

Appendix D

Examples of texts used during the ALTFC

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ADDRESS BY GENERAL S. NYANDA, MMM, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS TAKING OVER OF COMMAND OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE AT THE HANDING-OVER OF COMMAND PARADE HELD AT THABA TSHWANE ON 29 MAY 1998

The President of the Republic of South Africa and Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the Minister of Defence Mr Joe Modise, Government Ministers in attendance, the outgoing Chief of the SANDF General Georg Meiring, General Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Other Ranks, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I had intended not to make a speech today, having scheduled a media briefing immediately after this parade at which it was my intention to make whatever statement I had. Indeed, the press briefing will go ahead as planned so the statement I will make now will be very brief and is directed primarily at the SANDF over which I today assume command.

There has been a lot of speculation about the future of the Defence Force under my leadership. There has been talk of black frustrations, white fears, and how I will have to undertake a delicate balancing act in order to address these areas of possible conflict. There has been speculation too on the questions of integration and rationalisation of personnel, as well as on other areas. However, it is mostly the question of expectations and fears that I wish to address in my inaugural statement. This is so that the members of the Defence Force - through the officers present here and the members on parade - will be the first to hear my position on this matter rather than coming to hear of it second hand in the media.

My dream is that the Defence Force of the future will reflect the demographics of the country. All South Africans should be welcomed in it. All should be able to rise to the highest positions of responsibility, irrespective of race, religion, gender or creed.

It would be tragic if White South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, were to feel that they were no longer important in the SANDF and it had become an institution in which only Black people were served. I specifically mention Afrikaners - not because the Scottish, the Irish, the English, the Jewish and others are not important or welcome, but because the institution of Defence in the recent past has been dominated by Afrikaners. The transformation of the institution may sometimes be misinterpreted as an undermining of their role and importance in the future.

South Africa is not like other African states where Defence Forces are almost exclusively Black in spite of a fair mixture in the population. The day that this came about in South Africa would be one of shame for the leadership of the SANDF, and indeed, South Africa's political leadership. Despite the recent sorry past, all the nationalities of our country bring with them into the SANDF a rich array of military cultures. These cultures are derived from our history and date from the wars of resistance, fought by the Xhosa, the Zulu, the Sotho, the Ndebele, the Pedi and others, through to the Anglo Boer War, the two World Wars and the War of Liberation. All these traditions should blend in the melting pot of a new defence culture. The absence of any one of these traditions would make the Defence Force poorer. I want to get the understanding and the cooperation of everyone on this question as I believe that it also underpins the Government's policy of equal opportunity for all.

As we accelerate the affirmative action programme, we need to ensure that we manage it in such a way that its long-term effects do not result in an exodus of other nationalities - or in the impression among Black members that they alone should look to a future of leadership in the SANDF. Once the Empowerment Programme is completed, once we have redressed past imbalances and once we have addressed the question of values and loyalty, the long-term perspective should be one of rigorous pursuance of a policy of appointment strictly on merit.

Black members of the SANDF, as well as members of the former non-statutory forces, have every reason to be optimistic about their future. I intend to closely pursue Governmental and Departmental policy on equal opportunity and affirmative action. Black officers and men will be empowered to take their rightful place alongside their countrymen in all responsibilities and in all units of the SANDF. The implementation of some of these programmes will take time, but planning will be instituted forthwith to determine the time scales.

The Defence Force will be a home to all.

They are not welcome, however, who are not loyal. We are one of the power bases of the State and are an instrument of the State. We carry out Government policy. Those who do not like the policies of the Government or the policies of the Department cannot serve the Defence Force. Those who wilfully undermine such policies will be dispensed with.

They are not welcome, either, who practice racism. Racism is a scourge which many South Africans fought against and sacrificed their lives to eradicate. There have been numerous allegations of racism and of racist insults and attacks within the SANDF. I shall deal firmly with such cases should they be proven.

They are not welcome in the SANDF who abuse authority, practice discrimination or favouritism or who are corrupt, wasteful or incompetent.

They are totally unwelcome in the SANDF who are undisciplined. No military institution is worthy of its salt if it can tolerate acts of indiscipline by its members. Discipline is the cornerstone of any military establishment.

I assume command of the SANDF at a very difficult time. The transformation process is a very difficult exercise. The budget cuts that have been experienced over the past few years pose major planning challenges for the Defence Force.

The force design reflected in the Defence Review is unaffordable given the budget allocation provided for in the medium-term expenditure framework. There is still uncertainty about long-term commitments to address block obsolescence and long-term requirements. In the short term, I will have to take painful decisions which will not endear me to important roleplayers. I plead for their understanding.

I have no doubt that we will emerge from the difficult transformation exercise as a stronger, more united, more respectable Defence Force worthy of a prominent role in pursuit of the African Renaissance.

I thank you.