

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB NEWSMAKER F.W. de KLERK

SUBJECT: F. W. DE KLERK, THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, WHO EARNED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR HIS ROLE IN DISMANTLING APARTHEID AND CRAFTING THE NEW SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION, WILL BE GUEST AT A NEWSMAKER SPEAKERS EVENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB.

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**DONNA LEINWAND:** (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Donna Leinwand. I'm a reporter with *USA Today* and I'm president of the National Press Club.

We are the world's leading professional organization for journalists and are committed to a future of journalism through informative programming, journalism education, and fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the Press Club, please visit our website at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org).

And on behalf of our 3,500 members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker and our guests in the audience today. I'd also like to welcome those of you who are watching us on C-Span. We are looking forward to today's speech, and afterwards, I will ask as many questions from the audience as time permits. Please hold your applause during the speech so we have time for as many questions as possible.

Americans like to talk about the first hundred days of an Administration. Well, our guest today is responsible for seismic change in South Africa on the

144th day in office. On February 11th, 1990, F.W. de Klerk freed Nelson Mandela who had spent nearly three decades in prison. President de Klerk then began the process that led to the dismantling of Apartheid, the approval of a new constitution that emphasized the rights of all South African citizens, and the first ever elections based on universal suffrage of all voters, black and white and other communities, which took place exactly 15 years ago this week, when, on April 27, 1994, when Nelson Mandela became the first black President of South Africa.

The world applauded when Mr. de Klerk and Mr. Mandela, together won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, "For their work for the peaceful termination of the Apartheid regime and for laying the foundations of a new democracy in South Africa." Mr. de Klerk served as one of South Africa's two executive deputy presidents until June, 1996.

A year later, he retired from active party politics, but never really retired from active public life. Mr. de Klerk is currently the chairman of the Global Leadership Foundation, a consortium he established in 2004 of former heads of state, working with current leaders to promote good governance in troubled regions of the world.

Today marks Mr. de Klerk's third appearance at the National Press Club. When Mr. de Klerk next speaks at the National Press Club, it might be to take part in one of our famous wine dinners. That's because he and his wife, Elita, will soon be producing their own wine on their farm outside Paarl, about 40 miles from Capetown.

Today, however, he plans to address the recent elections in his country, and the path South Africa has taken in the years since he and Nelson Mandela have left office. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving a warm National Press Club welcome to Nobel Laureate and former South African President, F.W. de Klerk. (Applause.)

**MR. F.W. de KLERK:** Thank you very much for that warm welcome. It's good to be back at the Press Club. Since my retirement, I've been a regular visitor to Washington, but no longer on matters and affairs of state, but in respect of the Global Leadership Foundation, and also as a basis from which I've undertaken many speech tours under the management of Mr. Jim Keppler(?) there. I've spoken, since my retirement, in more than 30 of the 50 states of The United States, and is beginning to regard myself as, for an outsider, quite an expert on America and American politics.

But today, we will be speaking more about what has happened recently in South Africa. We've had an election on the 22nd of April, the fourth free and fair and peaceful election that we've had since 1994.

Before I come to that, however, just allow me to say a few words about the Global Leadership Foundation. We will be afterwards, have available for any of you who are interested in it, a copy of a short summary giving the 26 names of the 26 former prime ministers, presidents, senior ministers, senior United Nations diplomats who form part of our membership. And what we do is not for profit, to give quiet and discrete advice to leaders in government, especially in the developing world, leaders who realize that they need to change, leaders who are quite often surrounded by corrupt officials or by inexperienced officials, countries which are no longer the top of the international agenda, which are being neglected to a certain extent by the international community, countries struggling with the challenges of poverty, struggling in its process of democratization.

We operate from a basis of values. We promote democracy. We believe in that. We promote well-balanced economic policies. We promote constitutionalism. We promote the rule of law. Those are the values that have succeeded throughout the world. And those are the values which the developing world needs to embrace if they want to join the march to prosperity, which free economies and true democracies have brought to this world.

