

# Time to face the truth

● the election itself followed by the creation of a "fully representative government of national unity".

Each of these points is subject to negotiation and agreement by the other parties. So when the ANC objects to the times laid out by government, that is only the tip of the iceberg of what must still be determined.

To take just one example of what is still at issue, consider the matter of a transitional constitution. While everybody accepts that the country must be administered during the run-up to an election, the ANC is worried that a transitional constitution might in fact predetermine the outcome of the constitution-writing interim government by establishing certain structural changes such as the creation of regional boundaries, special rules over decision-making majorities and entrenched clauses in a bill of rights.

At the heart of the problem is the question of who is in charge of the transition? Up until the collapse of Codesa II, the parties were keen to be in charge jointly and to work out a way of achieving this.

*'At the heart of the problem is the question of who is in charge of the transition?'*

With the intervention of the UN secretary general, South Africans accepted that while

allegations of torture (by the ANC and the South African state), and continuing violence, we will have to make our way to the new South Africa through existing parties and institutions.

South Africa is not going to get a massive UN operation which takes over the transitional process. Nor is it going to get a special peace keeping force - whether domestic or international - which manages a truce and enforces compliance with political codes of conduct.

So the announcement by the state president of the steps outlined above will provide a crucial framework around which the politicians in all parties can negotiate.

There remain some real problems which must be addressed as soon as possible - and not all of them can be addressed by the parties alone.

● The amnesia of many National Party members, including cabinet ministers, about anything they and their party have done or condoned - from the basic apartheid laws to the "total onslaught" repression and destabilisation - is wearing thin for many black South Africans. A little humility is in order - about their competence to govern and their control of the transition - and an acceptance that, while they remain an important actor, they are the cause of the crisis which has led us into these bumpy negotiations in the first place.

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