

Interview with Oliver Tambo by Noticias, 05 August 1983, Maputo

Our bases are inside South Africa

Question: Since the car bomb explosion in Pretoria there has been talk of a change of strategy by the ANC. Has there really been any change?

TAMBO: There hasn't been any change in our strategy. I think, perhaps, this idea arose from the fact that the headquarters of the South African Air Force was a prominent target of our attack; prominent because it has also been the policy of the regime to conceal the casualties that they have had in confrontations with the ANC for a number of years now. For example, the rocket attack we launched against the headquarters of the SADF in 1981 caused great damage. There must have been a great many enemy casualties, because all information on the attack was suppressed. As a result of this policy, the Pretoria bomb attack comes as something very new and suggests a change in strategy. There could be no change in our strategy because there has been no change in factors which constitute the basis of our strategy. That is why the Pretoria bomb explosion must be seen simply as the intensification of our actions in light of the continued intransigence of the apartheid regime and the brutality in the methods which it uses to maintain the present system.

Question: The ANC has been criticised for the explosion in Pretoria because of the death of innocent civilians, including the death of black people. What is your response to this criticism?

TAMBO: First of all let me make it very clear that the struggle of the ANC is not against the people, least of all against civilians. We are not fighting to eliminate civilians. Our objective is to wipe out the enemy forces, the defenders of the apartheid system; to be precise, those who are armed, and those who maintain the instruments of oppression. Accordingly, it is a matter of regret that civilians were injured, and some of them fatally.

But I know of no war, no conflict situation, which has not had detrimental results to innocent people. But innocent people have been hit by the apartheid regime itself, and as the struggle escalates, more innocent people will be hit.

So, therefore, I want to stress that the wave of criticism does not come from the oppressed sectors of our people, the majority. The majority was overjoyed with this action, despite the fact that some of them had been wounded and killed in it. The exploited masses accepted the fact that those who died were killed in a situation in which the enemy forces were being attacked - a thing that actually happens in most conflicts. We suffer losses as the enemy does.

It is important to point out that the action was hailed by most of our people, because the regime had created the impression that only blacks, the oppressed lot, die in the struggle to try to bring about justice in South Africa. However, as a result of this action, they now realise that all South Africans have to pay the price of the country's liberation effort.

But who makes these criticisms? The Pretoria regime's forces invaded Maseru, where they killed a number of civilians, women and children. We were made to

understand that about 86 percent of the white population in South Africa hailed the government action, notwithstanding the fact that civilians had been killed. The criticism made against the ANC comes from these sectors of the population. Likewise, when the South African forces attacked Matola in 1981, the leaders of the white opposition parties warmly congratulated the regime on the massacre. It is significant that the ANC is criticised for the death of civilians in Pretoria, but the same criticism does not apply when civilians are killed in Mozambique, as was the case during the recent South African air raid. They killed one child and an unborn child, together with its mother. They killed workers. They killed civilians. No criticism of this was heard. Moreover, the South African regime itself stated that it was not concerned with the fact that civilians were killed in the Matola attack. Then what criticism is this? It is something that is part of a psychological war.

Question: In your opinion, is this criticism coated with racism?

TAMBO: Exactly. You know that thousands of Africans have been killed by the South African regime throughout southern Africa - in Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, and in South Africa itself. These people were civilians. The children who were killed in Soweto were civilians, but they were killed by soldiers. These killings take place regularly in South Africa, but nobody complains about the fact that the victims are civilians. This means that for some strange reason the word civilian only means somebody with white skin. It is also clear that many "crocodile tears" are shed over black civilians. But in the South African context, since when has an African been regarded as a civilian? The hue and cry about blacks having been killed is simply an attempt at winning the sympathy of the oppressed and turning them against the ANC, a vain attempt because our people clearly understand what is happening.

Defence Minister Malan says that he shall avenge each drop of blood regardless of whether it is the blood of whites or blacks. Well, he did not avenge the blood of Soweto children, nor did he do so for those who were killed in Sharpeville. Nobody was punished for those deaths, nobody was taken to court to answer for those massacres. He is, therefore, the last person who can defend blacks. He can defend himself and the regime, but not the oppressed lot. Even in this there is some element of racism, including the manner in which the criticism is made.

