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This is one of the places at which I never thought I would be talking about the political situation in South Africa, but I am very glad to be here. I think what I'd like to do is to give a brief analysis of the South African situation, then spell out some of the options available to resolve the conflict or to solve the problem, as it were, and then invite discussion or questions from you and see whether this could increase some kind of clarity on the part of both of us as to what is going on in my country.

Perhaps a good way to begin would be to put a very simple question to you, not only as foreigners but also to the South Africans here. South Africa has been in the news over the last two years as never before, and the dominant, central issue that has captured the attention is apartheid. Now I want to ask you a simple test question. If you had to say to yourself - "what is the essence of apartheid?" how would you answer that question? In other words what is the world asking P.W. Botha to get rid of? What exactly? And it's not such an easy thing to answer really if you think about it. Apartheid is not simple racism because obviously South Africa is not the only country in the world where you have racism. Apartheid is not simply a question of dominations, group domination, because you have group domination in many other countries - in Africa, in the Middle East and even in Western countries. So what exactly is it when people say to the South African government - "get rid of apartheid and we'll welcome you back into the community of nations". What are they really saying?

I think the distinctive feature of apartheid obviously has to be law. The fact that racism, racial domination, has been institutionalised in law in a particular way, in which a white minority finds itself in a situation of constitutional and legal domination over the rest of society. So when you say "get rid of apartheid" you are really saying "get rid of laws which underpin the apartheid system and which give legal meaning to racism". And if you look at those laws, the one that I was referring to in that television video you have just seen, the generic law is the Population Registration Act, which classifies every individual at birth according to race or ethnicity, and once, having been classified as either white or Coloured or black or Indian, a whole life of privilege or deprivation is then structured for him as a result of other laws which depend on population registration; for example where you will live, what schools you will go to, etc. etc. So that when you start dismantling apartheid by getting rid of for example, Section 16 of the Immorality Act, it immediately allows sexual intercourse between races which was prohibited but which, with its repeal, now allows it; it is no longer a crime. Once you allow that to happen the obvious question is "if people can have sex can they get married?" then away goes the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, but once you allow people to marry, the next obvious question is "where are they going to live?" so immediately the Group Areas Act comes under pressure and so you can go right back until you get to the Generic Act which classifies people and determines where they will participate politically, where they can live and where they can work - to a large extent.

Now when the government committed itself to reform it was in fact saying that it was going to get rid of some of the most obnoxious apartheid laws, and in fact it has done so. It has got rid of the Mixed Marriage Act, but it has also got rid of the influx laws which actually determined the movement of blacks from the rural areas to the urban areas, and now we find ourselves in a rather paradoxical situation in South Africa. It is true to say that of the present government and particularly of the President, P.W. Botha, that he has moved more in the area of reform than any other Nationalist Party leader before him. That he has really moved on fundamental issues which were quite inconceivable to the average white supporter of the Nationalist Party five years ago, and the paradox is that the more he has moved, the stronger the revolt has been against South Africa, both domestically and internationally and you have this extraordinary relationship between reform on the one hand and revolt on the other hand - and they seem to feed on one another - "the more reform the more revolt, the more revolt the more reform" type of situation, and it doesn't seem to be easing up. I think part of this problem or part of the secret in understanding this paradox - to a certain extent, because in any society where you have reform from a position of dominance, there is a certain degree of instability as people move through a new situation; but in South Africa the instability seems almost endemic. It escalates, it becomes stronger and if one wants to understand or get a key to understanding this, I think one can find the answer by looking at the demands of Reagan and Howe and the Eminent Persons Group and Thatcher, - presumably sympathetic governments, sympathetic administrations, - have made of P.W. Botha and his government over the last six months, and there's a common formula that runs through it - they have said to him "dismantle apartheid; release political prisoners; unban your banned organisations and negotiate". This seems a fairly reasonable kind of demand to set, except, and here I want to ask you another question. If you were in Botha's position and people asked you to dismantle apartheid and you are prepared to do that, then what do you have to negotiate about? If you have got rid of apartheid why do you have to negotiate? This brings a totally different dimension to the picture. I think Tertius Myburgh was quite correct when he said in that video - "the issue is not really apartheid; the issue is power". You have to negotiate a transfer of power. Now the word "transfer of power" makes the present government rather nervous. They don't like it. But even if you're going to share power from a position of non-sharing, you're transferring some power, you're giving power away, you're devolving it. And when one then poses the question to either Reagan or Thatcher "what do you mean by transferring power?" the one thing you can be sure of, at the end of the day, P.W. Botha is going to be out of a job. There is no way that you're going to negotiate an alternative political system in which the white minority will still be calling the shots, and that is why P.W. Botha said, as you heard him say in that video "if they want that, they're asking for suicide for the whites" and he's not prepared to do that.

The nature of the conflict that confronts us at the moment is very simple. Can the government find a formula where it can still maintain control over the political system and reduce the possibility of violence. That's what its trying to do. Now for the strongest opponents of the government, the

most popular opponents in terms of support - the ANC - they realise and they have made no bones about it, that the issue at stake is the transfer of power away from minority domination to what they call a democratic alternative. Now you can ask the government "do you believe in democracy" and you heard Barend du Plessis say "yes", "do you believe in negotiation" and he says "we do"; "do you believe in full citizenship?" - you heard the opening speech of State President Botha: "of course we believe in full citizenship"; and you can ask that of the ANC and they believe in all those values as well. What then is the issue? The issue is really that the government's version of democracy which Barend du Plessis said - "we will settle for democracy but our version of democracy".

