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## Keynote Speech:

## QUO Vadis TBVC?

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## Introduction

Namibia became independent on March, 21st, 1990. Almost simultaneously, a number of coups d'etat took place in South African homelands: On March 4th, 1990, the Sebe government was toppled in Ciskei; on March 7th there was a failed coup attempt in Bophuthatswana; on March 13th Frank Ravele succumbed to popular pressure in Venda and resigned whereafter the military took over on April 5th, 1990. Earlier, by the end of 1987, the Matanzima regime was overthrown in Transkei when the military under General Bantu Holomisa took over.

What makes these events more interesting is the additional fact of State President De Klerk's landmark speech of February 2nd in which he alluded to the participation of all South Africans in central processes.

I cannot recall him referring explicitly to the TBVC states in that speech. But in May Minister Stoffel van der Merwe acknowledged that independence is no longer the goal of homeland policies. So tentatively, one could have concluded that the paradigm is shifting.

Of course De Klerk also unbanned the ANC and the PAC in February completing the picture about the inevitability of more changes to come.

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Whether these events were related, or not, is not really the point, despite the fact that I think they are related. The fact is, these events and statements have taken place and no doubt signify major shifts in sub-regional politics mainly at the "centre", but not without longer-term consequences for the "periphery", the consequences of which have not become absolutely clear yet, despite pointing inexorably into a certain direction, indicating perhaps the following:

\* The policy framework creating homelands, is crumbling fast, though not the structures;

\* but unlike some revolutionary visions about a post-apartheid future, assuming homelands' demise or even disappearance, homelands are still with us and will perhaps remain to be so for a long time to come, albeit in different forms;

\* as Van Zyl Slabbert recently wrote: homelands still play an important part in state structures. As such, their roles are not irrelevant, but as he put it, only being redefined.

This is perhaps one of the major issues facing us today:  
Quo Vadis TBVC?

Nobody can deny that the TBVC states have become "dilemmical"! The question, however, is whether they are part of the "irreversible" debate, or not. Consider the following:

1. Since the TBVC dominoes have started to fall by the end of 1987 when the Matanzimas were ousted, virtually all the TCV leaders have indicated that they were interested in reincorporation into the South Africa of the future, the much-talked about New South Africa (NSA). Bophuthatswana still officially stands alone.

2. Quite significantly, all of the TCV leaders endorsed the concept of a negotiated transition. So far, however, TBVC leaders have had very little to do with the "talks" that have taken place between the government and the ANC. In all fairness, they were not part of the issues discussed at Groote Schuur and Pretoria. Still, the question is when, and how will they get involved?

3. Although it is true that it cannot be taken for granted that all the TBVC states will eventually join forces with the state at the negotiating table, the ANC, with the possible exception of the Transkei, cannot take BVC support for granted either.

4. Following from the previous point, the ANC may in fact be competing with the state for TBVC allegiance during this transition process: Witness Mandela's visits to various homelands and De Klerk's meeting with the leaders of the self-governing territories earlier this year.

5. It is significant however, that the De Klerk/Viljoen team has not had any noteworthy contacts with TBVC states, i.e. on the restructuring issue. This may indicate something of its thinking and strategies, i.e. that there is no rush to incorporate these states at this stage, despite the government no longer pursuing independence for homelands. On the other hand, however, Pretoria has always been very "correct" in its handling of TBVC matters, i.e. trying to foster the impression that Pretoria does not (openly) interfere in their internal affairs. But now things are changing.

6. This view is underscored by the fact that neither the National Party's 12-point plan announced in Parliament on May 9th (by Dr. Viljoen), nor the President's Council Constitutional Proposals announced last week (October 1990), contained any reference to these states.

7. From an ANC point of view, however, the issue is equally vague: Although the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines of August 1988 contains no reference to homelands, the ANC's Harare Declaration on Negotiations, dated August 1989, alluded to the vision of a "united, democratic and non-racial state" (paragraphs 12.0 and 16.1). This phrasing contrasts starkly with the earlier references to "a unitary state". This phraseology could be a case of mere semantics, but I take it to mean something else. To be sure, the ANC is quite consistent on this issue. One interpretation is therefore, that it alludes to an "undivided"/"united", but not necessarily unitary state in SA. It could therefore be seen as a concession towards regionalism.

