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Dr F van Zyl Slabbert

Political analysts talk about the world going through a new wave of democratization. It started in the early seventies in Portugal and Spain,; spread from Southern Europe to Latin America; Central and Eastern Europe and more recently to South East Asia, Africa and china. The very fact that they talk about a comparable process means that certain core values have been identified which typify democratic political systems - adult franchise, multi-party competition for political power and the peaceful change of government, constitutional protection of civil liberties, etc. Not all countries become stable or consolidated democracies, but virtually all of them share in common the quest for democracy. There has been an exponential increase in the number of countries experiencing democratization over the last 20 years and with it an explosion of information and knowledge about the problems and possible outcomes of the process.

Such information and knowledge can be useful to us understanding the dynamics of our own transition. Contrary to the impression sometimes created by our leading politicians we are not the only multi-cultural/racial/ethnic country experiencing problems of transition; nor are we the only case where a dominant minority tries to negotiate itself out of exclusive power in order to play some role in the future. Research shows that there is no single path to democracy; nor can one spell out a list of preconditions which have to be met in order to be a successful democracy. Conversely, there is no single or inherent reason why South Africa could not become a stable and functioning democracy. At the same time it is well to remember that the very fact that major political leaders commit themselves to democracy does not guarantee the inevitability of the outcome.

One of the critically important factors driving a successful transition to democracy is flexible, pragmatic leadership in responding towards each other and the constantly changing political, social and economic conditions. Certainly in the initial stages of our own transition, it was a cause of serious concern to observe the extent to which political leaders across the spectrum in South Africa had hopelessly underestimated the complexity of the process that they had subjected the country to. confident and simplistic predictions abounded in the first 18 months since February 1990. Elections and interim governments were promised and repromised, and when they did not materialize, we were subjected to round after round of dreary breastbeating, moral one-upmanship and transparent scapegoating. The ability

of parties to frustrate each other's intentions were deliberately ignored and there was a total lack of appreciation of the role of the civil service, and particularly, the security element and their ability to be both a source of stable continuity or constraint in transition. Perhaps most disturbing was a fairly common attitude amongst all politicians that "the economy" was somehow a resource operating in a separate vacuum independent of what politicians said or did and that it was always available to be tapped into at will. It is to the credit of Derek Keyes and others that they drove home the fact that the economy was bleeding to death precisely because politicians were not prepared to nurture and protect its relevance through transition.

Now, for the first time since February 1990 and as we run out of time in 1992, there are modest grounds for hope and optimism about our transition in 1993. This can be said precisely because of the consequences of escalating and arbitrary violence; the state of the economy and growing international scepticism about our will to succeed. It seems that not a moment too soon, some humility and realism has developed in, and between, our politicians. Almost as if in a moment of lucidity, they collectively had an awareness of how they were stuffing up this country.

In this context, the breakup of CODESA was a good thing. As long as it continued it fed the illusion that somehow the process of negotiated transition was under control. In fact, during its life, many important problems were either being ignored or neglected. CODESA made us put all our negotiation eggs into one basket and when it ground to a deadlock, a sense of polarized crises cascaded throughout the whole country. Crises were in fact what we needed to shake us out of the complacency that our transition was going to be resolved during 'happy hour time' in the artificial negotiating world of the World Trade Centre. What in fact has happened since the breakup of CODESA?

Firstly, the issue of violence began to enjoy sustained and focused attention. In a profoundly important development, most parties including the Government, agreed to receive an envoy of the UN Security Council and subsequently observers to monitor the violence and process of negotiations. This not only strengthened the work of the National Peace Accord, but in particular, the Goldstone Commission. Justice Goldstone displayed commendable courage in drawing attention to elements within the security forces undermining the transition. In this way, a fundamental truth about successful transition was dramatically underlined: it will not happen without manageable and broadly acceptable stability. To achieve this, the role of the security forces have to enjoy non partisan legitimacy in maintaining law and order.