But the government's version of democracy is not, at this stage, a negotiated version of democracy. It is a unilateral formula, it is a formula that they themselves have constructed, that they themselves have devised and they now want people to come in and participate in those structures. A classic example is the shift away from the old Westminster parliamentary system that we had here, based on majority rule within and amongst whites to the new Tri-cameral system of parliament - the Tri-cameral system of parliament which tried to bring excluded minorities such as the coloureds and Asians into the political centre, but without actually the whites losing control over the political machinery or the constitutional machinery. One of the consequences of doing that has been to highlight the exclusion of blacks from the political centre and ever since then, and then was 1983 when the Constitution changed, the government has been trying to find a formula to include blacks into the political system on the same basis; and the more it's tried to do so the more blacks and coloureds and Asians in the majority, have rejected the government's solutions. So that is the broad analysis of the situation - on the one hand an embattled minority in control of the political system facing demands to relinquish that control and at the moment unfortunately as you saw, the language that seems to be the most dominant one between the two is becoming violence. Violence is being used either to repress instability or violence is being used to create instability and that is the situation in which South Africa finds itself.

How can this be resolved? What are the options available? Quite clinically, irrespective of whether one agrees with it or not, there are only 3 that I can think of and a combination of those 3. - and when I say the problem is white minority domination and how do we get rid of it? The one way of getting rid of it is obviously through a form of massive external intervention. Now you may say this is laughable. It's nonsense, it can't be done. Yet if you listen carefully to the logic underpinning the whole question of external pressure and sanctions and so on, and you extend that logic to its natural conclusion, then it assumes that the outside world, some way or the other, has the ability to influence a transfer of power away from the minority. You can listen to people saying "why do you need sanctions?; why do you need South Africa to be isolated?" and the argument is usually "to bring the government to its senses or to its knees" - one of those two.

We had a recent visitor from Ireland, Conor Cruise O'Brien, who spelt out in a fairly consistent manner how he saw this happening. He said "sanctions are going to fail but they're going to create poverty, they're going to create economic decline and they will brutalise the domestic situation in the same sense that the government will have to fall back on more repression; and because the government falls back on both domestic and regional repression, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, the potential for internationalising the conflict is very great and means that eventually super powers have to decide are they going to allow one or the other to let that become the sphere of influence where they are going to lose influence; or are they going to allow Southern Africa to become "the" issue on the front burner of international relations." Conor Cruise O'Brien argues "no". He thinks that Russia and America will say "we can't allow that to happen, let's decide on a common formula" and he says it could then lead to what he calls a blockade and a kind of international military intervention through the United Nations. Now I think this is rather fanciful but if you take the one possibility of getting rid of white minority domination, this is the way some people are thinking, arguing and talking. I actually think it's a very dangerous way of looking at the situation, but nevertheless that is one option, the external option and this external option by the way, is the option that was followed in most cases where you had de-colonisation in Africa.

There is a tendency to look at South Africa as a colonial situation. I think it is not a colonial situation, not by any stretch of the imagination. What do I mean by this? If you look at what happened in Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, or Nigeria or Kenya or Zambia or Northern Rhodesia in those days, - at a critical point, an external intervenor or mediator could resolve the domestic crisis and allow those who were responsible for the crime to move away from the scene of the crime - if you want to put it that way. In other words the minority domination could move away, they could go to Britain or West Germany or France or Portugal but in the South African situation I don't see that critical moment ever arising, certainly not as far as the Afrikaners are concerned. You heard what Barend du Plessis said - "there is nowhere we are going to". Well in any case they wouldn't know where to go, - I am 30% French, 30% German and 30% Dutch and I'm pretty sure the Dutch don't want me back there. It's that kind of dilemma, there's no way in which you can as it were, go back. But this is the underlying logic of the external solution.

The second option available is through a massive disintegration, defection or break up of the security structure. That's the only other way. Now the logical extension of that one would be the armed struggle of say for example the ANC; where you could argue that gradually through a process of progressive erosion, the security structure of South Africa gets under more and more pressure, and since the numerical imbalance is not in their favour, the whites have to broaden their security apparatus to include blacks and coloureds and Asians and eventually at some or other critical stage there will be a successful revolution in the classic sense of the word. The most recent contemporary example of this kind of defection or disintegration of the security structure would I think be Iran, where the Shah misjudged the situation by trying to bring about socio-economic reforms without concomitant political reforms.

Those would be two options but the fact that I spell out these two options does not mean that both of them will not be applied in some way or other. Obviously we are going to have external pressure, obviously we are going to have an escalation of violence and they are going to impinge on the domestic situation and create a rather messy situation. The third one which could be a consequence of the previous two, is that at some or other stage the government voluntarily decides to set in motion a process of transition. In other words the government accepts that the costs of domination outweigh the advantages of negotiation and it sets in motion a process whereby it includes representative leadership on the part of the black majority and says - "now let's talk about a system that we could compromise on and that would actually stop the violence and stop the destruction of human and natural resources".

