

**Vice Chancellors' Oration 2006**

***“No Separate Future”***

Presented by

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to mark the

**International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

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**The University of Notre Dame Australia**

## **“NO SEPARATE FUTURE”**

**As I was preparing to come here, I reflected on some of my earlier interactions with Australia: demonstrating against the whites only immigration policy; going to the “Embassy in a Tent” established in Canberra by the Aboriginal people, and expressed solidarity with their struggle; visits to campaign for Australian support for a sports boycott, and economic sanctions against the apartheid regime. Later I came to Perth to explain our negotiations for a democratic South Africa. In my 10 years as Speaker of the National Assembly I came here and met with many of your parliamentarians and presiding officers.**

**Today, I am particularly appreciative of the opportunity to speak in Western Australia, as you try to grapple with problems of cultural and religious diversity and the establishment of a common society based on a commitment to human rights. It is a problem, which challenges many countries today**

**The concept of a Vice Chancellors Oration is quite intimidating. I will not be presenting a discourse on various academic theories on resolution of conflict, concepts of culture and multiculturalism, nor examine whether civilizations clash or engage in dialogue. Rather I would like to discuss with you and explain how we as South Africans found our way through the many theories about race and culture, and whether uniformity was a necessary prerequisite for social cohesion. These offered different visions and scenarios for our future. Eventually, while remaining true to our fundamental principles, we succeeded in coming together to determine where we wanted to go. We made our assessments as we progressed and made choices among the alternatives before us.**

**I cannot claim to speak on behalf of all South Africans. As a member of the African National Congress I will try and describe what I saw, learnt and experienced during some of the defining moments in my country’s history.**

**For more than two centuries there was ideological contestation to determine the nature of the South African nation in the making. The rulers of Australia and South Africa shared with other Europeans the racist view that the peoples of Europe who were “white” were superior, while those who were racially or culturally different were also inherently inferior. When they left their shores as**

conquerors or settlers, Europeans assumed that those they encountered were of limited capacity and not deserving of respect or equality. Hence they dispossessed the indigenous people of their lands and wealth, restricted their freedom of movement and confined them to special areas and decimated the population by means that we would today consider genocide, often enslaving those who survived. This was often done out of a misguided conception of Christian duty and a claimed desire to protect them. As we are now aware this impacted on the people of many countries and continents: the first nations of North America; the peoples in various countries in South America, and Africa as well as Australia where many still under threat.

I assume, you are familiar with your own history, and what was done to the Aboriginal people here. However you may not be aware that the oldest inhabitants of South Africa, the San and the Khoi peoples were subjected to similar treatment. However, the population in the interior of South Africa was too large and fought many wars as they resisted dispossession, conquest and colonisation. Both Afrikaner and British settlers treated them as people of limited capacity, and generally excluded them from the new societies that were emerging. There were a few missionaries and liberal whites, who had a different vision, but they were overwhelmed by British racism and Boer fundamentalism, which were later exploited by imperial financial interests stimulated by the mineral discoveries.

When the British prevailed over the Boer Republics, the House of Commons had little compunction in enacting a Constitution for the newly formed Union of South Africa, which denied the franchise to the African people in order to secure control of our country's mineral resources. Thus we were condemned to a further 90 years of violence and oppression.

In contrast to the dominant ideology, the African people aspired to a common Christian non-racial society which all South Africans could build together. Convinced that they had lost the Wars of Resistance because they had fought separately, their leaders called for the unity of all African people, and co-operation with the other subordinated groups who were similarly opposing colonialism and racist policies in the country. They also worked with those whites who shared similar values.

Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century the two visions remained in contestation.

Whites in South Africa continued to build their separate political, economic and military power. Soon after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, Africans were dispossessed of land and were confined to 13% the land. This remained the situation for over 80 years and only changed with the advent of a democratic government.

The African people did not deviate from their vision and succeeded in uniting across historical divisions of language and culture, a process assisted by

economic development and urbanisation. Their commitment to the non-racial vision remained intact. Increasingly the oppressed began to work together and undertook joint campaigns. However, they met with growing intransigence more racism and violence. Deputations and representations were rejected. Bantu education was introduced. The few rights Africans had were removed, including the remaining titles to freehold land. Peaceful demonstrations met with growing violence. There were bans on individuals, banishment and house arrest.

