

WHAT IF THE POLITICS OF NEGOTIATION GO WRONG?

"Compromise until it hurts..."

"The Inkatha Freedom Party places the achievement of a national will to produce a democracy, and to keep it intact, as one of our highest priorities. We argue that we must seek racial reconciliation now while we are busy in the last phase of eradicating apartheid and in the first phase of establishing a true democracy..."

— *Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi* — *speech to British, European and North American politicians, industrialists and businessmen, London, November 1990.*

The fact that apartheid is doomed does not mean that South Africa can now rest because democracy will surely follow.

This is the message that the Inkatha Freedom Party and its leadership is spreading throughout South Africa and internationally.

The IFP believes that various scenarios could produce awesome dangers in South Africa and it pleads that there be no repetition of the kind of situations evident, for example, in Angola and Mozambique and elsewhere in Africa.

If the present situation of flux and change ended up leading only to a white government being imposed on blacks who did not want it, there would be an unavoidable backlash.

Expectations are now so heightened that the imposition of another dictatorial white government would invariably result in what Dr Buthelezi predicts would be a "veritable bloodbath."

Conversely, it is just as true that if a dictatorial black government was imposed on South Africa, there would be a backlash from a highly military-trained, strategically placed and mobile white population. They too could wreak havoc.

"If the politics of negotiation go wrong we could head into either one of these two most undesirable situations," says Dr Buthelezi."

The Inkatha Freedom Party is intensely aware of the need that there is to put all political proposals, and all political action, to the acid test of how they would contribute to racial reconciliation. This view is made on the assumption that there is a lot going for South Africa and so much worth preserving — that could be preserved — if there was common cause across all race groups.

Reform therefore should lead to racial reconciliation that will lay the foundations for a truly non-racial society and for a vibrant and growing economy.

South Africa has vast mineral resources; it has the developed technologies and the management that is needed to utilise them. The economic infrastructure needed to expand South Africa's mining, industrial, commercial and banking undertakings have already been developed.

Nowhere in all Africa has there been a Press as free as the South African Press has been — despite the unwarranted and unnecessary media control that various South African Governments have exercised over it.

Nowhere in Africa is there a better legal system, a better banking system. Nowhere are the churches more free or universities as free to be liberal and open-minded.

Apartheid has not destroyed this infrastructure and neither have revolutionaries. The country has the advantage that the spirit of contract which goes with enterprise-driven economies and multi-party democracies is not alien to South Africans.

South Africa has a Civil Service which can back up economic expansion in a way which can stand unparalleled in the whole of Africa. It has an educational system which, if it was stripped of its racism, could be unparalleled in Africa.

The people of South Africa would not be fighting a hopeless losing battle to ally sound economic development with sound democratic development.

The crux of the matter however is that all people must be sure and be confident that South Africa is heading towards a multi-party democracy — and that the country will be normalised and allowed to develop as a modern, Western-type, race-free, industrial democracy.

"We therefore say that South African politics must ever-increasingly be dominated by the search for consensus which can only be achieved if every political quarter compromises until it really hurts... We want to move ahead in total sureness because it is only in a sure step by step approach to the search for the protection of the best that there is in South Africa, while we jettison the worst, that we can hope for national unity. There is a great deal which is very fundamentally good in South Africa once we move racism from every walk of life..."