As I have said earlier, the ANC does not wage a struggle against civilians. However, I must confess that it is becoming even more difficult to define a civilian in the South African situation, since Malan is arming all whites. This is bringing about a difficult situation for those who have to distinguish between the army, police, and civilians. However, the ANC will continue to avoid creating the impression that civilians as such are the enemies of our struggle.

Question: By arming the whites is the regime using them not only as a social and ideological base, but also as a kind of buffer zone between its Armed Forces and the ANC?

TAMBO: Precisely. This is extremely unfair because the apartheid regime is so brutal that it has forced our people to take up arms. The regime is recalcitrant, intransigent, and it is worsening its own position. It is now fighting with its back to the wall, and it is using white civilians as cannon fodder, and this is what the regime

says. The regime says that the civilians must first confront the guerrillas and the Army will do so later. It is always the Army which protects civilians when they face danger, but in our country civilians are under no threat whatever. However, civilians are being recruited so that they can become the "frontline of defence." This is the expression that Malan himself uses. This is creating problems. What are these civilians defending? They are defending a criminal and inhuman system. And do they really want to defend it? Be that as it may, if they take up arms - and the law states that they must - it imposes limitations on our definition of who is a civilian. The ANC hopes that the movement against participating in the defence of apartheid will grow and that most whites will refuse to take up arms to defend a system which is doomed to disappear.

Question: Does the ANC have mechanisms to operate within the context of the internal contradictions of the white community?

TAMBO: Yes. How efficient we are becoming is difficult to say, but it is part of our strategy to make the white community understand what is really necessary.

We are operating in a difficult situation in the sense that the ANC is banned. What we say does not reach the whites, who are being crushed under the weight of the many lies about what is taking place in South Africa. They are being deliberately, continuously, and consistently deceived. They live in a sort of unreal world. The ANC has to break this wall that has been formed around the white population with information about the realities of our present time. We are convinced that extremely serious conflicts are emerging with the oppressive class.

Question: Are there many whites who are transforming themselves into patriots, in the sense of a united South Africa, free of all forms of racial discrimination?

TAMBO: There are many whites who have already acquired that sense of patriotism. Many others refuse to defend the old order, and they flee the country or avoid getting drafted into the armed forces. Most of them support the principles that are prevalent in our Freedom Charter, in which they see the hope of a different South Africa, a South Africa in peace, which contrasts with the present growing and continuing conflict situation. To isolate the reactionary clique and to make the whites adopt supportive attitudes toward our struggle in order to create a new order in our country is, itself, part of our struggle.

Question: The liberation movements of southern Africa and other parts of the world have already made an important contribution toward the elimination of racial prejudice resulting from the colonial phenomenon. Do the ANC's internal composition and method of operation indicate that it is already an example of what could be regarded as an anti-racist South Africa?

TAMBO: Yes, and this becoming more and more true. We believe that the South Africa of the future will not be formed on a specific date. It is growing organically, and as our struggle develops it is being expressed by the forces who struggle for a nonracial South Africa. It will be these forces who are already nonracial who will take over power rather than a search for nonracialism after power is assumed. This is the pattern of our struggle. The ANC encourages our white compatriots to join the struggle and to be part of it, and already some are doing so in a solid manner.

The struggle itself is the embryo of the new South Africa. As the struggle advances, it creates the new South Africa. It must be that way.

Question: After the Pretoria explosion one heard a lot about "retaliation," the "cycle of violence," etc. What do you think of this terminology?

TAMBO: It is not the terminology of a liberation movement, the ANC. The idea was first promoted by the regime itself and its supporters, and by some journalists in South Africa who call for retaliation. There have been some commentaries about a "cycle of violence".

We do not believe that the situation in which we live can be characterised as a situation of retaliation and counter-retaliation. What we say is that we are involved in a continuing struggle to achieve our objectives, and in this struggle we are not guided by the actions that the enemy carries out. Our retaliation against any crime perpetrated by the regime - if we want to use that term - is simply an intensification of the struggle. Each crime is yet another reason why the regime must be removed. The intensification of our struggle might appear as a retaliatory action, but that is a wrong interpretation, because retaliation means the launching of an action, and nothing beyond that.

