

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu, South Africa

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
Lawrence Eagleburger, Acting Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Robert C. Frasure, NSC Director for African Affairs (Notetaker)

Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister
Mbonginkosi Amos Ngema, Private Secretary
Dr. Sipo Mzimela, Inkatha Freedom Party Coordinator to the U.S.
Ben Skosana, Inkatha Freedom Party UK Representative

DATE, TIME June 20, 1991, 12:10 - 1:10 p.m.
AND PLACE: Old Family Dining Room

The President: I want to emphasize that this is a working lunch. So we have a chance to both eat and learn. (U)

Earlier we discussed a number of things. We discussed Mandela. Chief Buthelezi has known him forever. We agreed he is a decent, honorable man. But we both have reservations about the ANC. I was concerned by the position they took during the war. I was disappointed by it. (U)

We talked about sanctions, and I know his views. (U)

There are five conditions in the bill. Four have been met. When the fifth condition is met, I will lift sanctions. (U)

My view is that it is best that we join with others on this. De Klerk has come a long way. We want to work with him. But I want your assessment of the situation. (U)

You have a lot of respect here for you on this side of the table. (U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Declassify on: OADR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
8/21/2009

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

Chief Buthelezi: It's a privilege to be here. (U)

You have covered our relations with Mandela. I spoke recently with Mandela on the phone. He wanted us to sort out a problem the ANC was having in organizing a branch in an area of KwaZulu. Concerning his May ultimatum, I objected to his attack on the IFP. (Ø)

The ANC Secretary General has said we should meet next month after the July 3-6 ANC conference. Tambo may step down at that meeting. (Ø)

The President: Is Tambo handicapped now as a result of his stroke? Will he step down? What will happen to him? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. He suffers from a paralysis on his right side. It is an important question. Mandela is committed to negotiations. Others in the ANC are not. (Ø)

The President: If you could anoint a leader for the ANC, who would it be? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: I would go with Mandela. (Ø)

The President: Will he have to compromise with the people on his left? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: He may have to do so. The left has great influence. Half of the ANC National Executive are card carrying members of the SACP. (Ø)

The President: Are there Whites in the SACP? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. Joe Slovo who is a Colonel in the KGB. (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Will SACP influence be reduced or is it always going to be a problem? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: Slovo still believes in communism. He just thinks it wasn't put into practice the right way in the Soviet Union. (Ø)

Mr. Skosana: It still has an appeal to young people in South Africa. (U)

The President: There is a lot of frustration here too among young people, especially about jobs. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Does communism have an appeal to the young people in your movement? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: No, not so much. We preach to our people that they must help themselves. (U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The President: Tell us about the violence problem. Our hearts ache when we see this. The ANC blames it all on de Klerk. That's just not fair. What must be done about it? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: The violence now in South Africa is endemic. It is very worrying. A culture of violence is being created by the ANC focus on the armed struggle. Some of them still think they can shoot their way into power. (Ø)

It is a different situation from Angola or Mozambique. The Whites in South Africa are indigenous. (Ø)

Mandela still talks about being "a government in waiting." The other day Mandela in a speech at Stellenbosch talked about "when we take power." People didn't like that. (Ø)

One must question them on that. (U)

They wanted all of the Chief Ministers to queue up behind Mandela. I wouldn't do that. They think we must hold on to their coattails. They see me as their biggest obstacle. (Ø)

The President: How can they discount your numbers? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: We have about 2,000,000 in the IFP. They have about 500,000. But it is complicated. (U)

I am disturbed that Mandela sees de Klerk as White. He said to me once that de Klerk "won't let us use our numbers." He wants to go on the basis of race. I cannot do that. I have White, Indian, and Colored members of the IFP. (U)

Mandela talks of a "Patriotic Front" but I won't fall into line. (U)

Mr. Skosana: The violence is designed to pressure us. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. We have ANC documents which described us a "counter-revolutionaries." (Ø)

Mr. Gates: Has outside support especially from the USSR for the ANC diminished? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. (U)

Mr. Gates: Slovo and Castro must be the last communists. (U)

The President: And Mengistu too. Where is he now? (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: In Harare. (U)

Mr. Skosana: The ANC is also tied up with Libya. (Ø)

The President: Yes. I raised that with Mandela. He said he has to stick with old friends, didn't he, Brent? (U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

General Scowcroft: He claimed the people who supported him the past had to be recognized. (U)

Mr. Skosana: What happened to the Libyan money which was supposed to go to the ANC? (Ø)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: It is in a NY Bank account, frozen. They transferred it through American Express. (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: That will teach them a lesson. (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: It won't be released to them (U)

The President: What about de Klerk's travels? Is he trying to reach out to Africa? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. He was in Kenya and in touch with Nigeria. (U)

The President: That's good, isn't it? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. It's excellent. (U)