We give discrete and confidential advice. And that is a special niche. There are many others who give advice and good advice and who are helping countries. But our emphasis is on confidentiality, because we believe that there's a loss of faithful(?) leaders to be publicly confronted with advice, to be told, "You need help." We prefer them to work through their problems with us, together the advice which we want to give. And if they take good decisions on the basis of that, we prefer them to get the credit for the decisions that they're taking, and for the action plans that they implement.

It has been a rewarding experience. Because it's discrete and confidential, I can't tell you which countries we have advised and which countries we are advising at the moment. But I can say that our members come from all continents, and that we've been active throughout the world already in the short span of our existence. We are involved in three countries in Africa at the moment, and another three is in the pipeline. We are involved in one country in the Middle East, one country in Southeast Asia. We've been involved in a country in Latin America and the old Eastern Europe. And we are looking at becoming involved in two more countries in Asia. And I'll be making trips later this year to have exploratory discussions in that regard.

So we have thrown our net quite widely. And what started out in 2004 as an idea which might work, have become in reality quite a dynamic operation. And we feel that we have already succeeded in making a difference in some countries.

And we hope, through quiet diplomacy and through peer advice to improve the lot of many people or to help improve the lot of many people throughout the world.

But ladies and gentlemen, I think most of you have come to listen a bit to a few observations about where we stand in South Africa after this last election, and also gain a few insights on the coming Zuma presidency.

South Africa, as I have said, has just held its fourth democratic election since '94. There is for us much to celebrate. Despite a few minor administrative hitches, the elections were as free and fair as those of any other constitutional democracy. On Saturday, the chief justice representing our independent judiciary and the sovereignty of our constitution will inaugurate Mr. Jacob Zuma as South Africa's fourth democratically elected President. The transfer of power from one President to the next will take place peacefully and constitutionally, and will be covered by our free and sometimes very critical media.

Democrats will welcome the somewhat stronger showing of opposition parties, and the fact that the opposition, Democratic Alliance, has won the province of the West and Cape outright, thus breaking the ANC's monopoly of power at the provincial level. They will take note that for the first time since 1994, the ANC's share of the vote, although still a massive 65.9%, has declined by almost five percentage points. They will welcome this, not because they are necessarily anti-ANC, but because democracy flourishes best when there is more vigorous multi-party competition.

Democrats will also welcome the fact that the ruling party, by a whisker, no longer has the two-thirds majority that it requires to change the Constitution at will. Disappointingly, voters in general continued to cast their votes according to race and ethnicity, and not according to political principle and policy. This means that the DA, the Democratic Alliance, the official opposition, despite its energetic and competent leader, Helen Zille, will find it difficult to increase its support much above the 20% represented by the white and colored and Indian minorities.

The best hope for change, I believe, if we look forward, lies in coalition politics. The newly established Congress of the People, referred to as COPE, which broke away from the ANC last year, also offers hope for the future. They managed to reduce ANC support by about six to seven percent, after only having existed and having been established about six months before the election, which was quite a remarkable performance.

So COPE now, as a splinter group with potential, having broken away from the ANC, have two years to firmly establish itself until our next important election which will be a countrywide municipal election in 2011.

But nevertheless, although this is not a picture yet of a really truly healthy democracy, with one party holding almost two-thirds of the vote, the election proved, I believe, the resilience of our young democracy, and adds to the many positive achievements of the past 15 years in South Africa.

I want to list some of those achievements for you. Until last year, we are experienced 14 years of uninterrupted economic growth, facilitated by sensible macroeconomic policies that the ANC government had implemented, despite its socialist rhetoric and despite its socialist and communist allies. Like the rest of the world, we are now wrestling of course with the fallout of the global financial crisis. And although we expect that our economy will shrink by about one percent this year, we are confident that we will be less severely affected than most countries. Our GDP, measured on a purchasing power parity basis, is about \$600 billion U.S. dollars, about the same size as the economy of Argentina and of Poland.

This gives us by far the largest economy in Africa. With only 6.5% of the population of sub-Sahara Africa, we produce a third of its gross economic product and generate two-thirds of its electricity. Our position in Africa help us to punch well above our weight in the international arena. We are a member of the G-20. We play a leading and constructive role in Africa. And we enjoy good relations with other leading emerging economies.

