Interview with Chris Har', Deputy Commander Umkhonto we Sizwe, Lusaka 21.1.90 Road Ahead Perspective Interview follows extended NEC meeting 18.1 - 20.1.90

Duestion: Could you provide some insight into the NEC's perspective on the road ahead? The NEC has said very generally in its statement following its meeting that it remains committed to all the usual forms of struggle. But presumeably the changed conditions in South Africa do affect its perception of the precise mix of the 3 methods of struggle.

Hani: In the NEC, that is the recent session of the extended NEC, we spent a lot of time looking at our perspectives, looking at the Harare Declaration, and we also felt that De Klerk was a different type of National Party leader — he is a product of what I would call the most serious crisis facing the National Party. He is leading a party which is no longer as powerful as it was under PW Botha or under Vorster. In other words, he is leading and bruised party. It is seriously divided. And he has got to reckon with this problem. And it is quite clear that there is no end in sight in terms of this crisis. It is not a crisis that this government is able to solve.

Undoubtedly, the ANC has grown in stature, acceptability, strength. It is an ANC which is drawing support not only from its traditional constituencies. It is an ANC now which is courted by homeland leaders, by leaders of business, Nafcoc. It is an ANC which is reinforced now by the released leaders, Walter Sisulu and others.

Now the present position we are enjoying in terms of support, and the crisis that engulfs the NP is the result of struggle — a combination of all forms of struggle. And definitely with the MDM playing the leading role in the past four or five years the achievements of the MDM have been immense. They have certainly emerged out of the SOE here quite buoyant, full of energy, and I think it would be safe to say that they have demonstrated the failure of the SOE.

While the SOE has had its own effect by the destruction of structures, it has done nothing to dent the mood of the people. The people are as opposed to the regime as they were before the SOE. So the SOE has not won any support for the regime. The regime has not succeeded in building pro-regime organisations. In other words, the space the regime created for itself by banning or restricting other organisations has not led to the emergence of pro-regime organisations — except bandit organisations like the Askaris and a few vigilante groups.

But these are mercenaries, people who do not enjoy any organised, structured support by the masses. I think the biggest disappointment for the MP has been the failure to organise a collaborationist group. I am not now referring to individuals, there are many individuals, but they have no

social base.

into this umbrella.

In the South African context they have not even managed a Muzarcua.

But instead we are witnessing a descriion of those who have all along been regarded as the stooges, the puppets. The most eloquent example is the Transkeian situation. The emergence of Holomisa and their distancing of themselves from the regime.

And a failure by the puppets who are saying look these fellows are going to dump us - let us find our way and probabaly talk to the ANC. So I think the ANC is succeeding in having this, big umbrella of organisations - even organisations which are outside the usual formations of the MDM. And I think this was clearly spelt out at the CDF. But the ANC is looking beyond the CDF by bringing in more groups

Why this strategy of bringing in more groups. We feel that in the event of negotiations — and in a struggle you can't dismiss a period of negotiations. Everybody is speaking about negotiations. And I think it is realistic for the ANC to prepare for negotiations, given the international climate, the tendency by the big powers to pressurise parties to a conflict to come together and talk.

Now, for us, in the event of negotiations, our biggest draw card is going to be the unity, the unity of the oppressed, and the unity of the democrats, even beyond the oppressed. The unity of all those people who are opposed to racism, the progressive whites. In other words, we teel that in this period we are creating and building a new South Africa, even in the process of struggle. The growing participation in areas like PE, marches to promote democracy to promote unity. And I think it was appropriate for the movement to designate this year the year for "United action for a Democratic South Africa".

Now we want to take this question of negotiation away from the clever initiatives and manoeuvres of individuals. We want to put it squarely in the hands of the the people. The people must know that negotiations is an arena of struggle. They must know that negotiations are not going to be possible through offers from the ruling class. If negotiations do come they must come because you are not sitting there waiting for them. But you are struggling, you are struggling to ende the capacity of the system to continue ruling. In other words, people need to realize that the struggle should force the ruling class to accept that it is futile to continue suppression, and that if they don't agree to negotiate, there is the inevitability of collapse.

Nobody wants a collapse, nobody wants everything to end in ruins — rational people, sensible people don't want everything to end up in collapse. So that those voices now are growing. I won't say these are the dominant voices in the NP, but in the Nationalist Party there are voices which feel that they don't want asverything to end up in smoke.

everything to end up in smoke. But the point is the Movement is determined to continue with the struggle until they overthrow.

