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of formal organisations & Press meetings*

PRESS CONFERENCE WITH PAC DELEGATION

MARCH 28th 1991

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GORA EBRAHIM

Well what we basically wanted to do was just to give you a briefing on the visit of the President here to the UK. First is that the initiative to invite the PAC delegation led by the President was taken by the British government themselves, and according to the common procedure this was a Grade One visit in that all the expenses are met by the British authorities. The second important aspect is that they invited us unconditionally. As you know it has been for some time the policy of the govt here to insist that they will only talk to liberation organisations that suspend the armed struggle, who are not involved in armed struggle. Of course they tried that comparison(?) we told them that you'd have to wait until after liberation to invite the PAC delegation. In that case they then thought it over and they didn't insist. They retreated from their position. That in itself is a political victory. The third point is this that the official Anti-Apartheid the Labour Party in this country & some other institutions always felt that there was only one organisation, that was the African National Congress. But because of the work that the British Embassy, Ambassador Renwick, and other institutions of the British government were able to see inside the country they are now convinced that the PAC is in fact a very important actor in the South African scene. At the same time they are very much concerned about that the end of the euphoria of Mandela's release. They release that not all is well. And also the SACP/ANC alliance is worrying them as well. So the President's visit has been successful in that we had the very first meeting here. The first meeting was with Lynda Chalker where the PAC position was put very clearly, particularly about 3 issues. 1 was the question of our position vis a vis the constituent assembly as opposed to the Multi Party Conference. Our position on the armed struggle and particularly the slogan 'One Settler One Bullet' and thirdly on the question of the leadership role that the PAC is playing in forming a broad based united front in the country to move the struggle forward. After that we have had meetings with journalists editors of AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL, INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY, ECONOMIST, ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT, SUNDAY TIMES, AFRICAN RESOURCE AND INFORMATION BUREAU (ARIB), BBC WORLD SERVICE, BBC FOCUS ON AFRICA, SPARE RIB, FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!, NEWSLINE, NON-STOP AGAINST APARTHEID, AFRICA ECONOMIC DIGEST. We have met the Ambassadors to the Frontline States including Nigeria, the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and the Parliamentary Committee on South Africa. We had a meeting also

with the International Institute of Strategic Studies and we pointed out that tactically and strategically they were giving the wrong information in their publication because they did not reflect what was taking place inside the country, they were trying to say that apart from the ANC there was nothing else inside the country and that all we were were a black extremist organisation. We said to them, what is extreme about the Harare Declaration or the UN Declaration? What PAC is following is what is laid down by the international community. We have made breakthrough now, destroying the old prejudices that were held against the PAC. But there is still a lot that needs to be done. The culmination of the meeting here was the meeting with Douglas Hurd (who asked the President what connection the PAC had with the City of London AA Group JAS). I think he was advised not to take on the PAC because the position of the PAC was very correct. He was not confrontational. (As well as the three points outlined above the delegation discussed with Douglas Hurd the current situation inside the country and the needs of the PAC to further the struggle, and the question of negotiations and how the PAC views them). The Lambeth Speech formed the basis of our discussions; we have said that we are ready to discuss the modalities of a Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly has international support, no one argued against the formula and no-one here argued for an All Party Conference. Lynda Chalker said that 'proven support' could be measured by 'paid up membership' but we said that we could give every body cards too, and what would that mean?

BARNEY DESAI:

I don't remember which particular meeting it was with the FO but we were asked pointedly if we would accept anything less than one person one vote and we said, categorically, no. In discussing the All Party Conference and the de Klerk proposition that any conclusions reached were subject to a white veto by way of a referendum, we said that we were not prepared to play musical chairs on the question of negotiations. That if they are a democracy they cannot have any objections to us putting forward the constituent assembly as a means of reaching a democratic solution. Insofar as the 'One Settler One Bullet' is concerned we made it quite clear that this slogan was not part of a programme of PAC that the PAC was a non-racial organisation. We gave them our definition of what an African is, which they could not find any fault with and we told them quite clearly that in our view de Klerk is resisting a constituent assembly because he firmly wishes to maintain control of the process of change within our country and we do not consider that we were going to be manipulated on a guided democracy basis. Certainly not by the interests who have been oppressing us. We indicated that we were quite prepared to give guarantees for human rights we were not prepared to protect special rights, to give protection or any sort of privilege or group rights. We are not prepared to abide by the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes for the conditional release of prisoners and the return of exiles. We