There are reported to be more foreign embassies in Pretoria than in any other capital in the world with the exception of Washington. Our sportsmen and women have attained new heights in international competition. And we will be hosting the soccer World Cup in 2010, which is the equivalent, really, of the Olympic games.

Our country has become an increasingly popular tourist destination. And tourism now contributes more than eight percent of our GDP, more than gold. Our current truck industry also contributes about eight percent of GNP (sic). More importantly, ladies and gentlemen, life is getting better for more and more South Africans. Since 1994, millions of black South Africans have joined the middle class, enlarging our consumer market and contributing to societal stability.

However, it is not only the black middle class that has benefited from the new South Africa. Since 1994, the government has built more than three million houses for disadvantaged communities. And it has also extended water and electricity services to more than 70% of all our households, and 13 million children and old-age pensioners now receive state allowances.

These are all (and I could add to them) positive aspects of the new South Africa. But there are also the well-known negatives. We have the highest number

of HIV-infected people in the world. Although we are at least addressing the problem, and are making anti retroviral drugs available on a massive scale, we started too late primarily because of the AIDS denialism of former President Thabo Mbeki and his Administration.

Almost 50% (I think it's about 46%) of South Africans live in poverty. We remain one of the world's most unequal societies. Despite the ANC's commitment to the promotion of equality and despite the fact that the achievement of equality is one of the founding values of our constitution, that percentage need to be brought down dramatically. And words on paper is not going to change it, but pragmatic policies which do not only enrich a small group relatively to the total population of 45 million, but which brings about better quality of life for many more is what is needed.

One of the main causes of poverty and inequality is our very high and persistent unemployment rate. At the moment, it stands roundabout 54% for all South Africans. But it is to be noted that at least 30% (I think it's more) of black South Africans are unemployed or have given up looking for work. Unemployment in turn has its roots in the dismal failure of our education system to prepare entrants effectively for the labor market.

Those roots lie also in the effects of global competition, which is quite often unfair, especially in the field of agricultural products, where there are all sorts of shields and walls in the prosperous countries which do not allow South Africa and Africa to export as it could. And it lies also in our ...(inaudible) labor laws.

All this has been aggravated by the influx across our poorest borders of uncounted millions of economic refugees from other African countries. And unemployment and poverty are, in turn, among the main causes of the unacceptable levels of violent crime that we experience.

So we find ourselves after 15 years of constitutional democracy balanced, balanced between justifiable pride over our achievements on the one hand, and deep concern over our unresolved problems which I have listed. The question that engages us all is how the incoming government of Mr. Jacob Zuma will affect this balance. Will he continue to build on the constitutional and economic progress that we have achieved? Will he be able to address the enormous societal problems that continue to confront us? There are no easy or immediate answers to these questions.

No one, ladies and gentlemen, really knows what a leader will be like until he or she becomes a leader. This is particularly the case in Africa. Unbelievably, many people, particularly whites, were full of trepidation when Nelson Mandela

became our first President. By the time he stepped down, he had won the affection and admiration of great majorities of all our population groups. The same was true of President Kenyatta in Kenya. But there is also the other side. For the first fifteen years of his rule, it seemed the President Robert Mugabe would follow the same pattern until he began to encounter serious electoral challenges seven years ago. After that, he presided over a precipitous decline into tyranny and economic and social disintegration.

Unfortunately, Mr. Zuma will not be acceding to the presidency in the happiest of circumstances. Until last month, he was facing serious fraud and corruption charges related to South Africa's ongoing arms procurement scandal. For several years, he had been conducting desperate rear guard actions in the courts to fend off his impending prosecution.

And then suddenly the charges were withdrawn, unfortunately in a manner which raised disquieting questions regarding the continuing independence and integrity of our national prosecuting authority. This clearly has serious implications for the rule of law.

Mr. Zuma also made a number of statements that have raised doubts regarding his commitment to the independence of our courts, and particularly our constitutional court, which is the equivalent of your Supreme Court here in America. Referring to the Chief Justice, he is reported to have said (and I quote) "I don't think we should have people who are almost like god in a democracy. Why? Are they not human beings?" He also criticized the Deputy Chief Justice, Mr. Dikgang Moseneke, and said that the Judicial Service Commission should review the status of the constitutional court.