This served to consolidate unity. The vision and aspirations were set out in the Freedom Charter, which proclaimed that South Africa belonged to all who lived in it, black and white. In 1955, at the Congress of the People the Charter was adopted by 3000 delegates from organizations representing the diverse spectrum of the population. Ironically, those who supported apartheid were also represented, as the police and security forces attended and dispersed the meeting with violence. Here were laid the foundations of the non-racial future that is now being realized: with the Charter's principles incorporated in the Constitution of democratic South Africa and forming the basis of much of our policy objectives these past 11 years.

The ideological challenge and threat of unified action brought a harsh response. One hundred and fifty six leaders of all races were arrested and charged with Treason. Resistance continued and after the Sharpeville massacre, the liberation movements were banned many leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment, thousands were imprisoned and many more went into exile, or became refugees. Without any legal avenues in which to operate, the shift to an armed struggle was inevitable.

Internationally, the blatant racism of the Nazis and revelations of the Holocaust had raised awareness of the consequences of racist ideologies. The considerable participation of colonial people in the War and their demand for equality and independence stimulated the establishment of the UN. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and international humanitarian law extended with the international conventions on genocide, racism, discrimination against women, and others, providing first for civil and political rights and later for what are now known as second and third generation human rights. There was a shift in emphasis to the rights of people rather than states and rulers.

The overt expression of the old forms of racism gave way to the assertion of cultural differences among people, which were allegedly rigid, absolute and incompatible. I will return to this new racism, as it currently poses one of the major challenges to many of us.

In South Africa also, apartheid began to be explained as a matter of national preference and its rationalization shifted from physical and mental superiority, to an alleged recognition of cultural diversity and making provision for preservation and the "separate development" of ethnic or national groups.

**South Africa suddenly became a country of many different nations, which needed to be kept apart. Apartheid was extended and entrenched in the laws of the country, the population was further divided and separated spatially and in every sphere of human activity. Revealingly, the white population was simply defined in terms of colour and considered a single nation regardless of culture religion or language. Blacks were divided along lines of language and perceived, and at times invented, ethnic identity with the coloured and people of Indian origin similarly categorized and put into their own compartments. Common endeavor as well as any form of organized interaction was prohibited; while the walls and fences grew higher and more impermeable.**

**Separate development continued to gain support from the white only electorate. It was applied with a demented vigor. In less than a decade, over 3 million people were forcibly removed and taken to areas arbitrarily demarcated for occupation by different ethnic and linguistic groups. Often these areas were merely scattered strips of barren land similar to the areas where your Aborigine people are settled. Bantustans, allegedly “independent” states were created and recognized only by Pretoria. They were provided with separate flags and trappings of states, separate departments of education, housing, finance etc. and a myriad of separate apartheid defined institutions, all of which were dysfunctional. Increasing levels of violence was used to maintain the policy, which in turn resulted in greater resistance. The economy continued to weaken as sanctions and isolation had their impact. Neighboring states bordering the country were destabilised, their borders violated, and rebel armies trained and armed to fight elected governments. Nonetheless their support for the liberation movements remained.**

**The ANC and PAC had been recognized by the UN General Assembly as representatives of the people of South Africa. This enabled us to participate in and learn from the various debates around the development of human rights and the various Covenants. The ANC committed itself to their realization and claiming the rights for all South Africans, integrated them and the values and culture into our own aspirations and programs.**

**Pressured by internal resistance, and growing condemnation and action by Anti-Apartheid movements and governments in many countries, Pretoria tried to introduce reforms. As the regime continued to deny even the possibility of a common society, they proved unacceptable and unworkable.**

**The price of maintaining white privilege became exorbitant. Whites emigrated – some to Australia, as they reminded us during the last cricket series played here. Growing numbers of young white men left to avoid conscription and families emigrated to settle elsewhere. Increasingly, skilled and professional black South Africans also emigrated.**

**With no solutions coming from their government, there was growing support for the democratic forces inside and outside the country. Some white South Africans**

**began to reach out to the ANC in exile, which had been demonized. Denied access to information by censorship few whites knew anything about the organization. Students, academics, church leaders, began coming to Lusaka or London, loaded with questions, looking for answers and possible reassurance. Business came to seek guarantees for free enterprise or at least a non-communist system, which they had been led to believe was on the cards. A group of Afrikaner intellectuals came to Dakar in Senegal, then lawyers and judges. One by one they began to explore with the ANC its common vision and what the new South Africa might hold for them.**

**In interaction with these groups the ANC was required to go beyond opposition to apartheid and elaborate on and put its principles and vision on the table. Documents and statements setting out a commitment to multi-party democracy, an independent judiciary, a written constitution with a Constitutional Court, were issued. This helped to clarify some of the detail of our policies, and the specificity provided reassurance.**