8. The concept of regionalism is fairly widely used in SA, e.g. it forms part of proposals ranging from those of the DP to those of the President's Council and Inkatha. It is therefore unlikely to escape the negotiations agenda. The position of homelands strengthens this assumption.

9. It seems trite to think that transition, any transition in South Africa, can take place without regional and local reconstruction. On the local level, however, the debate has already begun. Here one may refer to the Soweto Accord of September 1990 which was a landmark development ushering in the Metropolitan Chamber for Central Witwatersrand and a deal on rent boycotts between the TPA and the Soweto Peoples Delegation, representing the people of Soweto, Dobsonville and Diepmeadow. Other developments are also relevant. But somehow, the debate about regional reconstruction has been lagging behind. Perhaps, after this week in Venda the debate will begin in earnest.

10. In a sense, the ANC, and more specifically, Mr. Chris Hani, through his recent "extended visit" in Transkei, has further cemented ties between the ANC and Transkei thereby

ensuring focussed attention, also on "regionalism", especially on the role of homelands in this (i.e. ANC) scheme of things.

11. Mr. Hani's "holidays in the homelands" might also have forced the ANC to clarify its position on those homelands not subscribing to the Constitutional Guidelines or the Freedom Charter. Three immediately come to mind: KwaZulu, Qwaqwa and Bophuthatswana. There may be others as well.

12. But these issues, however interesting they may be, are peripheral to the details and to the options. Here are some possibilities:

(a) retention of the status quo, i.e. maintaining sovereign status and still co-operating with other sovereign entities through Secosaf, and remaining a full member of the SA Development Bank, etc. However, not all these institutions (notably Secosaf) may survive regional reconstruction. Their functions may persist, but role and forms are bound to change;

(b) redefining relationships with South Africa as one of bilateral association, e.g. as in the cases of Monaco (and France), Lichtenstein (and Switzerland) or San Marino (and Italy). Usually this is done through treaties and are very specific;

(c) being incorporated into a multilateral co-operation framework through confederal membership, i.e. retaining sovereignty, but sharing the same citizenship and nationality with the rest. Membership is usually voluntary and can be terminated at any time. For this reason, confederations usually don't last very long since they either break-up into separate entities again, or as is more often the case, they federate closer into the structures of the dominant state;

(d) being incorporated into a single, federal structure on the basis of one-state, one-nation, and presumably one central budget. Although regional "sovereignty" is inconsistent with this model, "autonomy" is the essence of federalism; usually in the form of cantons, provinces, states, länder, etc. There are two varieties here, the decentralised model such as in Switzerland, Germany and the USA, where the powers of central governments are circumscribed; and the centralised federalisms, such as in Canada (and I think Nigeria) where the powers of the regional governments are circumscribed. This is a case of administrative decentralisation, rather than of political devolution; and finally

(e) incorporation into a unitary state. This is the old ANC policy, presumably still the policy of the PAC and Azapo. However, even here there are two varieties: unitary states with regionalism and localism (e.g. France and Botswana) or unitary states without regionalism or localism (many African models fit into this pattern). Virtually all socialist, and previously, all Marxist states in Africa, are or were unitary states without institutionalised localism. This highly centralised model has now failed completely throughout Africa, and presumably everywhere else. The ANC appears to have moved away from this model, if indeed, it ever subscribed to it.

13. The theme, and design of this conference, are aimed at those very issues. But whatever the options, the background is important. These are the "major forces" guiding the rules of the game; setting the parameters for the players.

\* total regional integration exists between the TBVC states, the rest of South Africa, and even the BLS states, constitutionally further afield (implying "regional"

infrastructures, transportation and the regional dominance of SA, etc.);

\* that constitutionally-speaking, the TBVC states formed an integral part of the Union of South Africa until the sixties when they were given greater autonomy under the apartheid designs of Malan, Verwoerd and Vorster. In a sense, therefore, homelands are new, and actually South African;

\* they are virtually completely dependent economically, and financially, on South Africa, i.e. without RSA budgetary assistance they will all perish, but also

\* there is the undeniable legacy of separate security and administrative structures that exist in all TBVC states today. To quote Van Zyl Slabbert again: "They represent rare areas of bureaucratic expertise in regions that will be in great need of administrative care during and after transition". Johan Graaff puts it even stronger. He writes: "Enige toekomstige Suid-Afrikaanse regering wat selfs halfpad verbind is tot swart ekonomiese opheffing sal die bestaande infrastruktuur nie net moet behou nie, maar dit selfs moet uitbrei." (Die Suid-Afrikaan, Augustus 1990).