This was not good news. Mr. Zuma's remarks must be seen in the context of previous African National Congress moves to dilute the independence of the courts, and an ANC resolution in December, 2007 to introduce new legislation to transform the judiciary. In fairness (and I'm glad that I can say it) I must stress that Mr. Zuma and other prominent ANC leaders have since then repeatedly emphasized that they will respect the Constitution and will do nothing to undermine the courts.

However, just before the election, the Cabinet approved a constitutional amendment that will empower the national government to interfere at will in the affairs of municipalities. Supporters of this claim that the legislation will enable the government to ensure effective service delivery in South Africa's many dysfunctional municipalities.

Critics fear that the real purpose may be to give government effective power to overrule newly elected local authorities in municipalities run by the

opposition, and in the municipalities that opposition parties may win in the 2011 election. The proposed constitutional amendment could be the first major test from a constitutional point of view of the Zuma President.

Another cause for concern relates to the influence that will be brought to bear on government policy by the ANC's alliance partners, the South African Communist Party, and the trade union federation called Cosatu. There is little doubt that Mr. Zuma could not have secured victory over President Mbeki at Polokwane without their support. There's also little doubt that they expect to be fully rewarded for their loyalty. Cosatu and the SACP, ladies and gentlemen, make no secret of their ambitions. They want to reconfigure their alliance with the ANC by establishing an alliance political committee that would oversee all important alliance policy decisions.

They believe that we should change our whole economic approach. And they are yearning for the same type of policies which has failed so dismally in Eastern Europe and many other parts of the world. They've been vociferously critical of the mainstream macroeconomic policies that have been implemented for the past 12 years. And they have made no secret of their demand for more interventionist and populist approaches.

At the same time, moderates in the ANC leadership like Treasurer General Mathews Phosa, supported by Mr. Zuma himself, have repeatedly assured domestic and foreign investors that there will be no change to the existing macroeconomic policy framework. The choice for the ANC is therefore clear. Either it will retain its present economic policies in which case Cosatu and the South African Communist Party will be seriously alienated, or it will lurch to the left in which case foreign and domestic businessmen and women will stop investing in the economy. And there is also another dismal possibility, and that is that the ANC may try to satisfy both sides and end up satisfying no one.

A great deal within this framework will depend on the role that Jacob Zuma will play. He's pragmatic, as I got to know him, and does not seem to have any ideological preconceptions. He's a good listener, and much will depend on the quality of the advisors that he selects. And we are awaiting that. Also unlike former President Mbeki, he's charismatic and a man of the people. He makes no secret of the pride he takes in his Zulu heritage, and enjoys performing in traditional Zulu regalia, dancing and singing at public gatherings. All this is perplexing to Western observers. But it goes down well with the great majority of Black South Africans.

At the end of the day, South Africa, ladies and gentlemen, is predominantly an African and not a Western country. Nevertheless, South Africa operates within a global context in which the rules are not set by Africa, but by a



global consensus on how states should manage their economic and constitutional affairs. And that consensus requires constitutionalism and the rule of law, uncorrupt administration, free markets, and responsible macroeconomic policies. This in essence is the dilemma that President Zuma will face. He will have to straddle the divide, the divide between the populist demands on his left wing, alliance partners, and the macroeconomic dictates of the global economy, the divide between the collectivist traditions of Africa and the individualist freedom and constitutionalism of the mainstream international community.

The next five years will deeply affect the future of South Africa for decades to come. They will determine whether the constitutional democracy that we established, that we established with so much optimism 15 years ago, will continue to flourish, whether our economy will continue to grow, and whether we will be able to address the serious societal challenges that confront us. Our future success will, in turn, be a major factor in determining the future success of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

Personally, I am optimistic that Jacob Zuma will make the right choices, and that he will confound the prophets of doom, as has happened so often in South Africa's history. He has many of the qualities that will be necessary to deal with the difficult challenges that will confront him during his presidency. But by the same token, South Africans and the international community would be well advised to watch him and his Administration very carefully, particularly with regard to any initiative that might undermine our Constitution or the independence of our judiciary.