should come together and forge a strategy whereby we can now confront the enemy. That is the idea of this Patriotic Front. We feel we have a lot in common although we disagree with the ANC on the issue of the interim government but we are also hopeful that we will persuade them to forget the question of the interim government but insist on the question of the Constituent Assembly. We want the Constituent Assembly for the simple reason that we don't hope to reach a democratic solution if do not start democratically. Therefore if we now all agree that we go for an election on the basis of one person one vote in a unitary state - because this is important. We must always emphasise the issue of a unitary state because de Klerk had divided our country into small pieces. We want that done way with because you now all those people in the bantustans are our constituent assembly. We must have them brought in and fortunately for us they are also trying to break the bantustans down into pieces before we even demand. So we hope that in the final analysis they will be standing side by side with us to fight the common enemy. We say then that if an election would be conducted on the basis of one person one vote in an unitary state then whoever wins that election does not necessarily mean that he or she will now draw up a constitution alone. That is not the position because we maintain that every party that has proved to have a following through that process of election will be represented in the Constituent Assembly proportionately according to the number of votes acquired during the election. In other words the smallest party in the country. If for instance WOSA gets 2% of the vote in the country it means that WOSA will be entitled to 2% of the seats. In other words every body in the country will be represented in the Constituent Assembly because we don't want to be confronted by a situation at a later stage when people will start questioning the mandate of those who drew up the constitution. At the moment why we quarrel with the system of the APC it is because although they have not spelt it out clearly but we are told that people who are going to participate in this APC will do so on the basis of proven support & this has not been defined to us. Let us assume that by proven support they mean organisations that have card bearing members. We can easily issue cards throughout Soweto that does not necessarily mean now Soweto is turning PAC. And if that question of membership was the correct thing let us look at UDF. When UDF was at its height in our country we were told there were nothing less than 2 million members. The UDF today is no more and we assume that 2 million is spread out among ANC structures. But when ANC went to this consultative conference in December they told us that they were gunning for a membership of a million. According to the information that they disclosed they could hardly raise 150 000 members. The question is what happened to the two million. So we don't want a similar situation. We want people who voted to give a green light for others to go and draw up a constitution for our country. That is what we are working towards now. But before this happens we have decided to bring together the various political groups, that is the oppressed, the dispossessed and

making preconditions for negotiations a negotiating issue. Four weeks ago, Patricia (de Lille) and Benny Alexander went to Robben Island and had in depth consultations with the prisoners. They wanted no compromises to secure their release. The conditions for release and indemnity are obnoxious. One of the conditions is a confession to explain the 'circumstances' of the 'crime' and to indicate if there are any other offences to be taken into consideration. It is apartheid that is the crime against humanity. The PAC put forward its programme as adopted by our Congress in December. We altered nothing to suit our hosts. We put forward our programme as decided upon by our delegates. I want you to make that quite clear. There was no question of making any deals behind closed doors. That is what we eschew in the South African situation, and we are certainly not going to do so in London. We are not prepared to fetter our right of self-determination to a white veto. This makes a nonsense of serious negotiations. We think the visit has been successful in dispelling a lot of misconceptions. On the economic front we indicated that our ideology is socialist, that we did not want to hide this from any body and that we intended to make industry and wealth of the country responsive to the needs of our people. We have a situation where 95% of the country is in the hands of 5% of the people. We find that totally unacceptable. We also indicated that the land reforms were a mirage and not a reality....so basically the address that you heard from the President at Lambeth was the message that we conveyed.

