

WARNING!

What is behind the ANC's call for a Constituent Assembly?

The ANC, in its Harare Declaration which it immediately thereafter had endorsed by the OAU and the United Nations, demands an interim government to which the South African Government will hand over power.

This interim government will then, in theory, play midwife to a new constitution.

This demand was clearly formulated to further winner-takes-all politics and is part of the ANC's attempt to establish itself as the only contending party which will face the South African Government at the negotiating table. This is very clear.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has rejected the fundamental provisions of the Harare Declaration. It argues that the call for a Constituent Assembly, if it is made with any

"It would be suicidal for blacks to try to force the Government to hand over power to a Constituent Assembly, we know not what, to be led we know not where..."

— *Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi — address to visiting members of the US National Conference of State Legislatures, Ulundi.*

kind of strength, will have disastrous consequences in South African politics.

The reality is that if any major party is removed from the formula there will be problems. Inkatha notes its contention that the ANC is playing a very dangerous game in driving ahead in trying to establish itself as the sole contending force which incorporates all the political groups and all their leaders in black South Africa.

If the ANC persists in attempting to force

the South African government to abdicate, the country can forget about successful negotiations.

"Nothing could be more designed to produce a violent white right-wing backlash than the prospects of a South African government handing over power to an unknown Constituent Assembly to produce a constitution we know not what," says Dr Buthelezi.

"Any hope of national unity and reconciliation will walk right through the door and vanish.

"What machinery we use to finally formulate a new constitution and have it ratified democratically will have to be negotiated.

"The Inkatha Freedom Party is quite clear in its thinking that elections should not be held before negotiations have run their course and the negotiating parties can then go to the electorate for a final endorsement of that which has been negotiated.

"The idea of a Constituent Assembly contains the notion of political struggles to establish the right of existing parties with their existing policies to form a government. Negotiations in South Africa must be transformational for political parties."

"We must avoid trials of strength until we produce the new constitution with all its checks and balances and all the built-in assurances that there will never be another dictatorship in South Africa.

"The Inkatha Freedom Party envisages that negotiations will be turned into a political process in which opposition politics and political alliances demand that the South African Government legislates the negotiated agreements into position as they are reached.

"This avoids winner-takes all politics and avoids forcing South Africans, both black and white, to agree to leap into some kind of black constitutional and political abyss. Apartheid is finished. Negotiations will provide South Africans with an opportunity to discover common cause."