But in the ANC we are saying that - despite what they have done - we feel that there is a possibility to reduce the bloodshed. I think we should not forget the history of the ANC, which was an organisation which at the very beginning campaigned strongly for a political settlement to the SA problem.

The armed struggle has been imposed on us and I want to say something about that. The acceptance of the armed struggle came as a result of strenuous debates within the ANC - because so strong were the notions of non-violence. But, the armed struggle has made significant contributions to the present political chemistry in our country.

Question: Could you explain why? A lot of journalists are discounting that now.

Hani: I think the present political landscapes are as a result of the ANC accepting in its strategies armed struggle as part of those strategies. And I am convinced that we have scored certain successes.

our armed struggle has been a great mobiliser in terms of the youth. Armed struggle the mobiliser, the inspirer. It has given pride to the oppressed that look "we are no longer turning the other cheek, we have got to resist, we have got to hit back, even if we are picking a stone or a molotov cocktail". So that important national pride of saying "look I am not surrendering, those guys have got guns, but with me I have got a military wing." It is a military wing which can't be compared to the SADF. But the fact is, it is a military wing which attracted into the struggle thousands of young people.

And inculcated into the minds of the young people, especially the young people, the need to fight back, the need to defend the people, the need if you like, to join the struggle gun in hand. I am not going to plead, I am not going to beg for mercy, I am going to fight back, even if at the moment I just have a .....

So thousands of young people were influenced by this example, example of defiance, and readiness to pay the supreme sacrifice.

Secondly, it has brought about insecurity amongst the whites. If armed struggle was ineffective SA would not have militarised itself in the way it has done. They have had to build bases along the borders, they have had to patrol, they have had to pay, suspend substantial amounts — billions in fact — for defence. Defending against what if armed struggle has been ineffective. They have had to work out strategies against the neighbouring countries to prevent MK forces from coming in. They have had to create counter-insurgency units, they have had to dehumanise themselves by setting up murder squads, because of that basis foar.

Armed struggle has been responsible for failures of some

of the enemies strategies. Armed struggle contributed a lot to the abortive municiple elections. ... and collaborators in the African townships have been frightened by the very fact that they knew that military action would be taken against them for collaborating. While it is true that political methods are the primary weapon, but in the even of stubbornness, armed struggle has played the role of clearing some of the worst collaborators. It is taught our people that it doesn't pay to collaborate.

Question: There is a feeling that the potential that MK had in the past no longer exists. So it is important to say what the armed struggle can contribute today, what is its potential?

Hani: My reply would be that the tendency has been to look on this thing on a comparative basis - the ANC has been able to do A B C D a year ago, two years ago. There is a feeling that the level of MK capacity is going down because it has not risen to expectations. People forget that MK has achieved what it has achieved against the background of considerable difficulties, enjoying in fact no rear base one can speak of,...having to struggle to infiltrate even three cadres at a time. And MK has been affected by the developments in Southern Africa: the negotiations leading to the independence of Namibia, the abondonment of camps in Angola and the need to establish camps elsewhere. I am not looking for mitigating factors.

But despite all that we are an army which has had a steady growth... at the moment MK has got soldiers, and has got material, and still commands a lot of sympathy and support amongst the oppressed youths in Soweto, KwaMashu, Guguletu and other places - who sometimes feel let down if MK doesn't intervene.

The problem of MK is also the problem of the slow development of the underground of the ANC, and the movement is painfully aware of these problems. A lot of attention is being paid to the development of that underground.

Why do you think there has been such difficulty building that underground

I think there has been some slowness in the huilding of the underground for a number of reasons. I think there a basic misconception here. Our people tended to feel there primary role was to work and be active in the that MDM. And they felt that the question of the underground and the armed struggle belonged to those guys in exile. this was the basic misconception which has got to be corrected. An underground must be built by those people inside the country, who know the conditions, who are aware of the activities of the enemy, including the security organs of the system, who can monitor even the individuals who are involved in that underground, because underground is always a target of infiltration and

surveillance by the enemy. So there is a need for our people to do a rethinking on this question of building the underground, with its combat forces.