In the final analysis, the price of liberty is an always will remain eternal vigilance. And this is what the F.W. de Klerk Foundation in South Africa, which I started some ten years ago, is doing. We have started a constitutional rights center. We are checking all legislation for its constitutionality. We enter into constructive dialogue with the government when we feel that things are moving in the wrong direction with regard to the constitutionality of legislation passed. We want to prevent amendment of the Constitution by stealth, through subsidiary legislation. We want to popularize the Constitution and we want to ensure that that Constitution, with the balance which it contains within itself and the values that it encapsulates will remain to guide us and to prevent us from straying onto false roads which can only lead to calamity. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. (Applause.)

**MS. LEINWAND:** Okay, we have quite a number of questions. Again, if you have some more questions, please write them on the white cards and pass them to me at the front. How much contact do you have with Mr. Zuma? Do you expect him to call on you for advice?

**MR. de KLERK:** I know Mr. Zuma fairly well from the negotiation period during my presidency. He played an important role during those negotiations. He was the former chief of intelligence of the ANC and its military wing. And especially with regard to negotiations around the integration of ANC forces with the South African Defense Force and with the South African police services, he was a major player.

Since then, we've lost a bit of contact. But I hope to establish good channels of communication with him. I've had it with President Mandela. I've had it with President Mbeki. And I intend to have open channels of communication with Mr. Zuma and his Cabinet.

In the past, the F.W. de Klerk Foundation has, with the help of the then President, held what we call Bush Conferences where an important nucleus of the Cabinet would come and where I would bring together an important nucleus of leaders from all walks of life and from all disciplines in the country. And we would sit down in a sort of an island situation for a whole day or two to really discuss and cut to the bone in our discussions, the challenges that we face in South Africa.

One of the first things I'll do when I go back to South Africa will be to give President Zuma a call and ask him for a one-on-one discussion in order to hopefully establish the same type of open dialogue relationship.

**MS. LEINWAND:** To what do you attribute the ANC's slight decline in power?

**MR. de KLERK:** I think firstly, to its internal strife, the way they deposed, first as leader and then as President, of Mbeki has angered many ANC supporters who were ardent supports of President Mbeki. Secondly, to non-delivery, there is a feeling in the masses amongst the mass of people, the voters, that somehow or another, concepts like affirmative action and black economic empowerment has only benefited the few, and had led to a small group of very privileged, very rich people, and has failed to really best serve the interests of all.

So there's criticism after 15 years for one party in government. As you know all know in America as well, this dissatisfaction comes in and a feeling comes about that there's maybe a need for change.

But I would say at the root of it lies the internal strife within the ANC. And I don't think this is the last split that we will see in the ANC. As I've described in my introductory remarks, we have almost incompatible elements within the ANC alliance, believing in totally opposite things, and having totally

different philosophical opinions. And what South Africa's democracy really needs is that we must move away from the old historical political divisions and we must move towards value-based and policy-driven politics, and no longer racially-based and ethnically-based politics.

But can I allot in the analysis of the results, the drop in the percentage of the ANC would have even been more if it wasn't that they gained some Zulu votes and drew some support away from the Inkatha Freedom Party, the party of Buthelezi, who has dropped its percentage. And because I think of Mr. Zuma's strong allegiance to his Zulu culture, he succeeded to grow in KwaZulu-Natal. Otherwise, the drop would have been in the vicinity of-- from the previous 69 comma something percent to the vicinity of 62%.

**MS. LEINWAND:** How long do you think it will take for South Africans to move away from the race-based politics that you talk about and more toward issue-based politics? What would be some of the key factors that would power that move?

**MR. de KLERK:** I think one of the factors will be the transition, which is still taking place, of the ANC from the freedom movement which it started out to be, towards becoming a political party in the true sense of the word. It's beginning to happen. And once that happens, you will get a situation where politics will be much more normalized.

The old National Party was, in a sense, like the ANC. It was regarded as the front of the Afrikaner Nation, the only hope for the survival of the Afrikaner Nation. And for many elections, we had situations where people voted for the National Party, irrespective of their dissatisfaction with many aspects of the day-to-day administration of the country, because of a certain sentimentality and a certain deeper inner conviction that, "These people will look after us. We can trust them."