Now I believe South Africa is poised, I'm not saying we are there, but we are poised on this third one, and the whole question is - "how much pressure is going to have to develop economically, socially, politically, before the government decides to move?" Perhaps I can put a third question to you - "if you were in the government's position and you are not prepared to negotiate away your position of domination, what are your options?" "What are you going to do?" If you were in Botha's position and say "I'm not prepared to really go for full power sharing with blacks, yes - they can come in but not too close; as with the coloureds and Asians, - I don't want to lose control. I still want to be in charge." What can you do? I think he really has only two options, two strategies that he's employing and he's using them at the moment. The one is the strategy of co-opting people's constitutions, creating structures where they can participate without threatening his position of dominance and the other strategy is one of coercion-maintaining stability through coercion. So that is where we are at the moment in South Africa - it's a combination of co-option and coercion.

I'm afraid that's not going to work. You've seen the degree of popular mobilisation that has been going on amongst blacks where they actually demand participation. The key issue for them is also the key issue for someone like Barend du Plessis whom you saw there. Barend du Plessis said in that video - "we will not allow ballot box democracy to take place in South Africa - one man, one vote. We will only allow leadership democracy to take place." Now what does this really mean? It means that in terms of the government's constitutional plan they will broaden democracy on a group basis but they are not going to broaden democracy at this stage, on an individual basis. They are saying blacks as blacks, can elect their leaders; coloureds as coloureds, can elect their leaders, Indians as Indians or Asians as Asians can elect their leaders and whites, and then those leaders can bargain and negotiate about the spoils. That is rejected by the vast majority of blacks, coloureds and Asians. That is the dilemma. They do not demand a group based democracy, they demand democracy based on freedom of choice, on the individual's own choice.

Now I cannot see the Government buying off any pressure, unless it is prepared to concede that the individual has a right to freely choose who that person wants to support or belong to. I can't see it. In other words we are back

to the Populations Registrations Act. If the government demands the right to unilaterally classify other individuals on the basis of race or ethnicity and so structure the nature of their political participation, the consequence is going to be a massive rejection on a very populous base from blacks, coloureds and Asians. Now is there a way out of this, without simply abdicating or handing over power? I think there is. It's not going to be an easy way; there are risks involved, but at least at the end of the day it holds the promise of breaking the spiral of violence and it holds the promise of no longer destroying our resources. Now what would that be? It would be to accept that every person has the right to freely associate for the purposes of political participation. Does that mean that groups will disappear in South Africa? Absolutely not. I am convinced that if the government allowed freedom of association tomorrow, you would still have a Zulu factor, a Xhosa factor, a Tswana factor, a Sotho factor, but you will also have an ANC factor, you will also have a UDF or a Socialist or a Labour factor. You will also have Liberal parties; you will also have Afrikaner Nationalist parties, based on freedom of association and the only way in which the government is going to find out what the real distribution of support is in the country, is to be prepared to relinquish that degree of control.

Now what does this mean in practice? It means that you have to release Mandela and the other political prisoners. You have to unban the ANC, but given the military might of the South African government, that is a risk worth taking and one that you can cope with, and then see what happens. I actually believe it is going to be much more difficult for the ANC than they think it is if you unban them, because they are now going to have to move from being a rather romantic and charismatic movement in exile, they have to move from there to being a political organisation that has to try and stabilise the townships. They have to come to terms with those youngsters that you saw. They will have to try and organise political activity in order to be able to bargain with the government on a new constitution. That would be the first step that they would have to allow that freedom of association and they would have to allow a period in which those organisations would have to test their support because then only will the government be in a position to say "I want to talk to the real leaders" because it has removed all obstacles in the path of people to choose their real leaders. At the moment, if the government says "I want to negotiate with the leaders" they say "we can't, the leaders are in prison, there is no freedom of association, no freedom of organisation", and once you've allowed that kind of freedom of association and those organisations to test their support (and the government is still in a very powerful position, make no mistake about it), then the government can say "well, let us start a process of constitutional negotiation".

Unfortunately for the government, it must accept that at the end of that process, it will not be in a position of constitutional dominance. You cannot share power and not lose any. You cannot devise constitutional compromise which only suits yourself and it is quite clear to me that if we are going to move towards some kind of constitutional compromise, the government is going to have to accept the fact that whites will not be in a position of political domination. If on the other hand, whites respond by saying "never" as you

heard Eugene Terre Blanche say, then he is quite correct. At the end of the day you will have the AWB and the ANC as the two extremes confronting one another and the only language that will be spoken in this country on a political level will be violence. Then I can't see how we can escape that. I can't see how you can demand the right to determine the nature of political participation on your own terms, and keep a position of control and privilege and not expect there to be an escalation of violence. So at the present time South Africa is as I said, poised on that third alternative where the government, and there are members in government who are beginning to think along a process of transition towards, if you want to call it that, genuine power sharing.

From my personal interaction with the present leadership, I must be quite honest, someone like President Botha certainly does not see it that way, - and I'm not saying this in any way to be derogatory. He comes from a generation of Afrikaner leadership where it is inconceivable that there will be a black president. He just can't handle it. In fact when Pik Botha just made a slight reference to this in parliament in the most convoluted terms, he got slapped down right in front of all of us at the beginning of this year and Pik Botha said "well I suppose if we do find a formula based on power sharing, then it is theoretically and in principle possible that at some time there may be a black president". Mr. Botha said "you can't say that". This is perfectly logically true but he just found that offensive to himself, but not only offensive, he felt that this touched a chord in white politics that would be very difficult to cope with.