And I believe that given these attitudes of our people that it is the task of the people outside to build the
underground - we have achieved a lot. Because we have had to
send cadres into the country, in most cases without
reception, and these cadres have had to build reception for
themselves. And I think the achievements were considerable
given those disadvantages.

Our people inside the country in fighting for the task to mobilise thousands into active struggle, neglected a basic area of struggle under conditions of a fascist or police state: the need to have underground structures which are unknown to the enemy. Because I think we revolutionaries must have the foresight always to feel that even at a givaen time we have some space for mobilisation that it is in the nature of a totalitarian regime to resort to repressive measures, which would require clandestine work. And I think that lesson was not absorbed by us. All the time people kept popping up and being chopped and exposing all the cadres, some of the best cadres in terms of overt work.

Question: But is there time to correct this?

Well, I don't know but I feel strongly that this Hani: We shouldn't be caught with the should be corrected. euphoria of the rhetoric, the sweet rhetoric of De Klerk. Because we don't know the agenda of De Klerk (I wish I knew). De Klerk is the leader of the NP, an NP committed to ideology of white domination, and he is not just somebody who has emerged from nowhere. He has always abeen a senior member of the NP. Those who have been monitoring his activities in the NP say he has got a reputation for being a verkrampte. Well, we don't say people don't change. but the point I want to make is that the NP can't preside over serious changes in our country. Certainly, it can't prescribe the genuine changes, the democratic changaes because the NP is responding to the pressures of a struggle. It has no strategy of change, serious change, democrataic changes. The restructuring and rearranging are being done in order to give it more time to refurbish apartheid.

I think personally the NP is committed to weakening and dividing the national liberation movement. And I think they are still committed to a policy of the stick and the carrot. I think what we have achieved is to deprive the NP of any coherent strategy. Hence the confusion, the groping for answers.

And we must also remember that they have been deprived of coherent answers before because the struggle has actually nullified or neutralised all their strategies. You know racist domination is at the crossroads.

Question: But what if they cross over a little bit more in the right direction. What if De Klerk does unban the ANC, release all political prisoners? Can he not grab the initiative?

Hani: If De Klerk unbans the ANC, lifts restrictions against the ANC, stops all political trials, lets say if for instance he responds positively to our Harare Declaration package in terms of creating the climate, I think unbanning the ANC will cause more troubles for De Klerk in the following way.

He will have unleased an avalanche in the sense that the will have at its disposal most of its experienced leaders at a number of levels - national, regional - with the experiéance they have gained over decades struggle. And you can't just unban the ANC. You will expected to do something more. What is the next step. Unban the ANC and so what? The ANC continues with the struggle. It steps up the mass struggle, works together with the MDM and the trade unions to demand for the transfer of political power, for a democratic South Africa. The unbanning of the ANC does not bring about a democratic South Africa. regime will have to sit down and given consideration to which is the military wing of the ANC. Members of MK members of the ANC. And I am sure the ANC won't call off the armed struggle because it has been unbanned". Mk is not merely there because the ANC is a banned organisation. It is an answer to the violence of the regime.

So I believe that the Armed struggle will continue even if the ANC is unbanned. "Because the regime will still use violence, the regime will still resort to its military and security forces. The regime will still have to answer a state of armed conflict between itself and the ANC. And that state of conflict wont disappear becasue the ANC is unbanned, because the ANC is legalised. Do you think overnight now the regime will stop beating up the workers, shooting workers, dispersing demonstrations. Will it stop raiding homes? Will it stop using its security laws to ban people and to detain people. So the ANC will be placed in a position where it will still be required to answer back to the violence of the regime.

So the unbanning of the ANC opens a Pandora Box for the regime. the regime can't just unban the ANC and mark time and think that is the end.

Question: But internationally, do you think it could get sanctions lifted by unbanning the ANC and meeting other reform demands?

Hani: It think there will be pressures to lift sanctions if the ANC is unbanned. I think pro-SA lobbies will work hard in America, Britain and other countries. They'll say: "Look De Klerk has taken a positive step towards creating a climate for negotiations, why do we punish him further." The ANC faces a challenge in terms of its international work. We

say that nothing should be relaxed until there is a democratic transformation in SA. It is going to be an uphill struggle. So we need now to work hard to consolidate our support network throughout the world. To say, why do we leave a task unfinished? Is the struggle not for democracy. Why do you lesson pressures on this fellow? Your pressures have been responsible for releasing Mandela (when he is released), releasing the seven, unbanning the ANC, lifting restrictions, and creating a space for political activity. Why don't you push the struggle to the final end — to a democratic SA? I think that should be the approach.