That changed, vis-à-vis, the National Party because of new realities. And I think it is new realities in South Africa in the second place, which will also change our politics towards more solution-orientated politics, and less historically-based politics.

**MS. LEINWAND:** How should South Africa deal with illegal immigration from Zimbabwe as that country's political situation continues to decline?

**MR. de KLERK:** It is a very difficult problem. I think there are about three million Zimbabweans in South Africa. This has resulted in xenophobic attacks by black South Africans on some of these larger illegal immigrant

communities, caused by the feeling among South African people that these people are threatening their jobs. If already there is unemployment of 25%, three million new job seekers who are prepared to break the labor laws, who are prepared to work for less, who are prepared to do-- who have a different approach, because for them, it's about survival, they felt a threat. So it is a delicate problem.

The government correctly nipped those xenophobic attacks in the bud, brought some of these illegal immigrant communities into secure camps or housed them in tents, properly protected and guarded, and are now slowly, with regard to a certain percentage, reintegrating them really in the South African society for the time being. Until the economy of Zimbabwe improves, they won't go back. Unemployment in Zimbabwe is, I think, in excess of 90%.

So it's inhuman to return people to that. But there is an element, part of the policy of the government is some repatriation. But they're using it with discernment. And there is a procedure, according to which such immigrants, illegal immigrants, can get temporary legalization of their position in order to earn and in order to live.

**MS. LEINWAND:** As the new President, Jacob Zuma, prepares to take office, how do you suggest South Africa and Nigeria can work together to address attitudes towards foreigners in light of the killings targeted at outsiders late last year, including Nigerians?

**MR. de KLERK:** Yeah, well I think what Africa really needs is it needs in sub-Saharan Africa, a number of successful countries. And obvious candidates are South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and a few others. Once you'd look at Africa, the southern part of Africa really I think with-- through regional glasses, and say, each of the regions, SADC, the Southern states, most Southern states, have South Africa as a leading country-- West Africa needs one or two leading countries. East Africa needs one or two leading countries. Central Africa needs one or two leading countries, who can come the hub of development, and who must take hands.

And I think the international community should adopt policies within this framework and reward the countries which are trying to do the right things, and help to build them through interaction and economic interaction and trade, and in all other ways to become the engines of success of each of those regions. And in that sense of the word, I think very close relations between the leading countries of sub-Saharan Africa is very, very important.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What can Zuma and the ANC do to improve the standard of living for the poor people in South Africa?

**MR. de KLERK:** They must do-- Any government, whether it's Zuma or whatever, the challenge of the moment in South Africa is to win the war against poverty. And the two starting points lies in education and in well-balanced economic policies. Without well-balanced economic policies, we won't get the amount of foreign investment which we need to continue to grow at more or less five or six percent per annum.

Such growth with methodically address the unemployment situation. But at the same time, the quality of education and training must be improved. It's not as if we're not putting enough money into education. If you look at the percentage of the total budget spent in South Africa on education, it's amongst the highest in the world, around 20%. What is needed is quality leadership in each and every school, training of principals, motivation of principals, so that they can in turn motivate their staff.

What we need is to reconstruct the whole system of apprenticeship which we used to have in South Africa, and which, sadly I must say, the ANC allowed to fall into disrepair, where people who don't go to university, on leaving school, go to a training center where they become a good plumber or a good electrician or a good fochman(?)-- I am looking for the English word. Suddenly it escape me. A good artisan. That has fallen too much into disrepair. So education is the best way of empowering the individual. And if you have these two in balance, with economic growth comes jobs. With better education comes more efficient filling of those vacancies which will come about.

And a third thing is to redefine its approach towards affirmative action and towards black economic empowerment. It's necessary. I support the principle of affirmative action. I support the principle of black economic empowerment. But by imbalanced implementation of those policies, hundreds of thousands of highly qualified people have left South Africa, have felt that there is a new form of institutionalized discrimination. And if you look at the one million whites which have emigrated, and asked them, what are the main reasons which they give, according to surveys done by the government as well, they will say, affirmative action, discrimination on the basis of race and color. And another reason which they often give is crime and the violence involved in crime in South Africa.