I think the younger generation and Tertius is correct - the younger generation of Afrikaners - they are beginning to realise that there can be life beyond apartheid, that there can in fact be a more attractive life beyond apartheid than spending your whole adult life in a state of constant readiness to fight and to kill or be killed, and that message I think is permeating through a lot of whites. In fact I think it has a very healthy impact in some sense, and that is that for the first time a lot of young white people that I have spoken to at the universities are really deeply and fundamentally asking themselves a simple question - "what does it mean to be an African, not only an Afrikaner (an Afrikaner is an African in any case) but what does it really mean and how do I identify with this problem?" The people in this land are beginning to discover that in fact they have far more in common with their black fellow citizens than they have with many people that they meet in Europe when they go on those tours. I think perhaps I'll stop there and then we can have some questions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION:

You have placed some emphasis on the role of Central Government. Is it not possible to have a system of government? I guess if I look back 100 years or so in the United States, we had what people called States' rights and the dominance of the State government in its domestic affairs, within an envelope of the Central government to handle things that need to be put together like national defence and national security. Is it not possible maybe to shift to an emphasis on that sort of government - Provincial government?

ANSWER:

Personally I favour that. I've always envied the United States Federal structure of government which I think is a very sensible one and it was born of a deep suspicion of politicians. They just don't trust those people, which is a very good thing. Secondly the other very important thing about that is that your States had a very strong sense of self identify. They were very suspicious of other states impinging on them. Unfortunately in the South African situation those two political trends are absent from the people - in this sense that for blacks, any attempts at federalised, any attempts at partitioned, any attempt at decentralising power, evokes suspicion, because they see this as a kind of "divide and rule" strategy. I think we are going to first have to overcome that kind of suspicion before we will move towards a Federal structure. That's the first point.

The second point is that the government, given the nature of the problem that's confronted it, has tended over the last 20/25 years increasingly to centralise power, in other words to undercut what one would call normal accountable government, right down to local government, the city council. Powers that normally would go to a City Council have been usurped by Central government - housing, education, sport - all these have been taken over by the central government, so the central government found itself in a ridiculous situation that it has to decree for the whole country whether coloureds and Indians and whites could play a game of cricket on a Sunday in Pietermaritzburg. That would be an eminent example where you say "well you guys can play on a Sunday, that's your business and whoever you want to play with, fine, go ahead", but we've developed a situation where we've centralised political decision making to such an extent. Now the dilemma is having concentrated so much power, the re-action against it from say the ANC and others has been - "well that's what we want - we want that power that you have concentrated" and it is polarised in that sense.

I actually believe that convention "the least government, the best government" in any country.

QUESTION:

Could you comment on your resignation as the Leader of your party and some implications thereon?

ANSWER:

Talking about the resignation I think one must distinguish two levels of argument. Obviously the one is a personal and subjective one which cannot be transferred to any other individual. I mean I am myself and therefore my motivation and experiences I cannot ascribe to other people in the same position. By resigning, on that level I'm not saying that anybody who was in that position had to resign, but my experiences certainly led me to believe that in all honesty I couldn't carry on; but I don't want to dwell on

on those personal ones. If you want to have them I am quite happy to do so, but if one looks at the objective situation - what I became aware of was precisely this trend and increasing centralisation of power where even parliament as an institution was being bypassed for major decisions and not only bypassed, and I hesitate to say this but in fact it's true - misled, misinformed, kept in deliberate ignorance, and I just found this an untenable situation. It is impossible to be telephoned early in the morning by someone in the defence force, a brigadier, who tells you that we've gone into that country and we've done something and then you go back to parliament and the other parliamentarians don't even know about it, and when you get a briefing to find that the briefing doesn't really correspond to the facts that consequently become available. In any case, that was one of the reasons - that there was a bypassing of normal accountable government.

A second objective reason was that when the government changed the constitution from the Westminster one to the Tri-Cameral one, I fought very hard against it. People will tell you I led the campaign of the Party against changing the constitution. I said it would polarise the country, that we would get more violence (well it sounds almost in retrospect as if I was justifying it) - you can go back and check - that's exactly what I did say at that time. But I was very despondent when the government did change it and I said to some of my colleagues "Well let's go in and see - give it a chance". For a year - I was prepared to go in for a year. Well some of them said "no, let's go in". Maybe some of the new customers will think the same way we do and we can have some kind of coalition, perhaps hostile majorities in the other two houses and force things. In fact that didn't happen, but what did happen was that the Tri-cameral parliament became one of the key factors polarising the situation - the level of rejection was something that I had not anticipated, that one felt oneself trapped in an institution that had to generate an alternative and in fact was seen as a problem rather than a solution itself, and I couldn't see how one could break out of that.

And that relates to the third reason and that is that given the nature of political and social and economic developments that have been going on, I cannot see how parliament can generate an alternative on its own. It can't. An alternative that will be attractive. In order to generate that alternative it has to engage people that it has to negotiate with, and those people have no access to parliament in terms of which they can negotiate. They don't have it, there are no structures in terms of which it can generate that kind of leadership, and therefore I think the most important problem now as I see it, is to generate a democratic culture outside of parliament, to work for the creation of what I call freedom of association, so that those leaders can come forward and then hopefully to get the process of bargaining going, not between the parties in parliament because that's not where the game lies, but to get a process of bargaining going between the Executive of the South African government and the people outside of parliament. That's really it.

It would have been quite comfortable to sit it out in parliament and be a privileged spectator to a game that you're not part of, but I just didn't relish that thought.

/Page 10...

