

How Red envoy sees new SA

On developments in South Africa:

"This is a crucial period in your history, a transition from a totalitarian, racist minority regime to a democratic dispensation."

"The changes were possible because of strong pressure by internal democratic forces coupled with international pressure, including sanctions."

"The balance of forces in the country determines that the only solution is a political settlement through negotiation. On that basis, compromises are to be found, and a basis laid, for the future political, social and economic structures."

"A major factor that triggered the process of transition was the blockade by the existing political system of the development of the productive forces."

"This political system has to be removed and substituted by new political structures that will bring full political rights to all and, through that, open up the development of the productive forces."

"Also, certain leaders of the ruling party came to understand that there was no way forward by protecting the existing system."

On President F W de Klerk:

"He is an outstanding leader. His name will go down in history as that of a big reformer."

"He is one of the few within the NP who understood in due time the necessity of reform and the eventual elimination of apartheid."

"His major credits are the legalisation of the black opposition, the removal of apartheid laws

■ Russian diplomat Alexei Makarov has been directly involved with South African politics for the last 23 years. Two years ago, as head of the South African desk at the Foreign Ministry, he was posted to Pretoria as head of the Soviet Union's interest office. **ESTHER WAUGH** of the Weekend Argus Political Staff spoke to him on the eve of his return to Moscow.

and the signing of the Record of Understanding with the ANC in 1992.

"The balance of forces indicates that the moment of the unbannings in 1990, the ANC and government, in spite of their confrontations, occupy the centrist position in the political spectrum."

"The Record of Understanding was a major breakthrough. It got the leadership of the ANC and the president's team together to create a bloc powerful enough not only to chart a programme for the transition, but also to create a mechanism that would provide for the implementation of that programme with due interest to all major political parties."

"This will form the real basis for a stable, non-violent evolution to democracy."

On the relationship between the ANC and government:

"They need a mutual understanding of their past and they need trust. The trust is being formed, but needs to be developed."

"Each one of these two parties must build up their policies in the interests of the country and not for party political interests."

On the National Party:

"It is undergoing a very difficult process of changing into a truly democratic party."

"One of the difficult tasks that faces the party is to transform itself from an ethnic, mostly Afrikaner party, to a truly national one. It has the capacity under the present leadership to achieve this, but it will not happen overnight."

"Its task is complicated because most political and governmental structures have been discredited."

On the ANC:

"It has proved to be a consistent democratic organisation. According to all indications, it will most probably become the leading party after the general elections."

"The leadership has acquired experience (since the unbanning of the organisation) and displays flexibility and the ability of change."

"Sometimes, because of the speed of developments, the leadership experiences very strong pressure from the grassroots which it is not quick enough to adapt to and understand the changes. A lot will depend on the ability of the leadership to educate the masses to support the national executive committee's programme."

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"The ANC has its own internal contradictions and problems. The contradiction is determined by the fact that, after bringing the masses to the polls, the ANC would have almost accomplished its historical mission as a liberation movement: The struggle for human rights for black people (as defined in 1912 when the ANC was formed)."

"I think it will be difficult for the ANC to continue as a liberation movement after that. It will have to transform itself gradually into a political party or even several parties attending to the interests of specific social groups."

On the role of the SACP:

"There is a big difference between the SACP and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or other ruling communist parties elsewhere."

"The SACP was set up as a Comintern party in 1921 to lead the white working class to the world socialist revolution, but when it opened its doors to black people, it transformed its ideals and the priority of its tasks."

"From the 1940s, the SACP became one of the major parties in this country to steadily struggle for human rights for black people. The primary task of the communists became the struggle for human rights for all."

On the Inkatha Freedom Party:

"It is an important regional force which cannot be disregarded."

"It is very important that the major players find common interests with the IFP and find a way of stopping the confrontation between the IFP and the ANC in Natal."

On violence:

"This is one of the major problems and is very difficult to resolve. It is complicated because one cannot easily distinguish political violence and criminal violence, which is rife."

"Crime is caused by social factors like unemployment and a lack of housing and education. It is a strong breeding ground for political violence because it can easily be used by groups interested in instability."

"Violence will be a problem for many years to come. It will be one of the major problems of a new government. Without solving the violence, progress to democracy will be very difficult."

On the country's future:

"I am positive about the future of the transition to democracy. I am definite that in the long-term South Africa will find a solution to the political crisis."

"The will of politicians is not enough. There should be patience, determination and trust."

"There should be a national vision. The lack of such a vision is one of the biggest problems. South Africa is one country but it is still not one nation."