There must be a similar approach to our people at home - to say, you can't stop halfway.

In fact, this is a time for more serious sacrifices. And I believe seriously that we as the ANC should continue all forms of struggle, even when we are unbanned. And of course, we as a leadership will have to pause, to sit down to discuss whether there is no need for mass mobilisation, for mass action at present time, and a bit of this and this. We have got to look at the situation.

We must be firm in principle and flexible in tactics.

For instance, one would say - although there is no position on this - why should we attack a man like Holomisa, when Holomisa is actually articulating good positions. Is there is need to conduct military operations in Transkei. We have got to ask ourselves that sort of question. There were good reasons for attacking the Transkei under Matanzima, who was a despot and a leading quisling.

Question: So you can suspend armed struggle in areas where you have clearly won the ground?

Hani: When we have won a space for democracy and considerable support in that area and less harassment (probably there will not be no harassment at all — but less harassment). There are certain thinks we should look into for instance. Certain unanswered questions, there's no answers. But I think we should raise the question, where you feel there is growing sympathy from the black police, there would be a need to consider — this has not been discussed in the movement — but we would need to consider is it correct to continue harassing black police. I'm not sure, but these are some of the problems that might come up because of the struggle. What are the implications of the emergence of a few Rockmans in our struggle?

A movement is faced with these problems at a particular period. Our leadership is saying, if there is the unbanning of the ANC, that look you guys in the army, let us wait for de Klerk - this is just a hypothetical question - for a month or two and see what is the next step. I am not saying they will do that. But let's remember that Mkkremains under the point I want to make is that we need MK, we need to strengthen MK even that period for instance, where the ANC would say: you guys

cool it for two weeks. We would use that period to rebuild ourselves, to have weapons, to stock weapons.

Because you see, **De Klerk and the SADF** have not yet been transformed into lambs. You know given the indoctrination of years that army might even revolt against De Klerk. Why don't we see the possibility of an army revolting against De Klerk? I am saying this is a distinct possibility, but we mustn't dismiss it. (This is) an army which had been brought up on basis the organised and ٥f indoctrination, on the basis of upholding the theory of herenvolkism. Some of those generals might decide that this fellow is betraying us, let us crush and even destroy the present space.

Question: You have mentioned that De Klerk will try to divide the ANC and that you have got to convince people not to stop halfway, particularly cadres who are homesick. This poses a difficult problem to the leadership.

It is a time of hardwork on our part. We face the enormous task of educating our cadres politically. We must build our cadres on the question of strategy and tactics. We must convince our cadres through their struggle, through their sacrifice, through their patience, through their remaining in the camps and being loyal, we have achieved certgain victories, that they have come a long way, they need even to train better, that for the emergency of different phases in our struggle we must even prepare some of them for the task of political mobilisation, both overt and covert. We must prepare them for the role of addressing rallies - some of them. Others we must prepare them for the role of the political underground, the role of agitators. Naturally, some of them must be prepared for the role of building units in the country. We must put before our cadres very frankly the perspectives of a whole range of a struggle under the present conditions in SA. Our cadres must accept that there is a new - I'm not sure how permanent it will be - atmosphere in our country today, a situation which allows for some open political activity. And that should be fully utilised. We must also teach our cadres that there is a need to fight and talk and if talks fail we must go back and fight. I think we must struggle very hard for comrades not to feel that sitting down with our enemy is betrayal. That when the enemy asks for negotiations because he is feeling the pressures of your struggle - and it is not going to be easy - but I think some of the leaders of the ANC must spend time explaining these tactics to our cadres.

And we must tell our cadres that we must also improve their quality because as far as I'm concern having fought for democracy they are going to be the core of a new South African army, a core of a new SAn security force, and that they have got a duty to make our leaders negotiate — if they have to negotiate — from a strong position. I think what faces MK today is to use this space, to make it strong, and to bring about qualitative operations so that when Mandels

and Sisulu - and the entire leadership - are given a mandate by the entire membership to go and talk, they must talk from a position of political and military strength. I think that is what faces us.