The cycle of violence is part of the intensification and the escalation of the conflict. This is the nature of the conflict itself. However, it is not a question of violence as an end in itself. An armed struggle is not a group of individual and isolated acts of violence. It is a continuing struggle which includes the use of violence and also political action by all sorts of people.

Those who commented on the Pretoria explosion, for instance, regarded it as an act of retaliation by the ANC against the Maseru massacre.

Actually, we cannot close our eyes to what the regime does. For us it is not irrelevant that the enemy has perpetrated such crimes. Logically, we have to conduct the war in such a manner so that we do not create the impression that we can be attacked without exacting retribution. It is a struggle. It is not retaliation. It is part of the struggle.

We saw some commentaries in the newspapers which incited the Pretoria regime to retaliate through invasion against neighbouring countries in actions that would allegedly be against the ANC. There were many of such actions, invasions against Mozambique and other countries during the struggle of liberation in Zimbabwe. Those who speak of retaliation forget the result of such actions at that time. The struggle grew and grew until the Ian Smith regime was overthrown. Therefore, we see in that type of call for retaliation an act of people who are desperate. They do not know what to do.

The solution does not lie in retaliation. The solution lies in the elimination of the "apartheid" system. To retaliate implies an attack and a counterattack, an escalation. The problem will never be solved with attacks by the regime against the neighbouring countries and even with attacks against what it calls ANC targets. That will not solve the problem. The problem of South Africa is the "apartheid" system, and while that system is alive the struggle will be intensified, and thousands of retaliatory actions will simply add a new dimension to the conflict. This can go on

indefinitely, disastrously, with the destruction of much that has been built, with the loss of many human lives, as in other wars of liberation. In the process of so-called retaliation the regime does not face the cause of the cycle of violence which it talks about. It is only when that cause is removed that there will be peace in our country. Until then, the situation will continue to worsen, and let us be sure that this was not the last explosion. There will be many others, and, we hope, with less serious consequences regarding civilians. However, in order to change the South African system there will be sacrifices on the part of the guilty and innocent, civilians and non-civilians. While the system is alive that is the price to be paid.

It is necessary to remove the system. Retaliation is not the answer.

Question: The security services of the "apartheid" regime knew that there were no ANC bases either in Matola or in Mozambique. Why do you think they attacked Matola?

TAMBO: The regime's target was the minds of its supporters. It was a question of diverting the attention of the white population from the true cause of the explosion in Pretoria, by pointing to a false cause, Mozambique, the ANC somewhere in Mozambique. That being the objective, they did not even have to find ANC militants. What was necessary was to conduct some kind of action and then publicly state that "we killed 64 terrorists". The regime knows that it has not killed any 64 "terrorists". This was an action of a psychological nature, for the benefit of the white population, who were in a state of shock.

The correct question would have been: What provoked the explosion in Pretoria? The correct answer was, not Maputo or Matola, not even the ANC, because let us examine what makes the ANC take such action. The correct answer could have been found in the system itself. A journalist put the question correctly by asking what makes people commit such an act? What is going on with our system? That was the correct answer.

It has been part of the regime's strategy of defence to suggest that in South Africa there is a climate of perfect peace, stability, tranquility, and contentment. Everybody is satisfied. The only danger comes from outside, from neighbouring countries, or from the ANC, which, allegedly, cannot be in the masses. All the problems come from outside, from that "total onslaught" supposedly organised by the Soviet Union. That is always the explanation given by the regime. Therefore, when an explosion occurs inside the country, even one that hits many civilians, the regime has to act in accordance with the myth that the problem comes from outside. Thus, they attack outside. They have been systematically doing this, and they need to be consistent. They had to do so this time as well in order to have an explanation for their supporters who are totally wrong about what is taking place. Well, I believe that this myth of ANC bases in neighbouring countries, a myth that the regime continuously promotes, will soon be destroyed by reality.

Question: If the ANC does not have bases in Mozambique where does it have them?

