

For the record

The recent release of the taped discussion between the State President, Mr P W Botha, and the then leader of the Progressive Federal Party, Dr Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, highlighted their various perceptions of the political situation in South Africa. Certain statements were made relating to Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and, also, the ANC Mission-in-Exile.

In view of the remarks made by Mr Botha and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, Chief Buthelezi (who was on an official visit to West Germany at the time) was asked by the press to respond.

In a part of their taped conversation Mr Botha told Dr Slabbert "confidentially" that he had a long talk with Chief Buthelezi last year. He expressed concern to Dr Slabbert that Chief Buthelezi would not speak to him.

The transcript continued.

Mr Botha: "I'll tell you what Buthelezi's trouble is. Buthelezi's trouble is that he wishes to talk alone, but he does not want to talk with other Black people."

Dr Slabbert: "His problem lies on a symbolic level. You see Buthelezi and the ANC are eating one another up. I mean, they are going for one another, it is quite unbelievable."

Mr Botha: "Yes that is all they are doing."

Dr Slabbert: "Buthelezi said his big problem is that if Mandela dies in jail then he (Buthelezi) will become the first Muzorewa (Zimbabwe Prime Minister after Ian Smith) in South Africa and he knows it.

"He is afraid of that. But it is not the only thing that scares him. At the moment the ANC is waging a terribly strong anti-Buthelezi campaign and why? Precisely for the reasons you gave. The ANC want to be the first bull in the kraal. And Buthelezi wants to be the only bull in the kraal."

Mr Botha: "And they can't."

Dr Slabbert: "They can't. I said to both of them, there are many bulls in the kraal than you are aware of. It is not a question of you are going to call the shots and everybody must listen ..."

The transcript also revealed Dr Slabbert having told the ANC they were doing the wrong thing by encouraging the "education after liberation" campaign while Chief Buthelezi was keeping children in school in KwaZulu.

In 10 years Zulu children would be educated while others would be unemployable.

The following is Chief Buthelezi's reply to the conversation which he telexed from Germany:



Chief M.G. Buthelezi



Dr F. Van Zyl Slabbert

The release of the taped conversation between the State President Mr P W Botha and Dr Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, has far reaching implications.

I must, at the outset, assume that the information conveyed to me here in Germany is correct. If it is, then I find it most distasteful and extremely disturbing.

While I am working day and night to implore Western leaders and others to help South Africa work towards a negotiated future in which there will be power-sharing, peaceful change and national reconciliation, I learn to my distress that back home I am being stabbed in the back.

I can only regretfully conclude — after studying the text of the taped conversation relating to myself — that Mr P W Botha and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert were acting like two Whites pontificating about an uppity, difficult, kaffir.

This is a matter of deep concern to me. Not only on a personal level but because the widesread publicity given to the transcript of the tape will alienate a great many Blacks — including of course my own supporters.

I am now forced to reply to the statements in the hope that true perspective is given to my own stand which was greatly distorted by Mr P W Botha and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert.

Their utterances could not have come at a worst time. Mr Botha and Dr Slabbert have, in fact, done a veritable hatchet job on me. I have no illusions about the world of politics and — in particular — politics in South Africa. But this time I am feeling betrayal as I have never felt before.

If Whites are seeking Blacks with whom they can negotiate and share power, this then is an object lesson on how not to go about it. I am truly appalled at the lack of statemanship revealed in the conversation. I am aghast at the lack of understanding of my own position.

I have no doubt that the ANC Mission-in-Exile are astounded at their good fortune in having men like the State President and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert adding grist to their anti-Buthelezi propaganda mill.

Let me then give my replies to the points raised about me by Mr Botha and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert:

The State President implies that he had a "long, confidential, discussion ..." with me last year.

As releasing taped conversations seems to be the vogue, I earnestly request him to make public our talks.

I don't negotiate behind the backs of my people. In my first official talks with the State President last year (my first in four years) I unsuccessfully pleaded with him to issue a statement of intent on power-sharing. This is why I went to talk to him. The facts of the matter are that the State President and I did not communicate during those four long years of silence because I made it clear to him that I would not keep any of our talks a secret.

According to Mr Botha and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, "Buthelezi's problem is that he wants to be the only bull in the kraal ..." They accuse me of wanting to talk alone and of not wanting to talk with "other Black people ..."

This amazes me. Consider the following:

1. It was I who took an Inkatha delegation to London in 1979 to meet with the leaders of the ANC Mission-in-Exile.

2. It is on record that I have written to Mr Oliver Tambo requesting a meeting anywhere in the world. This still

stands. I have not had a reply from Mr Tambo. I harbour no bitterness whatsoever towards the ANC Mission-in-Exile.

3. I formed the South African Black Alliance embracing Black and non-African leaders.

4. I invited the President of the United Democratic Front, Mr Archie Gumede, to Ulundi for talks — which the UDF turned down.

5. In spite of Bishop Desmond Tutu's obvious animosity towards me (confirmed in numerous public and private statements which I have at my disposal) I readily accepted an invitation late last year from the Right Rev. Michael Nuttal to attend a "reconciliation" meeting in Durban with Bishop Tutu and other church leaders. Bishop Tutu continues to denigrate me at

Foreign Affairs who put the screws on Chief Matanzima and torpedoed the proposed talks by pointing out that having taken so-called independence, he was threatening various agreements between South Africa and the Transkei.