**On reflection, that mutual reaching out by both black and white South Africans in 1985- 89; while the ANC was banned and the armed struggle was being escalated, played a significant role in the process of coming together to develop a common future. The documents and record show that there was genuine engagement, discussion and changes in positions. For us it confirmed that when we could meet and discuss as South Africans we could chart a way forward. Whites began to gain confidence that in the vision of the ANC there was a place for them, and that their language and culture would be respected and protected.**

**Over the same period, separately from these initiatives and known only to a few people on either side, secret “exploratory” discussions between Pretoria and members of the ANC leadership began. In prison, Mr Mandela took the initiative to try and talk to members of the apartheid government and to urge them to begin negotiations with ANC leaders in exile. It was then President PW Botha and not F. W. de Klerk, who initially authorized the subsequent contact and discussions, and who later met with his prisoner.**

**These were not negotiations. While the world had come to know the ANC and what it stood for, the apartheid leaders remained isolated in their self made ignorance. Now, P.W Botha was motivated by a desire to assess Mr Mandela and the real nature of the opposition facing him. Mr Mandela had made clear that he would not negotiate and had smuggled a message out of prison declaring that “prisoners cannot negotiate” only free men could do so. His intention in opening dialogue was to try to bring about negotiations with the ANC leadership, which was outside the country. These covert exchanges, were later extended to meetings between officials and some members of the leadership.**

**As is known, prisoners were gradually released. Eventually, the ban on the ANC and other liberation organisations was lifted. Most of the leaders including Mr Mandela were freed and some exiles were allowed to return.**

**There were many different expectations among white South Africans of what would follow: fears of a bloodbath as retribution was sought; for others, hopes that the ANC would disintegrate through a struggle for powers among different leaders. Some security forces saw an opportunity to identify and liquidate ANC supporters and leaders. Many white politicians expected that they would be able to retain power by winning in discussion what they had failed to achieve through repression. None of this occurred.**

**The first contacts were about the return of exiles, freeing of prisoners, and ensuring freedom of speech and political activity to level the playing field. The ANC refused to accede to any requirement that that it lay down its arms and declare a unilateral ceasefire, so long as the regimes defence forces and other apartheid security agencies retained their formations and arms.**

**The ANC's priorities were that we needed to begin serious negotiations about the future as soon as possible, without pre-conditions. We accepted that everyone who wished to engage should be allowed to do so, since there had never been an election that could definitively determine the degree of support for any party or leader. On the other hand we did need agreement on a common objective, and were wary of being trapped in endless and aimless dialogue.**

**For more than a year was no agreement to start negotiations. The National Party continued to rule, the release of Nelson Mandela and other leaders had eased international pressure, and some believed the teeth of the opposition had been drawn and the National Party could unilaterally determine and make the changes it felt were necessary.**

**Covert operations were undertaken by special units of the security forces and hit squads to incite conflict, which was presented as inter-ethnic rivalry. Rational examination showed that those involved on all sides were almost entirely Zulu, and in subsequent trials it emerged there was a deliberate plan to try and weaken the ANC by inciting violence between supporters of the ANC and IFP who had previously lived harmoniously in one area. This violence, which spread to other parts of the country led to a greater loss of life than the armed struggle. There were many other similar attempts to create an impression of an inter-ethnic bloodbath.**

**Eventually the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was convened and we committed ourselves to bring about "an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship, patriotism and loyalty, pursuing amidst our diversity, freedom equality and security for all irrespective of race**

**colour sex or creed; a country free from apartheid or any other form of discrimination or domination.\***

**(\*Declaration of Intent of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa: December 1991.)**

**This was a major break through: an agreement by all that notwithstanding our diversity, we were one nation in which everyone could feel secure. On that basis, it was now possible to negotiate to resolve differences.**

**Women had been active in the liberation struggle for many decades. They had participated in the resistance to conquest, and began to make representation against restrictions on their movement and economic activity as early as 1899. This year we are marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a historic march by women to the Union buildings to present a petition calling for an end to renewed attempts to restrict their freedom of movement through the imposition of passes.**

**In exile we were active in the international women's movement.**

**Gradually, women from the developing countries succeeded in promoting an understanding of the links between peace, justice, equality, human rights and development and placed these on the international agenda. These are now encompassed in the concept of human security.**