TAMBO: Inside South Africa. For the ANC a base is not a place where an army is kept and from where it leaves and returns somewhere in an independent country. We do not have that. Any of such bases are inside South Africa, in secret places

where we go to and from, where we come from, and to where we return, secret places from where we leave for reconnaissance missions of targets to be hit, and to where we return.

Our bases are the people, the ordinary people who work daily and who are the cadres of our army. An important part of the training is being done inside the country, not the best training naturally, in such conditions. However, there are many cadres there. They are the ones who carry out such actions.

A bomb explodes in Pretoria. Those who detonated it had never left South Africa. They were trained there, but the regime goes to Mozambique. Our bases are in South Africa, and the regime knows it. However, the regime will never publicly accept it, except when they find small quantities of weapons. Let us see now, to whom such weapons go. Those who use them, when the moment comes for them to use them, are inside South Africa.

Question: Many observers think that the ANC is introducing new forms of political and military struggle without having nearby examples to follow as far as urban guerrilla warfare is concerned. What is your opinion about this? Second, do you think that at this moment the struggle the workers and community groups are waging is more important than the guerrilla war, or do all these forms of fighting have an equally important impact on the broader struggle?

TAMBO: First of all, I think that despite the fact that the guerrilla war has been guided by certain models and that it shares certain similarities, it has never changed the essential aspect in that guerrilla warfare must always adapt itself to the objective conditions, and even the subjective conditions under which it is launched. It must always be modified to take into consideration specific situations.

It happens that other liberation movements have had the benefit of support in the form of rear revolutionary bases in independent countries that agreed to provide camps where the guerrillas could train and, after a certain period, they could start creating liberated areas.

In our situation we are ruled by the reality that the countries bordering South Africa are not able to provide us with bases, that they cannot give us the kind of revolutionary support which most of the other liberation movements have enjoyed. This affects our strategy. We must develop strategies and tactics which correspond to the limitations of our situation. This is why our struggle has characteristics which are different from other struggles.

Since we could not depend on external bases we had to station ourselves among the popular masses within the country. As an integral part of our struggle we had to develop the political organisation and the mobilisation of the masses with great perseverance and consistency to build a political base which could replace the external bases. Therefore, it is possible that the level of political activity and the level of popular mobilisation are higher than in most of the countries where there have been liberation wars, except, perhaps, at the end when victory was in sight.

Ours is highly industrialised country, practically all of it. The oppressed people are proletariats, workers. The struggle of liberation is a struggle of the workers who form the proletariat class. It is they who support the country's economy, who

provide 70-80 percent of the labour force. Thus, they form the most powerful contingent of our struggle, and we have had to dedicate ourselves to their organisation and mobilisation. It is evident to us, as it is to the enemy, that it is not enough to have a militant working class; it must be well organised. The process of organising it is growing very rapidly. It is evident to us, and to the enemy, that the workers, particularly the blacks, form a force that can seriously threaten the regime.

However, we do not think that this has an exclusive importance. The armed struggle is indispensable, but strategically it would be a terrible mistake to dedicate ourselves to the armed struggle alone. In our organisation at this stage, we must give equal importance to the organisation of the exploited workers, which means organising the oppressed masses. Therefore, we operate on three fronts: the labour front, the mass participation front, and the armed actions front.

Question: Is there already any basic link among these three aspects of the struggle?

TAMBO: There is. We have developed this fundamental link over the years. We think that these three aspects are tied together like a ball of yarn and that they form a force that will be difficult for the enemy to hold back.

Question: Then the situation has already reached a point at which the regime and the conservative forces around the regime can no longer make an absolute separation between the trade union campaigns and the struggle for national liberation?

TAMBO: That is no longer possible. All these struggles have become part of the same broad front of action.

Question: What about guerrilla warfare in the rural areas? Does the ANC already carry out armed actions in such areas?

TAMBO: Yes, this is developing. Of course there is the regime's policy in concealing what is happening in that part of the armed struggle. Our actions in the most remote areas will only become known when they reach a certain level of intensity. From then on they will become known to the public.