Draft Follows

QUESTION:

Would you tell us a little bit about the present and future scenario that you see on economic power and corporate power in this whole transfer of power? Where do they stand today and where is the money going to be put because obviously all these things take money. I guess you've got the rich against the poor in a great many cases, and I'd like to know.

ANSWER:

Yes, well there again the answer to the question depends very much on when the actual transfer takes place, or the actual move takes place. The longer it is postponed the greater is going to be the economic decline as I see it in South Africa. This is commonly accepted by most economists that you have a population growth of 3% and an economic growth hovering around zero minus sometimes just about 1%. So that just in terms of population resources we are into a losing game unless we can get this economy to grow, and if you look at the nature of the economy, it can grow on an export basis and by obviously trying to improve your internal markets and internal markets can only be improved if you increase productivity. This becomes a vicious cycle - you have to give people education and so on. So if you look at the concentrations of wealth at the moment they seem to be with big companies - five major ones, and I can't see us having as I said, an export led growth, precisely because we are trapped in this whole sanctions campaign and debate. So I imagine what's going on today in Pretoria is the President is trying to entice business into some form of domestic economic growth and business is saying to them - "well we're prepared to do that if you can restore confidence" and P.W.Botha in turn says - "well I can restore confidence if you will restore growth" and that's where they are trapped.

If you do have the transfer and you listen to some of the main players such as the ANC, they would say they want to nationalise the gold mines and they believe in a policy of nationalisation, they believe in a policy of socialism, and if you really start pinning them down as I've tried to do, and ask - "well what do you really mean?" If you take the gold mines the government is taxing them at I think 75c in the rand. Now that's about as close to nationalisation as I can think of. It's not a question of nationalising the gold mines but what do you do with the taxes that you get from the gold mines? The blacks obviously don't like the way it's being distributed as far as housing and tax and so on. So I don't think that the ANC mean that by nationalising the gold mines that they want to take charge of them, because then the gold mines will really just become holes in the ground. They won't generate any wealth.

The other question is then, will the ANC for example, allow a large measure of free enterprise to exist? I think yes. I certainly do. If you'd listened to someone like Buthelezi, yes I think he too. So if I can put it this way, the sooner we start talking about negotiating for power, the greater the likelihood that the economy would recover. The longer it takes of course, the more difficult that is going to be. And I don't think one should necessarily be too discouraged by extravagant rhetoric. There

are two examples right at home, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Mozambique went one way because the rhetoric actually matched their performance eventually and was based on a lot of ignorance, but in Zimbabwe one anticipated that white farmers for example, would be dis-possessed, that the economy would go one way, and in fact they were not dis-possessed. The agricultural sector flourished. I had an interview with Mr. Mugabe, Prime Minister Mugabe, 3 weeks ago in which I asked him this very question. What do you think of business now? You were a committed Marxist and so on. I was amazed, he turned the whole argument around and said "No, I still believe in Socialism but responsible Socialism - in other words Socialism that can only come about as the economic position makes it possible." That's the closest to a definition of European Socialism that I know; in Scandinavia and that kind of situation, whereas previously the argument was - "you've got to force a chicken into every pot as soon as possible". I think he's realised that that's not possible.

QUESTION:

The press of the United States doesn't quite think the ANC is a sort of domestic Socialist party that is more or less partial at least, to the Communist government and foreign capitalists control. Would you care to clear us up as to how much validity there is to that observation?

ANSWER:

I think there is obviously some validity in that. I think that the history of the ANC which started in 1912 shows quite clearly that right at the outset, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the Communist Party, the ANC organisations and affiliations - they were all part of the movement against white minority control or white minority rule. That's absolutely true. I think once they went into exile the relative position of the South African Communist Party in the ANC in exile, became stronger. There's no question about it. As far as the arms were concerned, yes, they got their arms from Moscow when they committed themselves to the arms struggle. But only this morning I read that the Institute for Strategic Studies in Britain calculates that the strength, the manpower of the ANC in its military sense outside, is between 8 000 and 12 000 men. So from a military point of view it certainly doesn't constitute a threat and from the point of view of guerilla warfare I think it's unpleasant but it would seem to me, if I read the security people correctly, containable. The problem with the ANC is that it's not a movement in exile. It is a banned domestic movement and you have a lot of people inside the country who are supporters of the ANC. The whole of the Eastern Cape has, I would say, about 85% supporters of the ANC.

Now I don't think one can talk about the influence of the Communist Party in the same way as one can do externally. One way of finding out how strong the Communist Party in the ANC is, is by saying - "well let's see what happens under conditions of freedom of association". I think that

will generate tensions - no question about it - that they will have to decide - how do you work with an alliance in exile when you have become a competing political organisation inside; and that is as I said earlier on, a risk that will have to be taken. If that risk is not taken, I suspect that if the situation escalates into one of a quasi-civil war, the ANC will increasingly move to the East unless the latest shifts of Shultz talking to them and Linda Chalker talking to them, and Howe, softens the whole situation. But I don't think one should deny the fact that there are Communists in the ANC. Certainly.

QUESTION:

You mentioned earlier the "divide and conquer" suspicion. My question is - under your option 3, what would be the role of the ex homeland independent states?

