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The original purpose of the all race elections was to resolve the crisis of constitutional legitimacy which F W de Klerk confessed to in his famous speech on 2 February 1990. South Africa has to rid itself of white domination and negotiate a constitution that could enjoy popular, non racial democratic support. The elections of April will go down in history as having achieved this. But what now?

Now South Africa has a government of National Unity that must govern for five years on an all party basis where parties with more than 5% electoral support are entitled to a position(s) in the Cabinet. During the five years the final constitution has to be negotiated in preparation for the first fully fledged

democratic elections under a final constitution. Will South Africa have those elections in 1999?

That depends on a number of critical problems that will have to be solved :

1. Can the new Government bring about stability? This is priority number one. This means, can it combat crime and political violence? This essentially focuses on creating a viable and integrated Defence and Police Force that enjoys non-partisan support, doing away with private militia and instant warrior groups like self-defence units, and in particular, curtailing and strictly controlling civilian access to arms.
2. Can the new Government reach consensus on the priorities and policy for socio-economic development? This means that the new government takes seriously the promises they made before the election and now wish to deliver on these promises. In particular, agreement must be reached and programmes implemented for housing, education, health, community development, agricultural and land reform. Particularly important is consensus on the status of donor agencies such as the IMF, World Bank etc.
3. Can constitutional transition at the local/metropolitan level be finalised within two years after the April elections? This is a major challenge because the elections

have given South Africa National and Regional Government, but it still has to negotiate transition at the local/metropolitan level. For example, what is the new co-existence going to be constitutionally, socially and economically between poor Soweto and wealthy Johannesburg? The quality of transition for the vast majority of South Africans is going to be tested in improvement in daily services such as water, electricity, sewerage, refuse removal etc. It is well to remember that governments who win the founding election lose the next one because they fail to deliver on these basic issues.

4. How will a Government of National Unity cope with populist revolt? It is well to remember that the ANC is essentially a populist movement which came into power with mass support and mobilization and with all the advantages and disadvantages of mass politics. However, using mass politics in opposition is vastly different to living with it in government. A Government of National Unity with the ANC as senior partner is going to have to take some tough and unpopular decisions on mass actions such as union/worker strikes, civil service disruption in hospitals and schools and youth and student protests. It will have to weigh up the need for restraint, discipline and controlled development against the demand for populist protest. This could place a great strain on the parties within the ANC alliance, particularly on COSATU and elements within the SACP.

5. How will the new government control the rapid expansion of bureaucracy and the accompanying problems of nepotism, patronage and incompetence? The new constitution makes provision for nine regions, each one with a Prime Minister and Cabinet. Old Apartheid based state departments will have to be rationalised and transformed to meet the demands of an expanded democratic constitution. If problems of bureaucratic expansion get out of hand, they can become an enormous drain on the budget and the economy and debilitate the new government's capacity to deliver on development. This could further fan populist discontent at the slow pace of reform and deliverance.

Has South Africa got the capacity to cope with these problems? Yes, but it will depend crucially on the centre that will merge and coalesce out of the government of national unity. If this centre can achieve consensus on how to tackle these problems under the scrutiny and assistance of the international community, then rationality and moderation may carry the day. Then there will be democratic elections in 1999. If not, then an authoritarian civil-military government may very well postpone those elections as it continues to grapple with these problems. One thing is sure, South Africans will not die of boredom over the next five years.