PRESIDENT MAKEWU:

I am sure you want to know what is happening at home. Before we came here you will recall that we had a Congress in Jo'burg where we adopted certain resolutions and amongst those resolutions were the issue of the constituent assembly, the issue of the united front the question of violence. We are working with those. We were mandated by Congress to try to sell the issue of the Constituent Assembly. I would say we have succeeded in doing so amongst the ranks of the oppressed. The ANC is also for a Constituent Assembly, similarly with AZAPO, WOSA, it is only Inkatha who are opposed to a Constituent Assembly. We don't know the reasons but we hope in the long run that they will understand if we find time to sit down and explain to them what the position is. Because we suspect that they may fear that they may be swamped, but even so we do not understand because they claim no less than 5 million members which means that they are the biggest party in the country at the moment so we don't understand how they could quarrel with the setting up of a constituent assembly because according to their figures they would be leading according to whatever election that will be undertaken. As I say we are going to pursue this. We must see them. We want to write letters to them. We shall talk to them personally. Especially Gatsha Buthelezi and thereby we reach a conclusion. The idea of course as I have indicated is that we the oppressed, the dispossessed,

the exploited masses together as a Patriotic Front. We have spoken to the ANC on this issue. We had a meeting in Jo'burg where 4 members of the NEC of the ANC and 4 members of PAC came together and set up a committee of 3 from each body & these 6 members were charged with the task of drawing up an agenda, look for a venue, set up a date when the entire executive of these two bodies are to meet & that meeting will be taking place in 2 weeks time in Harare on the 14 April. We are hoping that after that meeting we are going to set up a committee to prepare for a bigger conference where everybody in our country except de Klerk will be invited. By de Klerk I mean all the whites won't be invited. Not because of their colour but because of the part they have played in our dispossession. We shall be inviting sport bodies, church bodies, cultural organisations, political parties including Inkatha to a bigger conference. We hope that one will be held in Cape Town and we hope it will be held not later than the 2nd week of May. I am saying this because as you all know ANC is going to hold their conference in June. They have stated & we hope they are going to keep that word and we want this conference to be held while they are still intact because we don't know what's going to happen after June. Now at that conference then we will be able to say 'de Klerk this is what everybody in our country wants'. We are aware that at the moment he is opposed to the Constituent Assembly. But, Barney, I am told that Pik Botha is not opposed to the idea of a constituent assembly. Yes according to information. But we can't bank on that. We have to chart our strategy and approach them on that position.

PATRICIA DE LILLE.

suffering because of the violence in our ly PAC members but anybody in the community. ps inside the country like the SACC, the Kagiso all these other ANC influenced bodies inside the fuse to assist the people affected by the are only prepared to assist people when its not when people are fighting amongst themselves. ooking at coming in to give assistance to these orm of soup kitchens, in the form of getting clothing and things like that because most n down the houses and people are left with only their bodies. There a big task when we get back. ady in Muncieville, near Kagiso. Some nights eople slept in the offices of the PAC & we get really involved now & set up projects. We om home videos which we brough from home.

have said that the ruling class are we must nevertheless bear in mind that the NP ranks to blacks. The NP is making a claim now. e apparatus in their hands they will dish out d for instance increase pensions. They could do ngs to bribe the electorate. We have a very nity at the moment in terms of impoverishment.

Many people are country. Not on The church grou Trust fund and country they re violence. They state violence As PAC we are l people in the f them blankets & places they bu the clothes on We started alre some of those p really eant to also brought fr

BD: Although we prevaricating, has opened its Having the stat money they coul a number of thi desperate commu

If they were to spring a surprise on us, for example to say, right we'll go for a constituent assembly tomorrow, we will find ourselves completely unprepared. We could not begin to reach out to our constituency, we have not been able to do so, because we have no resources. We believe that the Select Committee of the House of Commons is making a recommendation to set up a trust to encourage the democratic structures in the country. When & how that will come about we do not know. What our share in that will be we do not know but I will leave you with this thought that we are desperately in need of resources. The country is large. We don't have transport. We don't have enough full time organisers. We have, as I say, a vast constituency, we have the message, but we are very very short in so far as the means are concerned. The PAC needs every bit of help it can possibly get.

