a positive role in Namibia but the vast majority of ordinary Black South Africans are not yet aware of anything meaningful in their own lives which has flowed as something new from America because of constructive en-

gagement.

I and all Black South Africans applaud the emphasis which has been placed on aid for education programmes in South Africa.

The struggle for liberation would be strengthened by American-backed educational programmes and would be strengthened even further if educational aid were extended to health education and educational programmes which are complementary to the in-service training programmes aimed at vocational advancement in work situations.

I am particularly aware of Black South Africa's appreciation for the aid which is given for humanitarian purposes. American assistance given to us for drought relief and to help us meet the terrible plight of those devastated by floods by cyclone Demoina was greatly appreciated.

Mr President, the responsibility to liberate South Africa is ours, but the West must not under-estimate the desperate need to provide humanitarian aid to suffering communities involved in our struggle.

When ordinary suffering humanity is sustained by aid programmes, more morale in the struggle for liberation rises. The raising of Black South African morale is something the West can do and should do, and will I hope accept as a very important input to the struggle.

Mr President, may I in conclusion express the real fact that the value of educational and other aid programmes backed by the United States will have a greatly diminished value if they are based on partisan American assessments of the Who's Who in Black South African politics and not on needs and opportunities.

The need to be blind to Black party political affiliations in South Africa cannot be over-emphasised.

I plead for aid for Black South African organisations across a broad front of Black South African activity and I ask you Mr President and your administration to do everything that can be done to remove aid to Black South Africa from the American party political arena.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

AIDE MEMOIRE FOR DISCUSSION WITH UNITED STATES CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS BY MANGOSUTHU G. BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU, PRESIDENT OF INKATHA AND CHAIRMAN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 1985

Meaningful political dialogue is notoriously difficult to pursue, even in the most propitious of circumstances. Even where there are common objectives and there is a traditionally defined system of social, political and economic values, political groups can be at loggerheads and experience grave difficulties in discussing things meaningfully and rationally. One has only to listen to parliamentary debates in Western democracies to take the point that I am making. As soon as vested interests are associated with power struggles, situations are represented and misrepresented and it becomes extremely difficult to have meaningful conversation.

A FEW REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF A MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL BY MANGOSUTHU G. BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER KWAZULU, PRESIDENT OF INKATHA AND CHAIRMAN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE. 5TH FEBRUARY 1985, MAYFLOWER HOTEL, WASHINGTON

Big business in the United States is faced with a political debate about what it should do and should not do. The rising tide of American interest in South Africa and public indignation against apartheid is being raised to the point where we can anticipate a spate of congressional activity. Those opposed to President Reagan will use his policy of constructive engagement towards South Africa as a stick with which to beat him, and it is inevitable that in these circumstances, those jockeying for positions of power and influence will take every opportunity available to use the South African lobby as an in-pot to their activities and their

# American dialogue

Influential Americans including Senators, Congressmen and the chief executive officers of large corporations heard Chief Buthelezi explain during his recent visit to the US that the crucial question now was whether or not big companies could play a positive role in the process of helping to bring about change in South Africa.

He told them: "I am watching with some interest how American companies will in fact respond to the current situation. If big business has a job of work to do in South Africa beyond the turning over of dollars; if America as the world's leading industrial nation, and the world's leading democratic country, uses big business as a party political tool, and if activists and lobbyists in the United States beat big business in the field of public relations and mount the kind of pressures on big business which forces their hand in South Africa, then we will be witnessing something we have not yet witnessed before."

In the past big business interests in the West had participated in the development of the South African economy and had done so within the framework of apartheid. They had been party to the fact that economic development had favoured Whites at the expense of Blacks. There was now no doubt that the West generally and big business in particular were — in the last generation — blind to the horrors of apartheid. This was not the case now and American businessmen had "seen the writing on the wall ..."

America, he said, had the kind of massive wealth which afforded it the luxury of being involved in South Africa or not being involved. Big business in America was aware of that power and one of its options was to withdraw now in the certain knowledge, and perhaps even capitalist arrogant knowledge, that they were not foregoing involvement in the development of South and Southern Africa forever.

He said Congressmen and Senators in particular would be receiving conflicting signals from Black South Africa... Black South Africans had the right to differ with each other and to pursue differing aims and objectives. However, as a democrat he believed that the final arbiter of who was "acceptable" and who was not acceptable, were the masses of ordinary Black people. No other organisation in the country was endorsed by ordinary people as effectively as Inkatha was endorsed. For that reason he asked that his observations be taken seriously.

Chief Buthelezi asked Americans to "employ their indignation skillfully and rationally" and to bear the following nine points in mind:

1. The practice of democracy is deeply and adversely affected by circumstances of mass poverty. I ask Americans to remember that Black South Africans do not wish to destroy the foundations of future progress by indulging in the politics of anger which is satisfying in the short term but detrimental in the medium and long term.
2. The majority of Black South Africans seek to bring about fundamental changes in South Africa through the politics of negotiation, and by employing non-violent means.
3. Ordinary Black South Africans see politics as a bread and butter thing and as a vehicle for improvements in their standard of living and in individual family circumstances.
4. Black South Africans are intimately aware of White power and that it will be used to protect Whites preferentially if South Africa began to feel the effects of economic isolation.
5. Ordinary Blacks do not distinguish between those among them who were forced to live in urban ghettos by apartheid and those whom the same apartheid forces to live in rural areas. For them, the rural/urban dichotomy does not exist as a political dimension, and for them life under apartheid rule is as obnoxious for Blacks in apartheid-created townships, or apartheid-created so-called homelands.
6. Black South Africans do not wish to pay terrible prices for failing strategies and they neither believe that the armed struggle, nor the effective economic isolation of South Africa, could succeed in destroying apartheid for the foreseeable future. Both the armed struggle and increased economic deprivation, which Blacks would experience as the result of effective economic sanctions against the country as a whole, would involve Blacks in paying heavy prices for gains which would be minimal if there be any gains at all.
7. Black strategists with their feet on the ground are aware that people who suffer as we suffer, experience losses of morale in the face of the prospects of greatly increased suffering. It is the taste of something better which galvanises impoverished people to demand more and which creates a sustained determination to struggle for that more.
8. Righteous indignation which vents itself against South Africa's White apartheid bosses but which also extolls casualties from Blacks, must be rejected, as the use of bombs against strategic and military targets in South Africa which kill and maim ordinary Black citizens in the process, must be rejected.
9. Americans must always remember that the international might of the United States should not be used to dictate to Black South Africans about what they should do and what they should not do, and what they should suffer and should not suffer, as Americans give vent to anger and indignation against the horrors of apartheid.