



FW de Klerk
FOUNDATION

STATEMENT BY FORMER PRESIDENT FW DE KLERK ON THE DEATH OF PIK BOTHA

I have learned with great sadness of the death of Pik Botha.

He was one of the leading personalities in South African politics from 1970 until his retirement from active politics in 1996. He served with great distinction as South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1977 until 1994 - and was one of the world's longest-serving foreign ministers. During this period, he resolutely defended South Africa against growing international isolation.

He played a leading role in South Africa's relationship with South West Africa/ Namibia. Firstly, as a member of South Africa's legal team in the International Court of Justice's positive judgement in 1966 and subsequently, between 1974 and 1989, in South Africa's protracted negotiations with the Western Contact Group and the United Nations on the independence of Namibia. In 1988 he concluded the tripartite agreement with Angola and Cuba on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and the implementation of the UN independence process in Namibia. The agreement was of pivotal importance to the evolution of the political situation in South Africa.

In intense discussions that took place within the NP leadership during the 1980s, Pik Botha was a prominent and consistent advocate of reform, constitutional negotiations and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. He supported President PW Botha's reform measures and subsequently was one of the strongest proponents of the constitutional transformation process that we initiated on 2 February 1990. He played a constructive role in the subsequent negotiations and after the 1994 election, served as an NP Minister in the Government of National Unity.

His colourful style and forthright rhetoric won him widespread popularity among the white electorate and encouraged him, in 1978 and 1989, to stand as a candidate for the leadership of the National Party.

Perhaps his most important contribution, was the manner in which he and his colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs held the line against growing international pressure until the collapse of international communism in 1989 opened the way to the negotiations that led to the establishment of our nonracial constitutional democracy.

He was a unique and colourful personality who made an enormous contribution to the peaceful and constitutional resolution of the great historic challenges with which we had to wrestle before 1994.

He was, for many years, a valued colleague and friend. My wife Elita and I would like to extend my condolences to Ina and to his family.

**Issued by the FW de Klerk Foundation on behalf of former President FW de Klerk
12 October 2018**