**South African women had noted that though women participated in the anti-colonial struggles and fought in liberation wars, it was men who agreed on the settlements, and thereafter the rhetoric of equality was not translated into policy. We were determined that this should not happen in South Africa. ANC women mobilized to ensure that the issue of effective equality of women and their full emancipation was integrated into all aspects of ANC policy. When the ANC returned and began to operate legally in the country, we took the initiative to bring all South African women's organisations together, regardless of political affiliation, race, religion or language. We created a Women's National Coalition on a platform that the political and constitutional changes being discussed must result in changes in the lives of all women. In my view this was the most representative organization in South Africa, before the first democratically elected Parliament. Of course one significant group was missing – men! But then, the absence of representatives of the female half of the population has not prevented political parties and governments the world over from speaking on behalf of the entire nation; nor the UN claiming to speak on behalf of the peoples of the world. Has it? So why does democracy or representatively only arise when women are involved?**

**The Coalition mobilized women and was able to pressure all political parties to agree that highest negotiating body would consist of two representatives of each party, one of whom had to be a woman.**

**The Coalition embarked on a massive participatory research program that resulted in a Charter setting out women's self defined agenda for change. We also built a cross party women's network. The participation of women made a significant difference. Their involvement in the negotiations and the constitution writing process resulted giving us one of the most gender sensitive constitutions in the world and which incorporates second and third generation human rights.**

**Decision making is based on a number of factors: academic or technical knowledge; a comprehensive understanding of the issue or problem and the potential impact of solutions, combined with the life experience that informs the choices we make. If society excludes the experience of more than half of the population who are women, or that of the many groups of people who are marginalised, how can we expect that we will develop and implement policies that will provide solutions that meet the needs of the entire society? The fullest representation of women in all decision making bodies is not simply a matter of justice or human rights. It results in improved policies and better governance.**

**In the first election one in three ANC candidates were women. While other parties did not accept quotas, the participation of women had been accepted as necessary, and in the first Parliament 29% of MPs were women. This figure has grown. In the recent local government elections one in of every two ANC candidates had to be a woman, a figure that will be maintained in the next national elections in 2009. Currently 40% of Cabinet members are women as are three of the 4 Presiding Officers of Parliament.**

**Let me return to the negotiations.**

**After we began multiparty talks they were on occasion broken off. But the imperative for a new and legitimate government was overwhelming, and ways were found of returning to the negotiating table.**

**The ANC was anxious that we did not lose the peace. We did not seek a settlement that allowed us entry into the existing South African society in which racism had been deeply embedded. Rather we wanted one which enabled South Africans to build anew in the framework of the long held vision and aspirations of our people. To arrive at this required a great deal of heart searching, compromises and creativity.**

**While we had hoped that negotiations could focus on an early election we had to recognise that this could not be done without the legal framework of a new constitution. Hence we agreed that we would negotiate an "interim" Constitution, and an elected Constitutional Assembly would write and approve a final constitution. Ironically, the "interim Constitution" had to be enacted by a totally unrepresentative Parliament, which did not have a single African member! Though we could not accept the concept of group or minority rights, we did recognise that there were genuine fears about the future. Hence, we entrenched fundamental**

principles in the interim constitution, and provided that the Constitutional Court would have to certify that the final Constitution complied with these principles.

We could not accept the NP demand for co-governance in the Constitution, but agreed on a government of National Unity for a period of five years. All parties had to accept the result of the elections and focus on making it work, as the next election could not be held for a similar period.

Some issues were provided for in principle, but it was left to the elected Parliament to enact the necessary legislation. The most significant of these was the matter of amnesty. We could not accept that those who had imposed apartheid should be allowed to amnesty themselves nor could many of us even consider the possibility of applying to the perpetrators of apartheid as we had done no wrong.

The postamble of the Constitution required the new Parliament to enact legislation providing the procedures for amnesty on the basis that “there is the need for understanding, but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimization” It is on this basis that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established.

This provided for perpetrators of gross violations of human rights to apply for amnesty, which could be granted provided there was full disclosure including naming the others who involved and those who gave the orders.

Those who had been the victims could also appear before the Commission and reveal what had been done and by whom. Many also came to ask the Commission to investigate and find out what had happened to members of their families or communities who were missing. For many South Africans, especially among whites the revelations of what had occurred was a shock. For others it allowed for healing and coming to terms with the past.