I am also not worried about us seen not to be operating, if only we are doing the groundwork. It is important to do the groundwork. And sometimes people will have to accept the fact that we might decide to spend some time building ourselves. Our people must accept the situation. They might not get bomb blasts and ambushes because we have got to do the groundwork and build ourselves.

A revolutionary movement is never in a state of waging a permanent offensive. There are periods of an intensive offensive, but there are periods of a lull.

Question: Was there any decision in the NEC meeting on the return of exiles? The Harare Declaration does not ask for the return as a precondition for creating a climate for negotiations. The return of exiles has been more logically connected to a mutual cessation of violence.

Hani: We have always felt in the ANC that we shall never make a demand for the return of exiles. Our premise is that when we finally succeed in having the ANC unbanned and legalised, we shall go back to our country and continue our struggle. We don't think it depends on the regime to say come back. We have always organised to go back to our country. And for us the unbanning of the ANC means that we will just go back and continue the activities of the ANC in an organised and systematic manner inside the country. The agaenda will be ours on how we go back inside the country.

Question: You may go back illegally?

Hanis We can go back illegally, but we can fly back. We will or yamise this together with our leaders inside the country. They themselves will arrange our coming back. They will arrange the security of our going back. And we are not going to enter into arrangements with De Klerk on how we go back. We are not going to be asking SAA to organise charter flights for us. It is going to be a decision discussed by us outside and the leadership inside. I mean the mechanism of going back.

Question: So what you are saying is that if the ANC is unbanned tomorrow, the leadership might decide to send its cadres back?

Hani: It will decide how to organise to send its cadres back — the entire leadership — in an organised manner. In such a manner that when those cadres go back, they are already deployed, they have got tasks of our movement. They are deployed. We are not going back as returning refugees. We have never accepted the concept of being refugees. We are not refugees. The Movement will map out the tasks of each

and every one of us, where we go, what tasks, who should remain behind, because there will still be a need to leave people behind to service our organisation, to be in touch with the international community. So if De Klerk does not behave, we don't start from the beginning now, working out alternative strategies.

Question: I have heard that De Klerk made a suggestion to the frontline states that wherever there is a concentration of ANC members, they should be allowed to set up consulates where exiles could register and then return with the assistance of the churches.

Hani: That has not been put to us. And we certainly would not use a bouth African consulate as an instrument, as a medium for our returning back. Of course, the mechanism of our returning back will have to be reached as a result of our discussions with the regime. The regime can't just decide unilaterally this is the way the ANC should come back. We are not surrendering, we are not coming back as a defeated group. We have not surrendered to that regime. That regime, the very fact that it is speaking about negotiations is an implication of the recognition of the ANC as a party in the conflict.

Question: Would the ANC accept something like one stage further than the Harare Declaration - talks about talks, prior to the preconditions being implemented?

Hani: I think there is no avoiding talks about talks. Because before you go to the negotiating table there are certain issues you have got to settle, issues of procedure, issues of how we begin. And I think at the moment when that regime accepts that package of preconditions, it is going to be important for the regime to meet the ANC. To say that you guys now that we have implemented the climate, how do we go about negotiations.

Question: But would you demand the whole package being implemented, or a good part of the package being implemented?

Hani: We demand the whole package. Because that regime has got to demonstrate a lot of good will, precisely because our people don't believe that regime in the light of its track record? And again our people must feel that the regime has smoved away in certain areas. For instance, how will it be interpreted by our people if we are to go into negotiations while the ANC is still banned, when political trials are still raging; when the regime has not said anything about these people on death row who are precisely there because of apartheid, because of oppression. We don't want the enemy to chose within that package, issues which it prefers. Because you see we are accountable to a constituency, to the oppressed people of SA, and the ANC doesn't want to lose

that credibility among its people. That's why we don't believe in a secret agenda for negotiations.

Part of the reason why we are insisting on the unbanning of the ANC is because we want to be able to consult our people so we get a mandate from our people.

Question: But the problem is today you refused to disclose Mandela's communication to the NEC. That sounds like there is a secret agenda.

