

B. AFRICA

P.W. Botha Appeals for Unity, Says S Africa Not Seeking War with Mozambique

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Text of dispatches datelined Potgietersrus, 16th October (agency ellipses where indicated):

(i) In a call for national unity tonight the State President, Mr P.W. Botha, said he could not understand why so many South Africans joined the struggle to weaken the country's national will "thereby unnecessarily dividing us in the battle against communism". Addressing about 1,600 people at a National Party public meeting in Potgietersrus, he said "our enemies" repeatedly pointed out that South Africans were divided and that this should be maintained if they were to be defeated. "We must devote our strength here in South Africa to the creation of national unity and a national will which crosses the borders of all our communities and minorities . . . we must fight communism and its henchmen", he said. With the strength the unity he was calling for would provide, South Africa would overcome the total onslaught from both within and without the country, but without it, the country would fall.

Mr Botha reiterated the need to accept the "reality" of South Africa's multi-cultural population composition, and rejected the view from the political left the country could be totally non-racial, as well as the attitude of the right wing who exaggerated diversity and accepted superiority and skin colour as the main criteria for exclusion. "If there is to be real order and freedom in South Africa, then we must constitutionally account for the diversity in our country . . . each responsible South African must realise that", he said.

The struggle in South Africa was not one between black and white but one between Christian values and the right to freedom, and the forces of darkness. The overwhelming majority of people wanted peace in the country, but this was being "bedevilled" by those who wanted to create chaos. "Through discussion with one another, and through consultation, we must remove as many as possible of the perpetrators of violence in our country. Violence brings destruction, consultation brings planning and progress."

Saying the National Party was the one instrument in the political field through which national unity could be achieved around mutual interests, the President said: "We must remove the hate, prejudices and pettiness from our national life and also from our politics." No matter how difficult it may prove to be, he would not allow reform to be misused by those who wanted to destroy the basis and objectives of a free democratic South Africa in an undemocratic manner. "Let us stand together in spite of our diversity. Let us form a powerful bastion of unity that is greater and stronger than that which divided us", he said.

Although the Incomati accord with Mozambique was under pressure now, the State President, Mr P.W. Botha, said tonight he hoped it would "stand firm". Addressing a National Party public meeting in Potgietersrus, he acknowledged the non-aggression pact with President Samora Machel's government was in difficulty but said: "I hope it will stand firm so that order and stability in southern Africa will eventually triumph."

South Africa was being accused, once again, by its northern neighbours of preparing for war "but I assure you we are not . . . we do not seek war. But we will do all that is necessary in our opinion to maintain the freedom and independence of South Africa, and the integrity of our borders. We do it because we seek peace", Mr Botha said.

He had repeatedly said South Africa was striving for peace and friendship between all peoples and nations. Peace and friendship were, however, reciprocal and it was a hard reality of international relations that friendship was nothing but the extent to which governments believed their national interests coincided and overlapped.

Mr Botha repeated his appeal to all southern African nations to join South Africa in joint action to solve the region's problems and bring about progress and prosperity. "Let us co-exist here together in peace, and help each other develop the rich potential of our region to the advantage of all its people. On that basis each state can pay attention to its own domestic matters", he said. "We make no demands and claims on our neighbours, but (they) should not allow their territories to be used as bases for terror against South Africa."