So we lost too many. There's an imbalance at the moment. There's a shortage of highly skilled people and managers. And there's an oversupply of semi-skilled and under-trained people in the labor force. Education and good economic policies is the only way forward.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What authority will Mr. Zuma have on the international stage in light of the corruption charges that have dogged him for years?

**MR. de KLERK:** Well, Mr. Berlusconi still attends many international conferences and is fully part of the European Union and all its activities. So just using that one example, it doesn't seem as if unproven, I must say, charges, which hangs in the air-- Yes, it creates a cloud around the head of Mr. Zuma. But I think he will be mainly judged on what he does, on the decisions he takes when he's President.

And if it's in line with our Constitution, and if it's in line with the well balanced economic policies of the past, and if he shows guts in resisting the unavoidable pressures which will come from his left wing against him, and if he improves on the sometimes unwise foreign policy decisions which the South African government have been taken, then I think the door will be open for him, and he will be able as the leader of one of the most important countries of Africa to play a constructive role also in the international community.

**MS. LEINWAND:** Okay, moving on to some pan-Africa questions, what are your views on the situation in Zimbabwe? Why is has it not succeeded as South Africa has?

**MR. de KLERK:** What has happened in Zimbabwe is a tragedy. I'm critical of the way in which the international community has handled it. I think there was a tendency to pass the buck too much to South Africa. But I'm also critical of President Mbeki and his Administration as regards Zimbabwe. I don't think we should have sent in the army, as America and Britain did in Iraq. I don't think we should have strangled them economically, the(?), in any event, drowning economically by closing ...(inaudible). We would just hurt the people who are already suffering there.

So the only route was pressure. But there was too much velvet in the glove and too little iron in the fist within that glove. The pressure wasn't strong enough. And I expect that Mr. Zuma, there are clear indications actually that he will be quite firm and firmer than his predecessor, vis-à-vis, Zimbabwe. There's slight hope in Zimbabwe. There is now this government of national unity which will lead up to new elections. There needs to be fundamental change in Zimbabwe.

I just read yesterday that African countries are mobilizing some capital in order to help Zimbabwe to just begin taking the right steps to restore some semblance of order within their economy. So there's a slight ray of hope at the end of the tunnel at the moment. But it's a tragedy what has happened there. And it was allowed by the African community to too much of an extent. And I think especially Great Britain, as the former colonial power, also could have been more creative in helping to prevent some of the things which have happened there.

**MS. LEINWAND:** You mentioned some of the leading countries in the regions being able to guide other parts of Africa. Do you think South Africa and Nigeria can take the lead in confronting the various issues that plague the African continent such as in Zimbabwe, Somalia, DRC, and Sudan?

**MR. de KLERK:** I think, yes. But I don't think we should just say South Africa and Nigeria. I think we should look at the African Union as a whole. Some of the smaller countries can and should also make a contribution. We must guard against this sort of superpowers within African prescribing to others. It has landed America in a very bad position, this being seen as the superpower, as prescribing to the rest of the world, as not being sensitive to its needs.

And South Africa has been, throughout, since Mr. Mandela, been very careful to avoid becoming this sort of superpower and always becoming involved in problem areas such as the areas mentioned in the question, to say, "No, we will enter, but we will do so and must do so in partnership with other countries."

So I think partnerships and involvement of a greater number of stable countries would be preferable to South Africa and Nigeria as the two big ones, doing it all on their own.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What steps could be taken toward a peaceful resolution of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur?

**MR. de KLERK:** There's no quick fix. I don't even think at times that we know exactly what is happening there. I think international involvement is important. But based on our experience, the best solutions come when agreements are reached between people involved in the conflict.

Solutions devised from outside and imposed from outside has less of a chance to take root and to succeed than solutions which are born from proper interaction between the parties to the conflict. So something like our CODESSA I think is at times needed in deeply divided societies. And I think in Sudan, the concept of a international conference, which is inclusive, which invites all parties to the table, which don't have too many preconditions with regard to participation in those discussions, structured in a way-- I'm trying to give you what the lessons we've learned-- structured in a way where you start seeking points of agreement, where you start identifying on, "What can we agree," and from there then start addressing more-- some of the minor differences, thus broadening the area of agreement. And that, at a time, brings you to a point of no return where you realize that a solution is possible, and where enough trust has been built in this process to say, "We are now also ready to address the outstanding and more fundamental points."