Jacky: The British govt is inviting de Klerk over on the 23rd April, and they invited AZAPO over in October. Do you think they are playing a brokerage role, trying to mediate and consolidate their position inside the country in order to try to preempt their being left out in the cold if an unexpected govt takes power?

BD: The British govt is showing probably the keenest interest of all foreign embassies of what is happening in our country. They are showing an interest which is consistent with the fact that they are the largest investor in our economy. And although they protest and say that everything is a matter for us they would like to see a solution along lines which would in the final analysis protect their interests. They have not invited the PAC because they like its philosophy. In other words they are not honest brokers.

GE: I would just add here to say that I believe at this particular moment I don't believe the British govt has decided as to what specific role it wants to play in putting forward certain policies or strategies or formulae. I think at this particular stage what they are doing is carrying out a kind of 'Who's Who' exercise to understand the position of each organisation, both its political programme as well as its economic programme and what will be the future of the country under them. I think this what they are basically doing at the moment.

BD: I would not use the words that they we do not consider them honest brokers by the way. They have their agenda and we have ours.

Andre: Did you meet the Labour Party?

BD: Well no, actually. We met Don Anderson in a different role, as AWEPA (Association of West European Parliaments Against Apartheid). Kaufman wasn't available. Kinnock wasn't available.

They gave us Anderson. Not one of the bright stars of the Labour Party.

Richard: Never heard of him

BD: That's an understatement. Obviously they haven't been appraised of the situation. They still have a Charterist angle.

Richard: That's not surprising because one of Neil Kinnock's claims to fame before he became an MP, or certainly when he was first a humble Member of Parliament was that he was in the Anti-Apartheid Movement & Glennys Kinnock, you know, that was the 'thing' that she did. And part of his credentials have been built on the back of solidarity. It's part of that whole sectarian tradition of supporting the ANC.

GE: What we would say is that I don't think there is at this stage a fundamental change in the Labour Party attitude towards the PAC, but at the same time, Anderson was ready to meet our people for further discussion. I think they no longer regard us as tabu as they used to do before. They wouldn't touch the PAC with a barge pole. That has been the official policy.

BD: The Labour Party government has not had a particularly good record in its dealings with the SA govt. You know how duplicitous they acted in Zimbabwe. It was Sir Patrick Gordon Walker who acted against Sir Seretse Khama when he married a white woman. Some of us will never forget the Labour Party for that kind of racism.

RR: You did, I believe, meet the Labour Party Black Sections?

BD: No we didn't

RR: They were speaking on the platform.

JS: The press in Britain have always focussed on the townships, on the township unrest. Now obviously the land reforms affect the people on the farms and in the farming areas most crucially. Do you feel that the population in the rural areas is fully represented in the ongoing debate?

CM: Which debate are you referring to! Our position on the so called land reforms. To begin with, the farms at home are different. I am what you call a peasant farmer. In other words I own no farm to begin with. I possess a number of small plots. We shall try to help them be consolidated, they are never consolidated but as you all know we were robbed by this very country (UK) in 1909 when they set up the Union Act for South Africa. According to that act all powers of legislation were given to the settlers that we are confronted with today. The Act says that all members of the legislative will be British subjects of European descent. In other words cutting us off completely. So when these land acts came into being in 1913 and

1936 it was an all white business and even today that is the position. we are not consulted. To put it simply in 1936 when they removed us completely, even the few that the vote in the Cape, it was said that in order to make up this 13% that is said to be owned by us they were to buy 7 million ha from white farmers to add to what is called trust land, The 7 million ha were bought from white farmers but only 5 million ha were added to the trust lands...what happened to the 2 million ha that was also bought..it was leased back to white farmers. That is still the position. So when they talk of repeal, what they mean is that the 87% that is owned by whites is not going to be taken away from the whites and handed over to the African people. What will happen is that we are going to be told that from now on if we happen to have money we can buy from the whites- that is if they are willing to sell. And if they decide to sell they are going to sell at exorbitant prices. Eg ..in order to own a farm today in our country you must have nothing less than R600 000. And that is the smallest farm you can buy. And a man like myself can hardly raise a hotel bill. I have a problem here now. ..it is worsening our position..13% of land is possessed by Africans. It means that under this set up it means that land can be bought from us. We have no title over that land. If they can talk nicely to a chief, that land can be sold back to the whites. In short the African labourers who are on the farms today have no future, similarly with those who are in the cities because as you know under these removals they are just removed without compensation. That is the position.

