

**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE PW BOTHA**

**DELIVERED AT THE SANDTON HOLIDAY INN  
ON 31 AUGUST 1984**

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**GELEENTHEIDSPUBLIKASIE**

**Die Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut  
van  
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THE HON PW BOTHA delivered this address on the occasion of a Banquet which opened the SAIIA's third International Outlook Conference on the theme of "Economic Interdependence and World Order". It was the last public address given by the Prime Minister, before he assumed the position of State President elect under South Africa's new Constitution.

The Banquet, which was held on 31 August 1984 in Sandton and the Conference which followed on 3 and 4 September, served as the final major function celebrating the Institute's Golden Jubilee.

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Delivered at the Sandton Holiday Inn on 31 August 1984

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The Institute of International Affairs has become firmly established in South African society, and plays an important role as a forum for the exchange of views and information on international affairs between South Africans and people from overseas. It is a significant link in the intricate network of South Africa's international contacts, much of which is quiet and unobtrusive, but nonetheless effective. I would like to pay tribute to you, Mr Chairman, and your associates in the Institute, as well as your predecessors and the early pioneers, all of whom have built the Institute into the organisation that it now is.

It is appropriate that the Institute should celebrate its Jubilee in 1984, a year which has seen developments of great significance take place in Southern Africa. After many years of apparent inaction, the diplomatic and political scene in this region of Africa has acquired a new image, a new vitality. Old stereotyped patterns of relationships are being replaced, and relationships based on a new recognition of realities are emerging. It is a period of constructive diplomacy, and it bodes well for the future of this region. My confidence in the future has been reinforced by these recent events.

1984 will go down in history as a watershed year in the affairs of South and Southern Africa. Not only have important ideals come to fruition, but a beginning has also been made with the implementation of concepts and structures on which we can pin our hopes for a better and more prosperous future for this country, and for the region as a whole. The year has seen the further emerging of South Africa as a regional power willing to play a positive role in the normalisation of relations and the settlement of disputes. What we have achieved so far in the internal dispensation in the country has been done in a peaceful and orderly way, despite diversity and difference of opinion. This was possible not only because the participants in the process believed in the virtues of constitutionalism, but also because they believed that rational choices could only be made if there is interplay between reason and decision in open debate. Without this intellectual fermentation, South Africa would have been a much different place to what it is today.

South Africa has been extremely fortunate to be able to rely on both individuals and institutions of high intellectual and academic integrity and ability. Using their knowledge and their insights into the vexing problems facing the South African decision-makers, these researchers have helped to analyse and clarify the issues, thus making it possible for the government to discern with greater clarity the available choices and options.

The South African Institute of International Affairs has also made its contribution. Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of its founding in 1934, the Institute is in a unique position insofar as it has witnessed the development of most of the history of South Africa's foreign policy. Founded in a country far away from the dominant arenas of world politics, the Institute has played an important role over the past 50 years in educating and enlightening the South African public on international problems and in preparing them for the new realities we have to face today in a world totally different to what it was in 1934.

When reading AL Bostock's historical survey of the Institute, one is immediately struck by the following motivation which was proffered for its establishment in 1934 :

"Among the Dominions, the Union occupied a place of great strategic importance in the African continent, yet nowhere in the world was Africa South of the Sahara, from a political point of view, being studied as a whole".

These were wise words. Events since then have not only vindicated this early assessment of the strategic importance of our region, but also brought to the foreground a wide array of new problems and issues which have a direct impact on the lives of almost 400 million people in sub-Saharan Africa.

During the past 50 years we have witnessed a dramatic transformation in the politics and economy of Africa. The political freedom which was brought by decolonisation, led to euphoric optimism about Africa's ability also to solve its problems of underdevelopment and economic backwardness. In this respect, one recalls the United Nations' General Assembly's declaration of two "Development

Decades" setting a minimum annual rate of growth of aggregate national income of 5% for 1960-1970 and 6% for 1970-1980. The results of the two "Development Decades" have belied this optimism. More than four fifths of the sub-Saharan African countries still fall in the low-income category of developing countries (with annual per capita income of less than \$360 in 1976), and their average rate of growth per capita of 0,9% over the two decades was the lowest of all the regions of the Third World. The World Bank's most optimistic forecast for the 1980s sketches an even worse picture and all indications are that a growing number of people on the continent will find themselves in a situation of absolute poverty.

Being an intrinsic part of the African continent, and with its own welfare and security closely linked to the welfare and security of the other states in Southern Africa, South Africa is deeply concerned about this bleak and depressing economic picture emerging from Africa. It gives me no joy. The pity of it all is that this economic decay is taking place in spite of Africa's rich potential.