14. Economically and financially the problems of restructuring are daunting. Considering the following list of items randomly selected from the debate now taking place in South Africa: the degree of national and regional state control over the economy; implications for budget-making in the NSA; the questions of taxation (e.g. Ciskei has a liberalised tax system; the others not), monopolies, profits, privatisation, minimum wages and last, but not least, affirmative action, especially on land ownership and civil service recruitment. Will all these things also apply to homelands?

This list seems endless. The question, however, is whether the TCV leaders have given them serious attention. If not, this conference hopes to make a modest contribution to that debate.

It may be noted that the conference proceedings have been designed around these questions. However, it should not be inferred that the organisers intended to manipulate the programme into any given direction.

As indicated earlier, there is ample scope for regional variations and for different levels of autonomy within and without the boundaries of any future design. But more immediate issues come to the fore, issues pertaining to the negotiations about NSA:

\* How do we know that all these people all want to be part of an undivided or united South Africa?: It therefore seems imperative that this question be solved through democratic procedures and mechanisms aimed at measuring the consent of the governed. It is my contention that a coup d'etat, however well-intended in the past, or however popularly supported in any, or all of the homelands now under military rule, is no substitute for true democratic expression. In other words, those TBVC leaders not popularly elected (i.e. the TCV states) are perhaps morally obliged to consult their people in referendums or elections, as no doubt, other South Africans will do, say in 1993. Homelands might do it earlier in order to get clear mandates;

\* But I suppose all roads lead back to Damascus. So, the assumption may be made that all TBVC states will, sooner or later, be returned to the fold. In fact, even the constellation/confederation debate of the late seventies and early eighties, may, in the words of Deon Geldenhuys have meant "to bring together what apartheid has put usunder", but failed to materialise. This time however, the zeitgeist now



unleashed by Uncle Gorby, Uncle Sam, Oom FW and Neef Nelson, is perhaps more serious and has a stronger imperative underpinning it;

\* Beware the pitfalls however. There are many, the most notable of which are negotiations itself and the positioning of TBVC states during this process. For example:

\* how will the TBVC states get involved, through voluntary participation, ANC persuasion, or will they abstain in order to "wait and see" the outcome: Too little, too late? Sooner or later? Remember, they are not involved yet;

\* then the question: what is in their best interests, to try to shape the process as it goes along - in their own right, on the side of the ANC or on the side of the state? The answer is ideally in their own right; but in practice the choice suggests only two options: either on the side of the ANC, presumeably and attractive option for Eastern Capers - or on the side of the state, presumeably an option for the more "conservative" ones and for the establishment forces, assisting in counteracting radical outbidding by more militant participants to the left;

\* how will TBVC residents interpret their interests in the context of full South African universal suffrage: Nationally, regionally, or ethnically? Ciskei and Transkei are a case in point: Are all the Fingo and Rarabe paramount chiefs (Ciskei) and all the Pondo and Tembu paramount chiefs (Transkei) now suddenly happy with one another? Are they, for example, equally enthusiastic about inclusivity, free for all competition, non-racialism and that democratic thing called the rule of law? To be sure, TBVC legacy has been somewhat authoritarian, not very tolerant, sometimes unrepresentative, often paternalistic, but always dependent on SA. Can they and Soweto and Soekmekaar really harmonise

their interests? The psychological adaptations away from this should not be underestimated.

Therefore, what are the chances for liberalisation, let alone democratisation within the TBVC states itself? For example, are the TBVC states ready to partake in the imminent culture of multi-ethnic parties (of the ANC variety), or of those that the National Party is now apparently committed to create? Or are the "parties" of the TBVC states destined to remain ethnically frozen as they now seem to be? Or are the TBVC parties only going to consider coalitions, and if so, with whom? With one another, with the ANC, with the NP, with Inkatha, with the CP (an option for the partitionists among blacks), or with regional neighbours? Somehow it seems that this debate, and the soul-searching that goes with it, have only just begun. It must go much further.

Now, if this conference can take these debates any further, then the effort has been worthwhile. Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana must be congratulated on his initiative. He is our host, he conceived of this conference, he thought of the idea of all of us talking about the future of our region. It is my pleasure, and honour, to have put together the programme.

May we have a very fruitful stay here in the Land of Legend: Venda.

Thank you.