Some perpetrators did come forward, made full disclosure and received amnesty. A few families have had difficulty in accepting that these will not be prosecuted. Many perpetrators sought and received forgiveness from their victims. P W Botha refused to appear or accept responsibility. Mr De Klerk expressed regret that people had suffered but refused to accept responsibility for implementing policies that brought the suffering. Judges who applied apartheid laws did not appear, nor did generals of the SADF or members of the private sector. The ANC appeared before the Commission and made submissions to it. ANC leaders accepted responsibility for all actions carried out by our operatives under our orders. To our regret the Commission did not pronounce or consider the concept of a “just war” which we had put forward.

Recently, there are indications that some of the perpetrators who did not apply for or receive amnesty might be prosecuted.

**One needs to recognize that while the election of 1994 was a historic landmark, its main significance was to put in place a legitimate government that could undertake the task of reconstruction.**

**Twelve years later we can claim to have made improvements in changing the material consequences of apartheid. But the backlog in provision of housing, clean water, education, health services is so great, that many are justified in asking where is my house, my child goes to a school where there are not enough teachers and so on.**

**We have won much acclaim for the management of the economy. We have not borrowed from the IMF. Inflation has been reduced to 4-6%, the currency has been stabilised; by raising more revenue we have managed to reduce taxes and increase social spending in each budget. However, globalization and the need to restructure the economy has meant we have not managed to create the number of jobs that are needed.**

**Among our greatest challenges is the eradication of racism. The laws have been repealed but attitudes and institutional patterns remain. Many of our institutions still have to be transformed, by changing the assumptions on which they were established: namely the allocation of particular roles to blacks and to whites, as well as to men and to women and then reorganising on the basis of equality. Many of the formerly privileged fail to acknowledge the legacy of apartheid, and see our efforts as reverse racism.**

**Linked to the deracialisation of society is the challenge of managing diversity and forging a nation. We have proceeded on the basis of engaging everyone in shaping an inclusive South Africa. We made provision for eleven official languages. We have made efforts to revive the almost lost languages of the original inhabitants and made efforts to protect their indigenous knowledge and intellectual property.**

**Everyone has the right to practice their religion or culture subject only to the over-riding principles of non-racism and non-sexism. School text books are being revised to include information on many cultures and religions, and to promote respect for our diversity. Constitutional and statutory bodies such as a Human Rights Commission have been established with the power to investigate and where necessary provide appropriate remedies. The list is long, and yet, so very much more remains to be done,**

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**I had intended to speak only on the detail of the process through which South Africans managed a peaceful transition to democracy. However, since my arrival here I am constantly being asked to comment on what needs to be done to establish an inclusive society which brings together people of diverse cultures.**

**As an outsider, I cannot offer a prescription. Indeed there is no universal one. However, there are some questions which I would like to ask about Australia:**

- 1. Do Australians want a multicultural society? One gets an impression that many Australians are like white South Africans, who saw themselves as part of Europe and Britain in particular. If that is the case, then what are you doing in the Southern Hemisphere? Incidentally, are you aware that the culture you or your family left behind, has now changed significantly? Only a dying culture does not evolve. Geographically, Australia is located in an area where for centuries many cultures have thrived and been enriched, with people living in harmony and intermingling with each other. Why did Australia not become part of this region? Would that not have been natural? Any people who wish to isolate themselves from their neighbours, to engage with and identify only with others of their own colour and culture who are literally at the other end of world are racist.**

**The new racists of today, see differences in society as barriers which need to be maintained. Universalist human rights culture should acknowledge differences as diversity that enriches society and which needs to be properly managed. Article 1 of the 1966 Declaration of the Principles of International Cooperation proclaims that each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved, that every people has the right and the duty to develop its culture and that, in their rich variety and diversity all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all humankind.**

**Let me read you part of a report to the United Nations General Assembly from the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism: "In place of the principle of the equal dignity of cultures, -since culture is the product, the achievement of humanity, and humanity is culture – the neo-racists substitute the principles of "cultural difference" and "national identity". This new argument, which is manifestly in conflict with the work of UNESCO and the Declarations and Conventions....tends to consider cultures as tight categories, impervious to outside influences and to interaction. Ideological or religious differences are often to be found at the core of this perverted form of "cultural relativism"**

**"These arguments dressed up to appear democratic and used by the extreme right-wing parties, whose influence is dangerously on the increase, have acquired a certain pedigree, or at least a degree of respectability, enabling many people to subscribe to them. Thus it becomes natural to reject, to exclude, to discriminate against a group or ethnic minority on the basis of its culture or religion, in the name of some sacrosanct 'inability to assimilate'. Implicit in such forms of exclusion is a latent and unavowed feeling of superiority on the part of the majority subtly revive racism in**

its biological and intellectual form. The race which considers itself superior, naturally has a superior culture while others have only subcultures or second rate cultures; the question of cultural values remains unasked.