ANSWER:

Well I always used to argue when I was still in parliament that you'd have to give the independent states a choice on a plebiscite basis or a referendum and say to them - "now do you want to remain independent in this bargaining of a new constitution for South Africa" and if they then say yes, well that's it - they've had a free choice and they can do that. I am not so sure whether that will work now unless one is also prepared to say that the parties you are now unbanning in the rest of South Africa, should have the right to operate there as well. But then you're in a difficult situation because you are then deciding for, a presumably independent country, which organisations are allowed to operate within it. But they're not allowed to organise in a plebiscite. In other words I don't think that one can dismiss those homelands and I don't think you can dismiss the independent countries and say they're not a picture in the eventual bargaining, but I'm not quite sure how one is going to determine how they come to the bargaining table.

QUESTION:

If I could follow that on - you used the phrase "presumably independent". In fact how independent are they?

ANSWER:

Well they certainly are not independent in terms of international politics. Their independence is recognised by the South African government and by themselves amongst themselves, so Transkei would say yes, Ciskei is independent and vice versa. But that kind of independence certainly does not allow them passport facilities or international travel, it does not allow them to attend international conferences or anything like that, so the international community certainly does not accept that kind of constitutional independence. One could argue that in real political terms they are as independent as Malawi is or Mozambique is, but I don't think that is the key issue. Their sovereignty is not recognised internationally.

When one looks at other criteria for dependence, they are heavily dependent on the South African government and on the South African economy; so much so that I think almost without exception, all the independent homelands as well as the non-independent ones, depend for up to 70%, in some cases even higher, for their annual budget, on the South African parliament and the South African budget. The rest of their income comes in wage earnings from migrant labour, so that it's a heavy dependence that you've got there. One of the economically most independent ones is the Bophuthoatswana one because they've got some mineral deposits and a fairly strong agriculture in certain sections.

QUESTION:

What you have just said would apply equally to all the neighbourhood states, I would assume. What I wanted to ask you, is it possible that the answer might lie in the kind of federal system that exists in Yugoslavia or that exists in Switzerland. Is that a possibility?

ANSWER:

That is a possibility if they allow, as they do in Switzerland, if they allow people to voluntarily identify with groups. You see I have no doubt that if you give Zulus the choice to participate politically as Zulus, as the Afrikaner did freely of his own will - he formed the Nationalist Party - nobody said the law says that if you speak Afrikaans you have got to vote for the Nationalist Party. He formed the Nationalist Party. If you allowed that kind of freedom of association I think people would be surprised how many of them would participate as Zulus, in the political process and then you can start looking at Federal formulae that would come out; and at the decentralisation. But what I can tell you now, if it's done unilaterally, if the South African government decides "these are the areas and those are your rights", they will simply not accept them and that is the dilemma.

QUESTION:

Perhaps you can help me rationalise two of the points that you have highlighted. The first point is the strength of the security forces in your country, in their ability to maintain control, and certainly I think that many in the room would agree that they are very effective. Then you mentioned that the young South African white has a changing viewpoint that differs greatly from that of your current President. As I understand it, you have universal military service requirements that apply to young white South Africans and that is your principal input I would gather, into your security forces? It would appear to me at some point in time, these security forces - made up of those young white South Africans who have a changing viewpoint - when they're asked to do something that your current President asks them to do, may have moral constraints and that they are going to object. It seems to me at this point that you have a problem with your security forces. Would you care to help me with the rationalisation of this?

ANSWER:

Yes, I would say that it is only partially true to say that the security system in South Africa depends predominantly on conscripted whites. It's true for the South African defence force. That's true. But the South African defence force is one part of the South African security system. One tends to forget that there are large areas of security stability, which whites are not really responsible for, and I'm talking here specifically of areas such as the Ciskei, the Transkei, Bophutotswana, KwaZulu, where the security is maintained by blacks. They maintain that kind of security and that's a great source of tension, an increasing source of tension at the moment. But the South African defence force itself realises that you cannot go on indefinitely depending on conscripted white males to supply your manpower needs for the SADF. If one looks at the white paper that was tabled in parliament this year, from the South African defence force, they make it quite clear. They say the burden of military preparedness, the burden of security, will increasingly have to be shared by all population groups in South Africa and they also then say that they actually have plans being implemented to give effect to this, right up until 1990. The dilemma of course, is that when you start extending military service to the other population groups, on what basis do you do it? The government is sensitive enough to know that you cannot do it on a compulsory conscripted basis because this highlights the whole question of dual citizenship or unequal citizenship and so on, and I think increasingly they are going to move towards a volunteer situation, a paid volunteer situation, as far as Coloureds, Asians and blacks are concerned. Also white males form the most important pool of skilled labour.

(Tape discontinuity)

QUESTION: ???

ANSWER:

Well the one thing that we did try and do and I suppose they are still trying at the moment, was to see whether one could capture a slice of the white electorate that was significant enough to give one a balance of power between government and the Right wing. Now that depends to what extent the Right wing can capture say 30% of the electorate and the PFP type of support can capture 30% and then you have a hung parliament in a sense, and the government has to choose in what direction it wants to move to find a coalition

The PFP got up to 21% in terms of electoral support. That was in 1981 after the general election and it is apparent to me that there are very clear ceilings existing in the white electorate for them. The fact is that they are predominantly English speaking and there is - and I speak as an Afrikaner wrongly I think, a deep suspicion on the part of the Afrikaner that they are not really welcome in that part of the South African political spectrum. You know it has an image of being liberal, mink and manure, Northern Suburbs and that kind of thing, and it's difficult to undercut that image for the

average Afrikaner. I have spoken to Afrikaners who actually think more radically or liberally if you want to put it that way, than people in the PFP but can't see themselves becoming members of that party, so you have primordial, almost irrational prejudices operating within the South African political system.