8. I am abused and threatened by my opponents for the very reason that I preach the politics of negotiation with White South Africa. Time after time I have asked that the State President be given the chance to grasp the thorny nettle of reform. I have made it clear that I am ready to negotiate. Is it too much to ask that I insist on an agenda for talks? I am not going to discredit myself and betray Black South Africa by involving myself in bodies like the Black Advisory Committee, the Special Cabinet Committee, the Non-

Statutory Negotiating Forum and now the National Statutory Council, if I cannot have proof that they will have a specific utility.

9. Way back in 1973 I was the main architect of a conference in which various Black leaders got together and pledged their opposition to so-called independence for KwaZulu, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and so on. We all know who kept their promises on that score.

10. From the days of Prime Minister John Vorster through to the State President Mr P W Botha, I have pleaded privately and publicly for the release of Dr Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. I have made it clear that any negotiations about the future of South Africa will have little productiveness without their participation.

11. I initiated the Buthelezi commission with the purpose of working towards a united South Africa by showing how power could be shared in the Natal KwaZulu region. Talks in this regard are well advanced.

12. I opened the citizenship of KwaZulu to all Black South Africans. Inkatha is a national cultural liberation movement of more than one million Zulu and non-Zulu members.

Are these then the actions of a man who "... wants to talk alone ... Who does not want to talk together with other Black people ... Who wants to be the only bull in the kraal?"

I am on record both in print and in numerous television interviews as having stated, quite categorically, that I do not aspire to be the first Black



The State President, Mr P.W. Botha

every opportunity.

6. Inkatha, under my leadership, was instrumental in forming the Convention Alliance Movement together with the Progressive Federal Party. We then withdrew from the steering committee with the aim of distancing ourselves in order that other Black organisations would, hopefully, come forward.

7. When Chief Kaizer Matanzima approached me and said he wanted to speak with me as a "concerned South African" I put my head on a block and agreed. It was the department of

leader of South Africa.

I have said, and I repeat again, that if asked I will work under any democratically elected Black leader and I have mentioned Dr Nelson Mandela by name.

My role as an elected and traditional leader in South Africa is directed solely at gaining political rights for Black South Africans.

The State President talks about Zulus having "political rights ..." This is the language of apartheid. The very language he has declared "outdated". The reason this country is in turmoil is because Blacks do not have political rights. And nothing is going to correct this situation until Blacks have those rights.

And now I must get down to the next item of misinformation — that I allegedly fear that should I become

South Africa's first Black leader, I will follow in the footsteps of Zimbabwe's Bishop Abel Muzorewa. And so on and so on.

This is utter balderdash and, for the life of me, I cannot understand why Dr Van Zyl Slabbert plunged such a vicious barb into my back.

It is a pity that ordinary South Africans are not able to read the texts of African National Congress radio broadcasts from Lusaka and elsewhere.

If they could they would see that Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, who talks of this so glibly, is merely repeating ANC propaganda. The ANC has mounted a carefully orchestrated campaign of denigration against me and he has fallen for it.

Dr Van Zyl is a son of Afrikanerdom. I am a descendent of Zulu war-

riors — King Shaka, King Dingane, King Mpande, King Cetshwayo and King Dinuzulu. If he imagines that I could play the role of a so-called "Muzorewa", then he has not even begun to understand who the Zulu people are.

Finally, I am shocked and alarmed that Dr Van Zyl Slabbert should pit other Blacks against the Zulu people in such careless conversation. In this regard I am referring to his statement about children in KwaZulu attending school (while others elsewhere are not) and the prospect that, in the future, the Zulus will be "the only educated people ..."

It is unbecoming of a man of his intellect to indulge in this kind of divisive politics. Remarks such as this could have a disastrous backlash.

Will the West help?

At a meeting with top British bankers in London early this year, Chief Buthelezi said South Africa needed the "fullest possible" industrial development if political victories against apartheid were to be made meaningful.

He said the country's present crisis had, in fact, been exacerbated by exploitative, politically inactive businessmen who had, in the past, been more interested in profits than social justice.

It was in this light that the ANC Mission-in-Exile saw capitalism, and trans-national corporations in particular, as being at the root of the problem.

"They argue very fiercely that the country's economy must be destroyed and brought under the control of a future government by nationalising major undertakings," he said.

"I argue very differently. I say that whether we like it or not, the free enterprise system is the most efficient system mankind has devised with which to translate the kind of wealth with which South Africa is blessed into

benefits for the people."

Massive economic development was needed to cope with the vast unemployment and under-employment and to enable the country to salvage depressed areas from the ravages of hunger, ignorance and disease.

South Africa would be almost entirely dependent, for the foreseeable future, on the free inflow of capital, managerial skills and technology from the West.

"If South Africa abandons the free enterprise system, that inflow will be drastically reduced and there will be an unmanageable spread of poverty and deprivation, which apartheid had anchored, for the majority of the people.

"My message to the international business community is that, if they perceive what I am saying to be true, then they must follow the lead (now) given by South African businessmen themselves and act in recognition of the fact that the present crisis in South Africa demands the conjoining of political forces..."

Enquiries with regard to assisting KwaZulu's development efforts can be made to:

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