The President: Does the ANC object to the travel, to the lifting of sanctions. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes, they do. They particularly objected when Poland established relations. (Ø)

The President: It must be the hardliners again. Do they object to de Klerk being received in Africa? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Are the conservative Whites a real threat to de Klerk? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: They won a Free State seat in a recent election. (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: I mean an extralegal threat. (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: De Klerk doesn't have a long time. We, the Blacks, must get our act together and negotiate. (Ø)

General Scowcroft: How do you see the process? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: De Klerk has put down a proposal for a multi-party conference. The ANC calls it an all-party conference. (U)

The ANC wants a Constituent Assembly and an Interim Government. But that is a recipe for violence in my view. De Klerk cannot agree to that. (Ø)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

5

The President: I understand. (U)

General Scowcroft: The ANC don't agree among themselves. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Secretary Cohen has a good phrase for ANC policy. (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: "Majority rule before negotiations."
(U)

The President: What should de Klerk do? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: We have had several meetings. But whenever we have a meeting, it is a problem because the media plays it up.
(Ø)

The time has come for the multi-party conference. It can be held in August, we hope. (U)

Mr. Gates: Leaving aside the ANC, do Blacks in South Africa see de Klerk as a dramatic departure from the past? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. He was mobbed in Soweto. (U)

There is increasing support for him. Some Coloreds have joined the National Party. (U)

Mr. Gates: Is that true among the young too? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: I don't know. But everyone is frightened by the violence. The Coloreds see us Blacks hacking each other to death. (U)

The President: I asked you earlier about Winnie. Mandela has a blind spot about her, doesn't he? (Ø)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. Chris Hani threatened violence if she was convicted. (Ø)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: The ANC will give her an amnesty, they say, if she goes to jail. (U)

The President: If she is released, would the conviction still stand? (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Was the evidence strong?
(U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes, very strong. Her people were terrorizing Soweto. These kids. (Ø)

The President: How old were they? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Just fourteen. (U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Mr. Skosana: She showed no remorse. That was her problem. She admitted that it happened in house, claimed she was not there but showed no remorse. (U)

The President: It's a tragedy for the personal side of Mandela after that long incarceration. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. He is very bitter about it. He told me he thinks de Klerk is out to get him. (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: How should the West be helping? Economically? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: We need a political culture of toleration. Without it, democracy is not possible. (U)

The President: When sanctions are lifted, will it encourage investment? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: We need to satisfy expectations. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: That will be a big problem (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Violence and sanctions have caused social destabilization. We have a lost generation of young people, of uneducated people. You know the ANC had a slogan "liberation now, education later." (U)

The President: Does this affect all ages? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. All ages, especially the high school age. There also no jobs. (U)

When I was in Atlanta, I was excited by the Job Corps center. (U)

We mustn't forget that in South Africa, 50% of the people are fifteen years old or younger. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: It's one of the tragedies of sanctions that the U.S. companies which had good job training programs have closed up and left. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. (U)

Mr. Gates: Have companies continued to leave? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. People are leaving all the time. I talked to some Jewish South Africans recently who were leaving. They said they had no future. (U)

Governor Sununu: What about investment? Will it be only in already developed regions, if it comes back? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes, basically. (U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

KwaZulu has several development regions but investors still want to go to the cities. But I don't want our people going to cities. We even have a problem with squatters in KwaZulu. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: But how do you stop that? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: We need help in rural development. We particularly need help with agriculture. (U)

Mr. Skosana: That is the only thing which will stop the movement to urban areas. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: We have that kind of expertise. We are good at that. (U)

Assistant Secretary of Cohen: We are already working with the Peace Corps on opening up in South Africa. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: There is also the financial issue. I hope that when the sanctions are raised, the banks will make loans. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: You won't have to worry about that. (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: South Africa will be attractive. They have no debts to pay off. (U)

The Vice President: There could be a time lag, however, because of politics here. (U)

You will never satisfy the Ted Kennedys of the world. You will probably always have a South Africa amendment at shareholder meetings because of domestic politics. (Ø)

The President: But the mood should be that de Klerk has done a lot. Isn't that right, Hank? (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: Yes, Mr. President. I think we have recaptured the middle ground on this issue, which we lost in 1986. (U)

General Scowcroft: What kind of reception did you get on the Hill? (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Warm, very warm, even from people like Congressman Solarz who has disagreed with me in the past. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: It's never a warm reception for me up there. It's always hot! (U)

Mr. Skosana: Most rational people seem to think that the time has come to end sanctions. (U)

CONFIDENTIAL

8

The President: I think there is some understanding that there has been a big change. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. Dymally didn't even show up for the meeting. (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: He wouldn't for you. He would for de Klerk. (U)

Chief Buthelezi: Yes. But Dymally was a hardliner all along. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~