The second point that I want to make is that the government is in the position where it can actually outbid both the Right wing and the Left wing. If there's something that is worth doing on the Left they simply take over the rhetoric, sometimes the policy, and if it's worth doing on the Right they can accommodate that as well. So it plays it both ways. Eventually the pressure on the government is I think, not going to come from parliament - it's not there now. Government knows that it doesn't really have to fear pressure from within the parliamentary system and certainly it did not call a state of emergency to cope with the PFP or with the Right wing. It called a state of emergency to cope with problems outside of parliament and in that sense the real political battle lies between government and what's going on outside. I think in that battle the PFP can certainly play a mediating role, but I cannot see it capturing power.

QUESTION:

I really have a point of order for our current charman. Leo, we have been impressed by the intelligence and the knowledge of the young South African rangers who have led us around the Mala Mala compound. I see they are present here today and I see that they have listened with some interest to what Dr. Slabbert has had to say. I would hope that they are not excluded simply because we're guests here, from asking questions?

ANSWER: (L. Fish)

Not at all, if there were any thought of that, they wouldn't have been present in the first place.

ANSWER: (van Zyl Slabbert)

I can assure you that they are not backward when it comes to coming forward and asking questions.

QUESTION:

You have given a much more pleasant description of the ANC than the one that we have heard here before. All that I have heard of the ANC before coming and a view that I think was confirmed by much of what I heard in Johannesburg, is that the ANC is not a very compromising group but simply one of "all the power or nothing". Is their desire to take over the entire picture of South Africa so to speak? I think your view paints them as a much more compromising or perhaps more tolerant group. Would you care to address that thought?

ANSWER:

Well I certainly wouldn't want to give that picture. All I'm saying is that I treat them very much as part of the political reality of South Africa. I don't think you're going to get rid of the ANC by "rubbishing" them by saying "you know they are a bunch of terrorists" and so on. It makes one seem good but the point is they still remain a very viable and political effective force and we have to come to terms with them in exactly the same way that I don't see and never have seen, much point in "rubbishing" the government. I mean I fundamentally disagree with the government and I think they make the most extravagant statements sometimes, but I don't see any point in not treating them as a very real political factor in the South African equation, and by the way, if one is going to use the quality of rhetoric of the ANC as an indication of how uncompromising they are, I would suggest one reads the rhetoric of the Nationalist Party over the last forty years, to really get some idea of what can be said under certain circumstances. So I don't think one should take the rhetoric as such.

I have spoken to ANC executive members a number of times. I have a fair idea of their strategy. I disagree fundamentally with the arms struggle and with violence. I am fundamentally opposed to Communism; they know, I've said that to them. I have argued very much against the use of violence by the ANC as well as by the government and I certainly don't see much point in trying to justify either form of violence. When I've put the question of compromise to them they would say yes, they are willing to compromise but not under the present circumstances, so if I can highlight the dilemma :

P.W. Botha at the beginning of last year's session of parliament made the conditional offer of release to Nelson Mandela. He said to Mandela "if you foreswear violence, then I will talk to you and I will unban the ANC". The ANC's response and Mandela's response was "if you forego apartheid I will forego violence" and there you have it. On one hand the violence of apartheid if you want to put it that way, as defined by the ANC, versus the violence of the ANC as defined by the government. Which side is going to give in on it? The simple question is if both really wanted to talk they wouldn't use the violence argument. They would talk. But both of them in a sense, still think they can win and that is the tragedy of South Africa, both sides define the conflict as win-able on their own terms. The government says well if we just extend our security network a bit more, arrest all those young hotheads, knock them over the head, things will come right. It will stabilise. The ANC says well if we just blow up a few more farms and a few more this and that, then things will come right. I think they are both wrong. I honestly do:

But what I do accept on the ANC's side of the argument is that the violence of apartheid as they define it, preceded the violence that they committed themselves. I certainly accept that. I don't accept this Keith Campbell analysis that has just come out in London. It just goes against all historical evidence; but the ANC petitioned from 1912 to 1961 - non violently, a pacifist organisation to a very large extent, yes - a few strikes, a few protest meetings and so on, but not violence, and then went underground and committed itself to the arms struggle and so on. So I put it to them, I said "when will you be prepared to give up violence?" because that's the key issue

as far as I am concerned, otherwise we are just going to kill each other. They said "if they unban the ANC; if they release the political prisoners; if they dismantle apartheid and we can come in and organise inside the country; then we will give up violence". I have conveyed exactly what I have just said to the President himself and to the head of the National Intelligence Service, and I have conveyed it to Minister Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development, and I have said to them "even if you don't believe them, you are in a unique position of being able to call their bluff - if you do those things and they still commit acts of violence and carry on with violence, then the whole world must understand you have no other option." So I think the way you're going to break this spiral is not to get too much involved in what the rhetoric is at the moment, what they're shouting, because they're going to outbid one another in any case. P.W. talks about suicide, about Armageddon, about chaos and all that kind of extravagant language. The ANC talks "we want victory and we'll push them until they crack". If one is going to be caught up in that rhetoric, then there will never be any breaking of that cycle. I personally think there is a likelihood of compromise there and when I say that, I am not trying to "jolly" up either side of the conflict, I can assure you.

QUESTION:

In your opinion does the ANC have the ability to stop the violence throughout the country if it wanted to?