The struggle in the rural areas is also developing because the bantustans are a true injustice. And the people understand that the enemy is not even the group of administrators that have been appointed for the bantustans. They are obviously the regime's brutal agents, but the people understand that the enemy is the Pretoria regime. There are many actions in the bantustans which are directly aimed against the Pretoria regime.

Question: Can you mention some of these actions?

TAMBO: For instance, some of the administrations, like Venda's, are really isolated. First of all, there was popular resistance against the so-called independence; that was resistance against Pretoria. However, Pretoria has installed its own puppets there. There is continuing hostility against those administrations, a hostility which is essentially aimed against the forces that have taken up positions in the bantustans.

Another example is what happened in Ciskei, where there are two brothers who are shameless agents of Pretoria. A commission has investigated the question of

whether the people want independence. The vast majority of the population refused independence, but the regime installed its agents there. The popular opposition was essentially against the South Africa regime.

Question: Do you think resistance in the bantustans has already reached the point where Pretoria is no longer able to create a rift in the structure of the liberation war?

TAMBO: Pretoria will no longer be able to do that. The problem facing the regime comes from the very fact that the people being sent to bantustans come from urban areas. Migration policy functions this way: The people are sent to bantustans, they return to the cities, and once again they are sent to the bantustans. These people, therefore, do not consider themselves to be part of the bantustans. The majority of people in the bantustans are part of the proletariat class. They are people who are already used to working in cities, and they are people who have already taken part in political actions against the apartheid system.

Question: And thus they carry with them the idea of a united South Africa...

TAMBO: Exactly.

Question: Would it then be impossible for the regime to develop in the bantustans peripheral nationalism?

TAMBO: That is what the regime is trying to do, but I think that as the struggle develops this will completely disappear. The struggle is developing, and it is developing with the participation of people who have been forced to live in the bantustans. This brings about the people's unity. The regime has failed in its attempt to create separation between the various popular strata of the society. It has failed in its attempt to create nationalism based on tribes.

Question: Do the actions carried out by the ANC in rural areas also include the bantustans?

TAMBO: Our actions are essentially political in the bantustans. I would not like to go into detail about our strategy and tactics. Suffice it to say that in the bantustans our actions are fundamentally political because we do not want to cause a struggle among the oppressed. The bantustans are mainly inhabited by the oppressed, who are a potential force for the struggle against the regime. They are thrown into the bantustans, which constitute a very small part of the nation's territory. There they live, squeezed in by the millions, experiencing famine. Meanwhile, vast areas of the territory are reserved for whites: It is there where the enemy exercises direct power. We want to mount an armed struggle where the enemy is, and he is outside the bantustans. In the bantustans we have these administrations which are forced to defend the apartheid system and are thus exposed to the people's wrath. Our first rule of our struggle and our policy is not to turn the oppressed against the oppressed. Even the leaders of bantustans, who are traitors, were established there by our main enemy.

The bantustans are, therefore, in large measure the field for political organisational work and for the preparation for the armed struggle and its consolidation. We have people from the bantustans in our armed forces, and they joined us precisely because they rejected the bantustans and because of the living conditions there. We

have been carrying out a lot of work of this kind, that is, political organisation resulting in the people's participation in our armed actions. In other words, some of our trained cadres come from the bantustans.

Question: How do you view the South African destabilisation activities in the Southern African Development Coordination Conference region? Do you think that the destabilisation is now becoming a business of destruction and reconstruction, resulting in huge profits for businesses? Would it be reasonable to think that the destabilisation is already becoming part of the South African economic hegemony subsystem?

TAMBO: I believe that it is a little of both. There is a pathological element in the behaviour of the South African regime because there is despair. Quite often the reasons for threats to invade countries of the region are completely absurd. For example, two or three ANC guerrillas arrive in Harare from another country. From Zimbabwe they proceed to South Africa, and at a certain stage they are detected by the forces of the regime. This is an insignificant incident, but the regime turns it into an international issue to such a point that one would think that the issue involved an invading army, with tanks and everything. To this extent, the behaviour of the regime is, therefore, acquiring a pathological element which leads to actions with destabilising effects.