BD: I think your question went a bit further. You wanted to know to what extent they had been mobilised.

JS: Yes, the squatters, the people who aren't represented in the British press. To what extent has PAC mobilised in those areas.

CM: That is fertile ground for us. We are well represented in the rural areas. Where these people are now. But as Barney indicated earlier, we are hamstrung by resources. We are finding it difficult to reach each and every corner because of lack of resources.

BD: In that respect I have some concrete proposals to put forward to the branch and support groups. You know that 70% of our people are functionally illiterate. That means that most of them can't read an English newspaper or even the vernacular newspaper. Our 1st step would have to be audio-visual. In this respect it would be very helpful if people here would work on projects such as videos on the land question, how the dispossession occurred, how the land ought to be used. They could work on cassettes translated into the different languages. These things we could play on cheap cassettes and where we have electricity to have meetings. The dept of information would like to set up a video unit to train people

and if we can get
useful. A record
came in

and if we can get any expertise on this side that would be most useful. A recent survey, suspicious as I am of these surveys came up with the information that at least 50% of the rural people have not heard of Nelson Mandela. They don't have electricity, they don't have radios, they don't have TV, they are functionally illiterate. We haven't got the organisers in the field because we don't have resources. We can't get to them very often because we don't have the transport. You can see the enormity of our organisational problems.

DR (FRFI): Little has changed in the country except for the unbanning of the organisations. But in terms of the propaganda war, de Klerk is winning. Have you any confidence in the situation. Is there a possibility of unity so that you can change the balance of forces, especially with regard to the FLS?

CM: Unity is our mandate. The ANC Consultative Conference Resolution called for unity among the oppressed. At that Conference of theirs there was no mention of the All Party Conference that Mandela is preaching today. When I was asked by Mord and Chalker I said that the All Party Conference is not an ANC position, but Mandela's position. The Executive Committee never addressed this, it was only after a secret meeting between Mandela & de Klerk that the ANC pushed the All Party Conference. We are confident now because all organisations have called for unity. WOSA, Unity Movement, AZAPO responded favourably. We are hoping the ANC & PAC will speak with one voice in the Constituent Assembly; the issues of the Interim Government and the All Party Conference are points of difference; they will be on the agenda at Harare and we will coalesce round the points we have in common. Nothing has changed for our people, things have worsened. At Klerksdorp, the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and Inkatha held a joint rally against the violence; there was a lull, but the violence did not come to an end. Ask them why they are fighting, they don't know. Zulus and Xhosas have been living together in Jo'burg for a long time with no problems; therefore there must be a third force. The killers do not say a word as they kill. After Angola, South Africa started to bring in FNLA mercenaries; along with Koevoet, Askaris - rejects from the ANC & PAC - these are the professional killers.

FRFI: If the ANC goes ahead with the All Party Conference, without AZAPO, PAC, WOSA or the Unity Movement, can they carry it through.

CM: I have a feeling that they cannot do this so easily, against their own followers. Mandela got no thanks at the Congress. There is dissent within the ANC and unless they can convince their own it will be difficult for them. On the 1st February march in Cape Town there were ANC banners addressing the PAC accusation of ANC, and saying 'No retreat from the

Constituent Assembly'. These were not our banners, they were ANC members.

Newsline: Why is the UK govt willing to talk now?

CM: They cannot ignore the facts. Ambassador Renwick is working hard; they will not be misled by the Press. They have intelligence in the townships saying 'You might be backing the wrong horse'

Newsline: The PAC position is that apartheid must be eradicated. Is the primacy of the armed struggle still your position?