ANSWER:

No, not at the moment. They can't do it from outside. Even if they say they can, I don't think they can.

QUESTION:

What would then be the short term formula for the stopping of violence?

ANSWER:

The short term formula I think, would be for them to come in and take responsibility of the townships. You see at the moment they're sitting outside. They get all the kudos for whatever happens here in a sense, without having to accept the responsibility and they find themselves in an invidious position, because I said to them in November, "why don't you call a moratorium on violence? why don't you say to the government "for 6 months there will be no violence if you are prepared to do x, y and z?" and their simple answer was that they couldn't do it. They didn't have that kind of control over the situation. And the reason why they didn't have that kind of control is because they were where they were. They couldn't operate inside. It's what I mean by calling their bluff. Let's see if we can do it. And by doing that you don't weaken the security structure of the South African defence force or the security system. In fact I think you're in a stronger position. You can see where the people are.

QUESTION:

Do you think they can stop it?

ANSWER:

Once they come in, I think the risk is worth taking. I don't think they can stop it if they remain outside, so the risk that I'm prepared to take is - bring them in and see if they can stop it inside. If they stay outside there is no risk, - they can't stop it.

QUESTION:

In this conflict, this dichotomy between the ANC and the government, "you stop your violence" and "we'll stop apartheid" and vice versa. I understand there have been a number of steps, - and I don't really understand what they are - towards the reduction in the apartheid rules, laws. Are those recognised at all by the ANC? and if so what effect has that had on this dichotomy?

ANSWER:

I think quite frankly that those changes in the apartheid laws have been counter-productive, - not because they are not good in themselves but because the manner in which they have been presented has been counter-productive. You have just seen the Rubicon speech on tape. If the President in that speech had mentioned in one package, all the things he has done after that speech, I think he would have bought himself a lot of time and a lot of goodwill, but he messed it up on that speech, and after that he started giving a concession here and a concession there and so on, and what happened was, that the ANC and the UDF and the trade unions said "well, what is he doing, he is really just throwing out little titbits to preserve his position, rather than actually engaging in a systematic programme of reform". So in that sense, every time he gave something, they demanded more and they wanted to know "where are you going, what is your plan?" It's the logic of what I call the Tri-cameral parliament. In a sense, what the Tri-cameral parliament did - and this infuriated so many people - was to bring Coloureds and Indians closer to power in order to show them how far they were going to remain away from it. "You can now look and see how we work in parliament and do our things but you're never going to be in a position of control" and this was epitomised by the two security bills which were passed during this session, where the whole parliament opposed it except the government and the HNP and the CP and Mr. Botha took those two bills to the President's Council for ratification where it was loaded with his own supporters and they went through. That if anything, highlighted the powerlessness of parliament. Similarly, it is a good thing that people be brought back into the political centre. It's a good thing that the government got rid of influx control as this created more freedom for people. But what you really did was to enable blacks to come from the rural areas to the urban areas with a greater degree of freedom, only to find that once they were in the urban areas, they were trapped into those townships in any case. So you increase the pressure cooker effect in the townships and there in the townships the blokes wanted to know "now we're here, what can we do, where are we going from here?". So it is in that sense, that the reforms although good in principle, were bad in the way in which they were implemented.

QUESTION:

There's been a great deal of conversation over time about the lack of a long-term plan for the dismantlement of apartheid. Is this related to indecision on the part of the government - I'm over simplifying it - or is there an important factor of fear of the Right in opposition to this type of thing?

ANSWER:

I don't think it is indecision so much. I think the Right Wing is used quite effectively by government. I don't think government really fears the Right Wing in that sense. The Right does not represent an electorate threat although if you lived in this part of the world you think everybody is a Conservative Party member. I come from this part of the world and I know what the feeling and thinking is. When I say this part I mean more towards Pietersburg and so on, where the Conservative Party have a strong following, but if you look at the distribution nationally of the Right Wing, there is no poll that shows them getting more than 16½% combined, so far, and they are distributed rather unevenly over constituencies in which they can vote, so that in 1981 14.6% voted for the HNP and they couldn't get one seat in parliament. 15% voted for the PFP and they had 27 seats in parliament. It goes to show you the concentration of support, so I don't think it constitutes an electoral threat, but if you say "why is there no long term planning on the part of government on a constitutional level?" I want to bring it back to the initial point I made - a fundamental decision that government has to take is "are they going to set in motion a process where they will talk themselves out of power?"

Now there are no happy precedents in history where governments do this kind of thing. They don't like talking themselves out of power. But unfortunately this is the kind of crisis that faces them. Again if you look at what Ian Smith did - he was not going to do it but the circumstances beyond his control, largely externally, eventually had him in a situation where he actually had to negotiate the transfer of power. Now in South Africa all the pressures point to the whites having to negotiate a transfer of power. The question is - what kind of transfer? I'm arguing that the government hasn't really in its mind at the present stage, accepted that a transfer of power has got to take place. They haven't. There are some of them who are beginning to talk like that. The moment they start that, you will start getting long term plans coming out that may I think, alleviate the situation.

QUESTION:

Would you care to tell us how much influence Bishop Tutu has. We see and hear a lot of him in our press. How much influence does he have in this country?

ANSWER:

I don't want in any way, to knock Desmond Tutu but I would say that he is a far more influential person in the United States than he is here - and I think he would be the first to concede this. Desmond Tutu has always said that he is not a political leader. Now he may have political

(Tape discontinuity)