But I think that we should view the destabilisation as part of the more comprehensive attempt by the South African regime to realise its old ambition of dominating southern Africa economically and politically. Smuts tried to do this. So did Verwoerd. John Vorster wanted to achieve the same objective, and now Pieter Botha wants the same thing with his idea of a constellation of States. The main idea has been the same over the decades. The aim is to create a South Africa which can be the exploitive centre of a series of neighbouring countries with weak economies and which are dependent on the South African economy. It is an old dream. Accordingly, South Africa tries to weaken these countries economically, to keep them economically underdeveloped to increase their dependence on South Africa.

There is a struggle going on. How long will these countries be able to resist? The destabilisation is aimed at forcing them to surrender to South Africa, to request assistance from Pretoria, forcing them to submit to the South African capital and, in practice, to accept the creation of the so-called constellation of States. Part of the destabilisation is, therefore, aimed at making these countries part of the South African empire. If South Africa were able to do that, there is no doubt that some companies would expand throughout southern Africa on a terrible scale.

But there is more to the destabilisation than this. The destabilisation is also the result of the regime's resistance to the political and economic independence of neighbouring countries.

Let us recall what took place during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. The Ian Smith regime created the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), but in March 1980, when it became clear that the Smith regime had been abolished, the South African regime took charge of the MNR. Until that point, South Africa had participated in actions by Smith forces in attacks on Mozambique and other countries of the region. It was from that time that the whole army of bandits started to

receive increasing support from South Africa. In other words, South Africa continued to resist the independence of southern African countries, as it had done before, by either participating side by side with the Smith regime, or participating on the side of Portuguese troops against the liberation struggle in Mozambique and Angola. South Africa is waging a continuous struggle to prevent these countries from achieving their independence, as it is seen as a threat to the South African economic and social system.

Part of the economic hegemony subsystem is, therefore, linked to the attempt to politically dominate these countries. And there is no end in sight to this strategy. But partly - and we cannot ignore this aspect - it is also a defensive strategy for the survival of the regime. This is different from a strategy designed purely to achieve the domination of more regions. The destabilisation is, therefore, also a survival strategy aimed at preventing these countries from possibly developing, since that would unmask the true nature of the South African capitalist system. There is no doubt that it would seriously affect the oppressed in South Africa, even the white population, to know that a neighbouring country was prospering, that the living conditions of its people were improving.

South Africa would appear as such a contrast. This is why South Africa has to prevent Zimbabwe, for example, from successfully becoming a nonracial State.

The South Africans have to destabilise Zimbabwe so that they can later on say: "See what liberation means? Let us keep what we have here; it is better than any other system." Their aim is to keep whites horrified about what is taking place in southern Africa. For these reasons, destabilisation is also a defensive strategy.

There are two ways to end the destabilisation. One is total capitulation, total acceptance of South Africa and its racist policy, the acceptance of the minority government, submission. In this case South Africa would acquire its system of submissive bantustans. The other way is through the overthrow of the apartheid regime. Either way, there would be an end to all destabilisation. There is nothing between these two things. It is either one or the other.

In brief, I see what is taking place as a combination of an aggressive attitude and defensive strategy.

Question: Destabilisation appears, therefore, as a method for the survival of the regime?

TAMBO: Yes. The two go together, and as long as there is any threat to the regime`s survival there will be destabilisation.

Question: What do you think of the reforms by P.W. Botha? Are they a sign that the regime has lost the initiative?

TAMBO: I think so. Botha is on the defensive. These reforms are not the result of any change in the racist philosophy. They are an adaptation to a new reality, which is the increasing effectiveness of the liberation struggle. And I am not only talking about the pressure on the regime from the masses in South Africa. I am also talking about what is taking place in southern Africa, the struggle for the liberation of Namibia, international pressures, the increasing isolation of the regime. Botha

himself has said that there is a need to adapt to this new reality. This means going on the defensive.

Of course they do this in a zigzag manner. What are these reforms? They are reforms in form only, as formal changes in the Constitution and other things of that sort. But there are no substantial changes in the content. Meanwhile, the very fact that they have had to manipulate the Constitution, the fact that they have had to recruit support from the Asian and Coloured populations, this means that Botha desperately needs their support. This support is not forthcoming, because the Indians and Coloureds are aware that Botha has lost the initiative and to support him would mean being used to defend the system against which they have been fighting.