Secondly, there was a proliferation of other forums focusing more specific attention on developmental issues critically important during and after transition. A National Economic Forum is highlighting the central importance of the economy and the need to have consensus on economic and development policy. We see the emergence of forums on Housing, Health, Education, Local Government, Electricity. The creation of these forums draws in a wide range of expertise and helps to move a range of critical

issues beyond partisan political manipulation.

Thirdly, the style of negotiation between leaders and groups changed significantly. CODESA was an artificial forum where strength did not necessarily negotiate with strength. After the breakup the negotiations became bi-lateral and much more articulated. Such bilateral discussions highlighted what had to be resolved between two parties before multi-party discussions could be successful. In an almost paradoxical way bilateral talks paved the way for more inclusive multi-party talks. WE now see the emergence of some common plan of transition between major parties with identifiable phases and problems that have to be resolved in each one of them. One senses that a critical re-orientation is taking place between the Government, ANC and Inkatha on how the process should evolve next year. Public pronouncements have become more modest, pragmatic and realistic about the way forward. CODESA was unreal and smooth. Negotiations now are more real and messy.

These developments since the breakup of CODESA highlight three interrelated problems that have to be resolved if we are to succeed. The dynamics of our transition is such that there can be no economic development without political legitimacy. However, we cannot negotiate political legitimacy if we do not have acceptable stability or the non-partisan maintenance of law and order. For better or for worse we have to concurrently address problems of stability, legitimacy and development. What does 1993 hold for us in this regard ?

Stability

The military and the police have to be cleaned up so that they can perform the vitally important roles of combatting crime, controlling political violence and assisting townships, villages and suburbs in maintaining community stability. We are not out of the woods yet, but developments in these areas look better for 1993 than they have been since 1990. In addition, private militia like APLA., MK, Aquila etc have to be disbanded and together with other security forces, e.g. Transkei, Ciskei, Venda, Bophuthatswana and Homeland Police Forces have to be re-integrated and rationalised. Also, the public carrying of weapons of any kind has to be strictly circumscribed. Both right and left wing militancy will have to be repressed and constrained, otherwise it will gnaw away at the centre and threaten a fragile developing stability. Vitally important is that parties who may differ strongly with one another, but are prepared to coalesce at the centre in order to manage transition have to agree on the status, legitimacy and role of military and police. There can be no effective negotiations for legitimacy if there is no acceptable and effective stability. The continuing absence of stability has been the most consistent threat to our transition.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy in the form of demonstrable consent for the process of government depends on popular acceptance of a constitution and democratic elections under it. But before this can happen "... there must be a conscious adoption of democratic rules. They must not be so much believed in, as applied, first perhaps from

necessity, and gradually from habit. The very operation of these rules will enlarge the area of consensus step by step as democracy moves down its crowded agenda." (Dankwant Rustow) In short, a critical mass of politicians and parties have to agree on the rules of the game in terms of which legitimacy will be established - not only on the national level, but on the regional and local level as well. If no consensus on these rules develops in the centre, flanking and militant fringe parties will play havoc with stability. Without serious attempts at establishing transitional legitimacy no effective development can take place. In this regard, 1993, looks very much better than 1992.

#### Development

If in 1993 South African politicians and political groups cannot reach agreement on which areas of economic development and policy should be removed from partisan political contestation, then economic stagnation will continue. This will react back onto problems of stability and legitimacy. We simply cannot afford enduring and inconclusive haggling on issues such as nationalization, land reform, property and prioritising on development areas such as housing, education, health etc. Transition in South Africa is certainly not only about the formal transfer of political power, but also about redistribution and equity. Again, in this regard, the omens for 1993 look more realistic and promising than the two preceding years.

So, South Africa, like many countries today is caught up in a wave of democratisation. As we start 1993, we hover on the threshold of hope. It is however hope tempered and born out of two years of frustrations, disillusionment, even despair sometimes. Hopefully, we have learnt what does not work and what to avoid. If we have, then we may dare to cross that threshold where hope is not frustrated.