

focus on Mandela

SOWETAN: Sir, I would like some clarity on the present crisis between the ANC and Government and I would appreciate it if you could define it - especially how it differs from that which everyone called an ultimatum which the ANC gave the Government last April.

MANDELA: The crisis is very simple to define. It is essentially a clash between a minority of about 15 percent of the population which wants to retain the monopoly of political power and a majority of 85 percent which is determined to destroy that monopoly today, not tomorrow.

That is the essence of the crisis.

We went to Codesa II with the intention of agreeing with the Government on the immediate installation of an interim government of national unity.

The Government blocked that development, because it wants, not only the white minority, but the National Party in particular, to remain ruling after a democratic system has been introduced.

That is the essence of the crisis... And then there is the question of the violence in the country, violence in which Mr (FW) de Klerk is implicated.

Now ... we have sent demands to the Government to say that before we resume talks, they must comply with those demands.

We are not prepared to go back to Codesa until those demands have been met. There is no question of abandoning peaceful talks - generally and Codesa in particular.

But Codesa will not meet until the Government is prepared to negotiate in good faith. That is the issue facing the country.

It is not easy, therefore, it is difficult for me to say what is going to happen tomorrow because this depends on the response of the Government to our demands.

We are certainly not prepared to meet them until they have complied with those demands.

There's a question which has just come to mind - How are you tied to those demands? I am reflecting on last April's demands where you gave them a set of demands and talks resumed afterwards even though, if I remember correctly, the Government did not deliver everything you demanded. Will talks resume if they don't comply 100 percent this time?

That must depend on the response that they make. We have submitted 14 demands. And we have insisted that they should comply with each and every one of those.

Whether there is going to be any change from insistence that they comply with those demands will depend on the nature of their response.

But we would not have submitted those demands if we did not want them to be complied

Just four days before his 74th birthday on July 18, ANC president Mr Nelson Mandela talks one-to-one with Sowetan Political Correspondent **Ismail Lagardien** on the country's political crisis and suggests that there is hope yet.



Nelson Mandela ... suggesting that there is no reason to give up hope.

with.

I think you are mistaken in thinking that we lifted our ultimatum (of last April) without the Government doing anything.

We demanded the dismissal of Mr Adriaan Vlok (then Minister of Law and Order) and Mr Magnus Malan (then Minister of Defence).

They removed them from their portfolios.

We demanded the banning of dangerous weapons.

We demanded the phasing out of hostels from where this violence comes. They agreed to that, made a clear undertaking.

We demanded the setting up of a commission of inquiry into violence. They did that.

So it is not correct to say that they did not comply with the conditions.

So, if they do not comply with the 14 demands, mass action would also

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continue besides the fact that there will be no further negotiations? And in the same context, other pressures such as the armed struggle and the sanctions campaign - are they things of the past? I would say so. We have suspended armed action. And whether armed action would be returned to is going to depend on future developments.

What is clear is that there are two ways of addressing problems: there is one that includes persuasion, discussion, criticism. We are busy with that and that is what we believe in.

We initially went into violence because we were convinced that this method could bring about a democratic South Africa.

If that is the position ... if the ANC returned to the armed struggle, then history would be repeated, because we are not prepared to sit back and fold our arms.

But we hope that that will never occur, because we believe that we have the muscle without resorting to violence to induce the Government to negotiate in good faith.

There have been people who, over the past months and weeks - we might as well call them by their names... the PAC and Azapo believe that they have been vindicated by the apparent collapse of Codesa. What are your views on this perception? Has Codesa failed in the manner they said it would?

That is an argument, you see, that comes from people who are not really involved with any constructive and positive measures of solving our problems in South Africa.

Firstly, there are 19 political parties involved in Codesa. The PAC withdrew because their point of view, without exception, was regarded as ridiculous. And they had to withdraw.

We have never had a romantic approach to negotiations. We have known that there would be hiccups, that there would be problems.

But we are convinced that this is the way to a democratic South Africa.

And already we have made enormous achievements from which Azapo and the PAC have benefited without doing anything.

We discussed with the Government and eventually agreed that they should release political prisoners. The PAC had no share at all in those talks.

We demanded of the Government that exiles should come back. They are coming back...

The PAC and Azapo have made no contribution at all as far as that is concerned. They have benefited by proxy.

We said we wanted an interim government, we wanted a constituent assembly.

The Government has now conceded, al-

though they are now blocking the way towards the achievement of these, but we are exerting tremendous pressure in this country, both by talking as well as by action.

Tell me just one action that has been started by the PAC and Azapo in this country over the last two years?

You and persons in your organisation have spoken in broad terms of international and foreign involvement in the country as monitors, observers, throughout the negotiation process, but more specially in the violence in the country. What is the exact role you see for organisations such as the United Nations, the European Community, the Organisation of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth?

Well, it is important to have monitors, a monitoring group in the country, to see for themselves what is happening.

Because many people are not actually alive to what is happening in the country.

Therefore, the presence of a monitoring group from the various countries and various world bodies is of extreme importance.

I had called about three months ago for an international peace force to be deployed in the unrest areas. I still think that would be a good development. But short of that we would like a mission, goodwill missions, to monitor the situation here in the country.

Mr Joe Slovo mentioned it once and I believe Mr Cyril Ramaphosa did too, that Codesa could be restructured ... What I do recall them saying was that the actual forum should be a lot more transparent, a lot more open to media scrutiny, so the public could actually have an insight into exactly what it was that was happening inside Codesa. Do you see this happening?

We have to be careful with the word restructure. Because it might convey the impression that the present form of Codesa could be broken down and a new organisation, a new Codesa, is going to be built up - there is nothing of the sort.

We have no such programme at all, as the African National Congress, nor has the Communist Party, nor Cosatu, although some people have said so.

But as organisations, as official policy, we have no programme to restructure Codesa.

But this suggestion that the Press must be allowed - that we welcome. It was a proposal that came from Joe Slovo. We welcome that, because that would enable the public to know what is going on ... If you call that restructuring, then off course we are in favour of it.

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