Because of these pressures there is a series of conflicts rising from within the ranks of the dominating class, which makes Botha's task even more difficult.

In strategic terms, we are the ones who have the initiative. What we need to do is to intensify the offensive. The very fact that Botha has been forced to change camps means an opportunity for the forces of change to increase their offensive. It is in this light that we see the so-called reforms. They are not reforms in the real sense of the word, and it is precisely because of this that they are being rejected by the people. But they show that the regime has the feeling that it cannot continue to rule the way it has done in the past: It must at least change the external forms of its administration. And this formal change is not being accepted.

Question: In principle, apartheid is not reformable?

TAMBO: It is not possible to reform apartheid because if the Indian and Coloured communities of our population accepted the reforms they would be implementing the very same apartheid. In other words, either there is apartheid, or there is not. You cannot correct apartheid from the top.

Question: How do you see the conflicts within the regime?

TAMBO: The conflicts have resulted from the conclusion that the regime can no longer continue to rule in the old way. Some within the regime think that if they change they will be destroyed. There is, therefore, a crisis which involves them all, a crisis which, I think, will bring about divisions and subdivisions within the regime. Objectively, they are being divided by the pressures of the revolutionary struggle.

Question: And would this crisis affect people like Botha, as individuals?

TAMBO: It could. There is speculation about what will happen to Botha, as an individual, if he cannot carry his proposals forward, if they are flawed, or if his own supporters reject them in a referendum. This could end Botha's political career. This is the crisis in which he has been plunged. He cannot go back, but he cannot move forward.

Question: In some circles there appears to be an attempt to revive the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). What do you think about this? What relations does the ANC have with PAC?

TAMBO: My stand regarding the PAC is that it does not even deserve to be discussed.

There is an extremely serious situation in South Africa affecting all the countries of the region. And it is all because of the ANC. Lesotho lives in the hope that something will happen to it because there is a large-scale South African campaign against the Lesotho Government. It is all because of the ANC. The enemy talks about the ANC, and the ANC is the topic of discussion between the regime and leaders of the region. In this kind of situation I do not believe there is any room to discuss the PAC. It is not a factor.

Question: Recently you visited the People`s Republic of China. What were the results of this visit? Was this an ANC delegation`s first visit?

TAMBO: That was the third time that we visited the People`s Republic of China. The first visit was in 1963, and the second was in 1975. In both cases I was the one who led the delegation. The period between 1975 and 1983 was a long one, and during this time there was no development in our relations. Partly, therefore, their invitation to us was aimed at strengthening relations between the ANC and the People`s Republic of China. This is how we see our most recent visit.

We feel that we came out of the discussions convinced that our relations were deepened, and we were guaranteed that China would give us maximum support, political and material. As I have said on other occasions, we asked for support for our armed struggle, and we were promised arms.

Question: Were the talks held with the country`s leadership?

TAMBO: We held talks with Central Committee representatives, as well as with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister.

Question: Was this the first time that China promised arms for the ANC?

TAMBO: They would have done so sooner, if we had asked during the first two visits we made.

Question: Do you think that the relations between the ANC and China are viewed in the context of the Sino-Soviet conflict?

TAMBO: I think that in the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s this was a factor, but in 1975 we resolved the issue.

The Chinese saw that we had nothing against the USSR, that we were friends of the USSR, and that our friendships, regardless of whom they are with, do not condition our relations with the USSR. They accepted this in 1975.

Question: How do you view the improving relations between Mozambique and the South African people through the anti-apartheid struggle?

TAMBO: I believe that we are demonstrating in practice what President Samora Machel said, namely, that we are one people, we are 35 million. I think that the Mozambique experience during the struggle for independence and after independence demonstrates the fact that we are one people.

Mozambique is a lesson for the South African masses. And for this reason it will continue to be a target for the hatred of the forces of reaction in our country. But the future points to an even further identification between the peoples of South Africa and Mozambique, and a catalyst for this level of identification is the kind of struggle we are waging and the support which is necessarily and inevitably rendered by Mozambique to this struggle, no matter what the difficulties are.