

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 26, 1990

1433

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEETING WITH  
CHIEF MINISTER GATSHA MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI

DATE: February 28, 1990  
LOCATION: The Oval Office  
TIME: 9:45 - 10:00 a.m.

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT

DECLASSIFIED

PER NSC WAIVER #2021-02  
By MM NARA, Date 7/16/2021

I. PURPOSE

To demonstrate our support for including all responsible groups in the South African negotiating process, to urge Buthelezi to reach out to Mandela and the ANC to end the violence in Natal, and to create a climate in which negotiations can begin.

II. BACKGROUND

Buthelezi, who last visited the White House in 1987, is in the U.S. on a private visit, including speaking engagements in California. However, the principal focus of the trip will be his meeting with you -- which he views as a critical element in his strategy to play a leading role in the negotiating process.

Buthelezi remains a controversial figure at home. Proud, arrogant and conservative, he is the leader of South Africa's largest black tribal group -- the Zulus. Although he has consistently rejected the Government's attempts to foist "independence" on the Zulu homeland, and adamantly called for Nelson Mandela's release from prison, the more militant opposition groups remain deeply suspicious of his motives and commitment, and opposed to his cooperation with the Government. However, the single most important cause of the political gap is the tragic violence that has caused thousands of black deaths in Natal in recent years. The strong political rivalry for the allegiance of Natal's majority black population between Buthelezi's Inkatha movement, and the UDF and related groups, has degenerated into near random violence and killing at the local level.

Buthelezi shares a number of our basic convictions. He is committed to a multi-party, democratic system. He rejects the armed struggle, and does not believe in international economic sanctions. He is a strong supporter of a free market economy. And, he is willing to participate in a negotiating process to move South Africa past apartheid into non-racial democracy.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Declassify on: OADR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

cc: Vice President  
Chief of Staff

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

POINTS TO BE MADE IN MEETING WITH  
CHIEF MINISTER BUTHELEZI

The New Climate

- It is an exciting time in South Africa, and I am optimistic that a negotiated end to apartheid is possible.
- Much of the credit for the remarkable changes must go to President de Klerk.
- I am looking for ways the U.S. can help move this process forward rapidly and successfully.
- Our meeting today, and meetings I hope to have soon with President de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, can help us determine what role we can play.
- Clearly, however, this is a problem that South Africans have to solve themselves. We look to you and other leaders to take the steps needed to put apartheid into the history books and transform South Africa into a non-racial, democratic society.

The Violence

- I am very troubled by the senseless violence in Natal that has led to the tragic loss of so many lives.
- I know you have very strong views on who bears responsibility for this situation, and I fully respect them.
- However, what we need to do now is to move beyond recriminations and accusations, and stop the killing.
- This will require bold and courageous leadership from you, from Nelson Mandela, and from President de Klerk.
- If there can be a political accommodation among the

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Declassify on: OADR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

**DECLASSIFIED**  
PER NSC WAIVER # 2021-02  
By MM NARA, Date 7/16/2021

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

competing forces in Natal, this might provide scope for a return to law and order.

-- I encourage you, as I will encourage Mr. Mandela, to take steps now and work together constructively to end the violence.

-- The United States stands ready to help facilitate a dialogue, and you should feel free to discuss this with our Consul General in Durban, and our Ambassador.

### The Negotiations

-- I strongly believe that all responsible parties should be at the bargaining table when negotiations get underway.

-- We certainly admire and encourage your commitment to multi-party non-racial democracy, your opposition to the armed struggle, and your support of a market economy.

-- Your political experience in dealing with the government, and your focus on practical ways to address outstanding issues -- such as the Indaba concept of powersharing in Natal and KwaZulu -- will be extremely valuable in the negotiating process.

-- I will certainly make the point to President de Klerk, and to Mr. Mandela, that you can play a constructive and necessary role in the negotiating process.

-- How do you see negotiations shaping up?

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

## SUMMARY OF BUTHELEZI'S PREPARED REMARKS

Buthelezi praises de Klerk's moves, and is convinced they are irreversible and broadly supported. He appreciates President Bush's support of these moves, and reiterates his opposition to economic sanctions.

Buthelezi suggests that South African political forces have to move from left and right extremes toward the center--a position long held by his Inkatha movement. He argues for negotiations on reforms which will then be legislated by the Government. He sees a major role for business in this process, and argues strongly for a free market economy in the post-apartheid era.

Buthelezi expresses opposition to the ANC negotiating position, which he characterizes as a demand to turn over power to a constituent assembly. This position, however, has not been endorsed by the people.

Buthelezi pledges himself to work to eliminate violence from politics, particularly in Natal. He explains Inkatha's pro-democracy, pro-free enterprise stance, and requests U.S. "educational and welfare" funding.