“In order to combat racism and racial discrimination such arguments must be decoded, the realities engendered by them must be boldly confronted, and the mechanism common to racism and to one of its mutations, the abuse of cultural relativism for racist purposes, must be dismantled. It is important that the anti-racist movement should be aware of the abrupt change which has occurred in the complex racist interpretations and arguments, namely the shift away from biological inequality towards making cultural differences absolute”.

Having heard that would you say that Australians in general are racist?

In South Africa what the UN Report described is exactly what the apartheid regime did, as it shifted from overt racism, to “separate development” in the belief that it might be more acceptable. We did not fall for it, and the world continued to recognise their policies as racist.

I repeat my question- do Australians want a multi-cultural society? The answer inevitably is: some do and some don't. The challenge for those who do is to shift the balance in your favour. That may be your greatest challenge. A word of warning. If Australians continue to live in isolation, as is their right, do not be surprised if the region rejects you, and perhaps suggests that you return to your heartland, where your home should be.

2. My second question : Is there a political will on the part of Australian governments at Federal or State level to combat racism?

Many people were very shocked, nay horrified, when Australia turned back a ship carrying refugees, in violation of the obligations of international humanitarian law... Equally so, when one reads newsreports of what happens in the camps where refugees are held while being processed. I cannot help wondering if the ship had come from Europe, would it have met the same response? I do not recall what kind of camps were established when Australia accepted relatively large numbers of people from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. How was refugee status established then, and how long did it take?

3. I am told that there have been “race riots” here recently. What happened to the youths who engaged in such criminal actions? Have they been arrested and charged? Were these incidents dealt with in the same way as when white youth gangs fight each other? Racism of any kind can never be condoned nor can failure to act be described as showing racial tolerance.

4. The racism described in the UN Report , is at the root of many of the conflicts of today. It has been exploited by neo-nazi or right wing parties in Europe and elsewhere, as they seek power by blaming immigrants or refugees for the loss of jobs and the economic problems arising from globalisation. Regretably, it is also exploited by mainstream political parties in order to gain electoral support.
5. More threatening to all of us, is the US designed “Coalition Against Terrorism” which does not accept an international definition of terrorism, but arrogantly declared as did Secretary of State Colin Powell, that terrorism is inherent in the teachings of Islam and that suicide bombers are trained in the religious schools for the young called maderessas. When I was taught history, I learnt of soldiers who went into west Asia to fight for Christianity, but they were called “crusaders”.

It is generally recognised tht terroriam is the indiscriminate use of force against civilians to achieve political ends. The entire city of Dresden was destroyed by British bombers in World War II. In Vietnam, high flying US bombers devastated and destroyed large swathes of the countryside. The cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima with almost the entire populations were subjected to US atomic bombs, These are 20<sup>th</sup> centuy examples of extreme terorrism.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century does one go to war on the basis of ignorant assumptions? It seems that this is what is now happening, and it is a dire warning where false notions of cultural differences can lead. There is nothing more threatening than the arrogance of power, propelled by the force of ignorance.

A few final comments addressed to those who want a multicultural society, which I believe is necessaary for the survival of the best of your nation. While you try and tip the balance make efforts to understand racism in all its manifestations. Don't be afraid to expose and confront it and call it what it is. Politicians, don't pander to racist sentiments for immediate political gain. You have a tradition of politics of principle in Western Australia and elsewhere. In the long run what you win will be worth it.

Recognise that cultures evolve. Your challenge is not simply to open the doors of Australia and ask immigrants to join the old club you have designed. Accept that those who come in have a great deal to contribute and can be partners in building a new Australia. In this endeavour the cultures of your region, of indigenous Australians and those who came later, of the peoples of Europe, Africa and the Americas are woven together into a colourful tapestry reflecting the rich diversity of a people and society that is greater than the Australia of today.

I wish you well as you tread that difficult path.

**In his first speech to the South African Parliament as our President, Nelson Mandela set out the challenge:**

**“We must, constrained by and yet regardless of the accumulated effect of our historical burdens, seize the time to define for ourselves what we want to make of our shared destiny”. (May 24<sup>th</sup>. 1994 )**

**South Africans have defined for ourselves what we want to make of our shared destiny. But there is still a long and hard walk ahead.**