CM: We admitted we are puzzled by the situation in the townships. The ANC has suspended the armed struggle and Inkatha has advocated non-violence, yet they are the ones who are fighting. I cannot say that we are not fighting. We have to defend ourselves. What de Klerk is doing was not imposed by the PAC. We were left out of the Harare Declaration. But we never quarrelled with this or the UN. These set out actions for de Klerk to lead to a climate conducive to negotiations. We will not unilaterally suspend the armed struggle. When he withdraws his men to the barracks then we can order a ceasefire.

ARIB: I would like to ask about the PAC economic policy and the relation between PAC and the Labour Movement. You are NACTU aligned; are you expanding to incorporate different unions and non-unionised workers?

CM: When PAM was formed in December 1989, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the executive of PAM were trade unionists from NACTU. The Secretary for Labour was in SACWU (Chemical Workers Union). Although NACTU has recently adopted an official position of non-alignment, there is a relationship between PAC & NACTU. Our economic document sets out our position.

ARIB: Azanyu members were not happy with certain positions. Is this resolved?

BD: That was the discussion document that was circulated.

CM: Democracy has a tendency to be abused. Some people are questioning the Conference, there is some dissent.

ARIB: Will the mining corporations be private or state owned?

CM: You can't reconcile socialism and capitalism. We are socialists. I am not always happy with state intervention; bureaucracy takes over leaving out the masses. You have to be careful. We have seen state capitalism (Europe), we are not going to sell our people bankrupt policies. Ours is a caring socialism against a backdrop of African reality.

SOCIALLY

Jacky: Do you see a role for the UN or the Commonwealth in the election process?

GE: The UN recognises the PAC which has observer status. Our fundamental task there is to propagate the legitimate struggle of our people to utilise the opportunity to get the international community to take a position. For example the arms embargo after Soweto. Since 1976 the South African seat in the General Assembly has been vacant. We use the UN to promote and project our struggle, and we failed to get the UN to adopt mandatory comprehensive sanctions because of the US and UK veto. Britain is at the forefront of the call to lift sanctions. The Consensus Declaration calls for sanctions until a constitution is in place. Championing anti-sanctions is violating an international document. The Commonwealth was responsible for the Eminent Persons Group; I understand there may be a new EPG. However, the Commonwealth was also responsible for the Bahamas Resolution on the unbanning of the organisations, the release of prisoners and the return of exiles, and at Kuala Lumpur there was support for the Harare Declaration. I met the Sec Gen of the UN and told him of his responsibility to ensure the preconditions are met by the regime. He agreed and called the South African Ambassador to the UN to tell him. We have not worked out if we want them to play a mediating role. They have a formula and they must see it is implemented.

BD: We would insist on some mechanisms for free & fair elections. In that respect we leave our options open regarding the OAU, the UN and the Commonwealth.

FRFI: What will happen on April 30th?

BD: They will have to concede. The US Sanctions Act demands it. The external leadership must be allowed back unconditionally.

FRFI: What are the prospects for a peaceful change without compromising on your principles?

GE: It is not the case that if the April 30th deadline is met it will be a greenlight for the ANC. The Constituent Assembly was a PAC idea, and there is a growing demand for it. On the 1st February, more than 1/4 million people marched for a Constituent Assembly. There is a Patriotic Conference of the Oppressed in May and the June Summit of the OAU to come also.

FRFI: Then the ANC will abandon its strategy and not go for 'talks about talks'.

GE: You must distinguish between the ANC and Mandela.

FRFI: The ANC must survive. It cannot go against its membership.

BD: We asked the ANC what was the purpose of the All Party Conference. Is it to sidetrack from the Constituent Assembly? Slovo said that the APC was not a substitute for the Patriotic Front or the Constituent Assembly, they are committed to a Constituent Assembly. South Africa is in deep crisis; a settlement has been demanded by vested interests.

AAPRP: Has there been a debate about the armed struggle in the PAC. Do some people wish to give up the armed struggle?

CM: We know of no PAC members carrying guns wishing to lay them down.

Afterwards I spoke to the President and asked him about the FLS attitude to the armed struggle. He said there were 'no problems', that PM Mwinzi of Tanzania and President Museveni of Uganda were supportive. The bantustans were strong PAC areas and Hani in the Transkei was not a factor.