Hani: No, no, no. Mandela himself has made it plain that he is not negotiating - and he is not negotiating. But regime spokespersohs go to Mandela and Mandela tells about what they are saying. But there is an element in terms of the oppressed. You can't confidentiality disclose what the regime is saying - Mandela is not taking positions on behalf of the ANC. He is keeping the informed because he can't stop these people coming to talk Of course, Mandela, as a senior member, explains to to him. spokespersons of the regime about the policies of But of course, there are certain things we should within a movement whilst we go through a process of informing certain levels of our movement. A time will when some of these communications will be made public. But I assure you that the ANC does not believe in a secret We are saying to the regime, come out and explain agenda. you positions. So far that they are not doing so.

Except now and again they make a timid step forward - allowing people to demonstrate, releasing our leaders, allowing them to travel to Lusaka. I think the enemy of course is in trouble. Certainly afraid of the rightwing. They are prisoners of a situation of their own making. In a way they are calling upon us to help them. ... the problem is that De Klerk is still the leader of the National Party. He doesn't represent all the people of SA. The majority of the people of SA are for democracy - including the whites.

He will be surprised at the sort of transformation within the white community. But it is our duty through struggle to push De Klerk out of a NP prison. He is in a NP prison.

De Klerk must become a De Gualle. De Gaulle had to also pull out of prison. He was a prisoner of the rightwing, of the colonialists, even of the settlers in Algeria. But the intensification of the struggle in Algeria forced him to get out. Well it remains whether De Klerk will be a Winston Field in Zimbabwe who was replaced by Ian Smith because he was indecisive. It remains to the whites whether they want to go the way of Ian Smith and get a Treunicht who will bring about such bloodshed for another 10 years, or whether they would like a leader who will negotiate for a democratic solution to our problems.

And people mustn't forget that the guerrilla warfare in Zimbabwe was dismissed and was taken seriously only two years before the Lancaster House. Before that Zapu and Zanu were regarded as ineffective guerrilla organisations. But any guerrilla movement looks at its strengths, looks at its

weaknesses. Improves on the basis of its own experience, and prepares its force for a stepping up of the struggle. And I think the ruling class must not forget the lessons of the history of armed struggles throughout the world.

Question: Can we look at the Consultative Conference?

Hani: It is no longer a Consultative Conference, it is a National Conference that is going to involve members of the ANC from inside and outside the country, irrespective of whether the ANC is unbanned or banned.

question: Have you decided on the mix between internal and external representation?

Hani: No we have not decided on the numbers. It will be resolved in the course of our discussions with the leaders of the ANC inside the country. But it must reflect the various formations within the ANC. The youth, the women, the workers, the rural areas. Because the decisions of that conference I am sure will be so historical, so significant,

Question: Will it be delayed now that you have transformed it into a National Conference?

Hani: I don't think so. There is a feeling of urgency because of the present situation, because of the present challenges — that we need this conference to discuss very openly how we move forward, how do we unite the oppressed people of SA, how do we broaden the front, how to work with the MDM, how do we build MK into a people's army. This will be a situation where MK will be discussed, not only by us who have been in the fore of things in the past 26 years but by comrades who are thinking so freshly about the problems of MK, comrades inside the country who have seen us in action who will be in a position about being open and being critical about the way we are handling things.

Question: Do you think there will be major leadership changes?

Hani: Yes there will be fresh elections of the leadership the ANC. There are many people now who have been participating in our struggle, some of whom have been outstanding in terms of their contribution, young people who have already made very sterling contributions, and they have to be considered for the leadership of the Movement. There are also senior comrades who have served terms in imprisonment for both for ANC and MK activities. So there must be a need for a new mandate and a new leadership. The people must decide through democratic processes. If the feeling is that those in the leadership have done well, the people must decide whether to return them. But there would be a need to have the spirit of strengthening, invigorating

realities of the struggle in our country. Of course, the ANC would have a broad spectrum from which to chose, given the present situation. Some members have come in from the underground, some have come in through the MDM (it is very difficult to know who is ANC and who is not ANC there), fraom the trade unions, from the rural areas. And these would be young men and women, old people who have kept us afloat through all the years. I think the spirit will be to build an effective leadership of the ANC.

Question: Do you think the President would want to step down?

WE would certainly - and I am expressing a personal opinion - resist OR's appeal to step down if he were to make it. He is an important unifying figure, just like Mandela and Sisulu. His achievements as a leader are just incredible. We would have of course to organise ourselves in such a way that we reduce his workload. But we certainly need him.