But that's a long answer. The short answer is, talks, negotiation, I think rather facilitation from the international community than intervention.

**MS. LEINWAND:** What should be the U.S. role in addressing Africa's problems? And what do South Africans want from President Obama?

**MR. de KLERK:** They expect a lot, I can already say, from President Obama. All of Africa expects a lot. Him being who and what he is have raised great admiration and great expectations in Africa. And as I understand him, and what I see when I look at TV and what I read when I read my newspapers, I think has an understanding that the role of America in the world must change in many ways.

As an African, I want to just give some credit to your immediate former President, President Bush. He made many mistakes. And I'm not going to go into that. But vis-à-vis Africa, he has actually done more than many former American Presidents to really reach out, and to really open doors. And this has been recognized in Africa. But more is expected of President Obama.

Two things to my mind are fundamental. The one thing, I don't know whether it can ever be achieved, but somehow or another, from an African perspective, all these big subsidies to farmers, in America and in the European Union, must change. The one area where, except for the few mineral-rich countries of which South Africa is one, where Africa can begin to compete, can begin to strengthen their economies, is agriculture.

But with these subsidies, it's impossible for Africa to compete. Let me give you a figure. In help to Africa, only five times more (let me put it that way around) five times more is given to subsidies to farmers in America and the European Union than aid to Africa. For every one billion given for aid to a poverty-stricken continent, five billion is given to farmers in the Northern hemisphere. That I think must change.

Secondly, there must be constructive engagement. Aid and handouts is not the solution. Project-orientated involvement, I see as the solution. Getting involved – yes, there is room for a-- Countries need money to fight AIDS. Countries need money to fight malaria, which just those two illnesses coupled with diabetes, are killing millions and millions of Africans month by month. So there's room for charitable aid.

But the best way of helping is engaging, is trade, is becoming involved in projects which will create a basis for growing economies. So we ask of America to put Africa very high on its agenda with regard to its international foreign policies.



**MS. LEINWAND:** We are just about out of time. But before asking the last question, we have a couple of important matters to take care of. First of all, I would like to remind our members of future speakers. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, we have Jeff Idelson of the Baseball Hall of Fame with special guest Brooks Robinson, on May 15<sup>th</sup>, John W. Rowe, chairman and CEO of Exelon Corporation, and on May 21<sup>st</sup>, Secretary Ray LaHood of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

And second, I would like to present our guest with the coveted NPC mug. I think you have a full set now.

**MR. de KLERK:** Thank you very much.

**MS. LEINWAND:** And for our last question, I'd like to ask you, what is your relationship today with Nelson Mandela?

**MR. de KLERK:** We are friends. Our relationship, from the beginning, has been one of mutual respect. It was marred at times by great tension, mainly due to continued illegal underground activities by elements in the security forces, and by elements in Umkhonto we Sizwe and the NC, which led to continuing violence, notwithstanding the policies of my government and notwithstanding the commitments and the policies of Mr. Mandela.

But we've overcome that. We worked well together in the two years that I was together with Mbeki, an executive deputy president under President Mandela. He entrusted the day-to-day running of the government to us. He never chaired a Cabinet meeting, but he always attended the meetings. He acted more like a French president. But he is such a warm and friendly man. And he has such-- so much compassion. And his greatest contribution to South Africa has been reconciliation, reaching out to former enemies, closing the book on the ...(inaudible) of the past and moving forward.

And in that sense, I think our relationship has, from the beginning, been a symbolic one. But it has developed into a very personal one. We phone each other on birthdays. He's been to (Elita, my wife, is here with me today) to our home for meals. We've been to his home on more than one occasion for meals. He is unfortunately now very frail. And my heart goes out to him, how he's suffering. He can't walk easily. He's going, I think, through a very, very difficult time at the moment. I really think he needs our prayers. And as a friend, I am remembering him in mine.

**MS. LEINWAND:** I'd like to thank you for coming today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Jo Ann

Booz, and Howard Rothman for organizing today's speaker. And thanks to the NPC Library for its research.

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Thank you and we are adjourned. (Sounds gavel.)

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