There are of course many reasons for Africa's disappointing development since 1960. The rise in oil prices, the reduced overseas demand for Africa's export commodities, the substantial decline in foreign aid relative to African income and population and the recent severe drought, deserve to be mentioned. But the burden and responsibility for African development rests on Africa itself, and the time has come for Africa to get its priorities in order. There are signs in 1984 that this is beginning to happen.

As an African state, with particular knowledge of the problems of the region, the Republic of South Africa has always been prepared to make its contribution towards the development and security of the Southern African region. It has never been our aim or our wish to bring about a system of economic dependence under South Africa dominance. Interdependence is an inescapable fact of life in Southern Africa, which we can ignore only to our own detriment. The Nkomati Accord shows that with agreement reached

on security issues, economic co-operation can take place on a free and equal basis and in spite of differences in internal policies.

It goes without saying that the major powers have world-wide interests and responsibilities. It would furthermore be unrealistic to attempt to deny that these are also manifest in Southern Africa and that they would wish to safeguard such interests and discharge such responsibilities in the region.

If the aim of this involvement should be to assist their friends and allies in a meaningful way to ensure their stability and sustained development, South Africa could surely have no objection to it.

If the objective should be the furthering of peace and prosperity in the region, South Africa could not but welcome these activities and could even consider making available some of its not inconsiderable own resources towards the achievement of such aims.

A meaningful and constructive understanding in terms of which the RSA would not exert itself against any of the justifiable global interests of the superpowers, including those in the Southern African context, and they in turn would not endanger South Africa's essential regional interests, may under such circumstances well be possible.

However, should the superpower involvement be conducted in a manner which the RSA perceives as threatening these essential regional interests - if violence and bloodshed can still be directly related to such actions; if political instability and glaring social deprivation remain the result; if the sustained economic viability of the supposed beneficiaries of superpower assistance fails to materialise and, above all, if the RSA remains justifiably convinced that an important thrust of such involvement is the enforced and even violent adjustment and indeed destruction of its value system and social structures - then the RSA will continue to safeguard and advance its essential and legitimate interests by all means at its disposal.

There is reason to believe that the superpowers have come to realise that in a confrontation situation in the region the RSA enjoys certain advantages over even their massive capabilities, not least of which being the incontrovertible geographical fact of physical proximity.

But confrontation with the superpowers is not an element inherent in the situation in Southern Africa. In the interest of all parties confrontation can be avoided if the USSR, and the USA, should involve themselves in a way which would credibly demonstrate that they wish to act only in the real interests of their friends and not regard the region as merely another arena in the East-West power struggle.

In recent times there have been frequent calls for the states in Southern Africa to seek their economic "Liberation" from South Africa. We fully realise of course that this type of rhetoric is used to exploit anti-South African sentiments elsewhere in the world. Let it be clear that South Africa sees nothing wrong in the desire of other states in the region to achieve greater economic independence and prosperity. Such a development would benefit all of Southern Africa. However, to work on the assumption that this goal can be achieved without South Africa's active participation, is to ignore realities.

Through regional organisations such as the Customs Union, SARCCUS, the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the multilateral system of the SATBVC-states, a framework for equal and mutually beneficial participation among the States of Southern Africa has already emerged. Bilateral co-operation, in which the private sector also actively participates, has been enhanced. The message is clear : there can be no progress towards economic prosperity and the social wellbeing in an atmosphere of enmity and interference in one another's domestic affairs. What South Africa desires are normal interstate relations based on mutual respect for sovereignty. Let there be no doubt about our will to defend our sovereignty and security, but let us sincerely hope that this will never become necessary; that an end can be made to conflict,



external interference and regional hostility which have retarded the development of this important African region for so many years.

The Nkomati Accord and the security agreement with Swaziland have opened the door towards a new order of co-operation and development in Southern Africa. I sincerely hope that those states in the region who still refuse to normalise their relations with South Africa will soon realise that they have chosen an impossible path, and that if they continue to give preference to a hostile and conflictual relationship, their peoples are the ones who stand to suffer most in the end. If it is our common desire to remove the region's vulnerability to outside interference and the forces of chaos and exploitation, this is the time for rational choices.

The fact that you have chosen "Economic Interdependence and World Order" as your conference theme, highlights the importance of the policies that South Africa is trying to pursue, not only in Africa but also in the rest of the world. I trust that your discussions will be fruitful and wish your Institute every success for the future.