

## **Input by Hon NN Mapisa-Nqakula Minister of Defence on the No-Confidence Debate**

8 August 2017

Honourable Speaker;  
Honourable Deputy President, and  
Honourable Members of this House:

Today's session in this House has attracted, in my view, more attention in our country and even abroad, to even surpass the opening of Parliament and the delivery by the President of the State of the Nation Address.

But, we have been here before - seven times in the last seven years. The only difference today is that the process of voting will be secret. The reason it is secret is because there is some belief among the opposition parties that some ANC members in this Chamber will vote with them, thus giving a boost to their No-Confidence Motion to oust President Zuma. In other words, they want those ANC members to help them topple the ANC.

The sponsor of this motion, the Hon Mmusi Maimane, has said on a number of occasions that President Zuma is not the real target. He is but a small aspect of their strategy. The target is the ANC. There are other leaders on the opposition benches here in this House who have expressed a similar sentiment. As Hon Julius Malema said yesterday, their goal is to remove the ANC from power. They want ANC members to help them fulfil that ambition. They believe the time is now ripe for them to further exacerbate the problems the African National Congress is confronted with at this time.

The ANC leadership admitted publicly that the Movement was experiencing big problems as a consequence of the wayward behaviour of some of its members. When the ANC held its 105th anniversary celebration on 8 January this year, we told South Africa about those issues. We were open as we publicly admitted that some of our members were involved in corrupt activities, were encouraging factionalism in our structures and destroying, in the circumstances, the unity that our Forebears forged among South Africans, to construct a country that would belong to all who live in it: black and white. We have publicly admitted that the ANC has these days become a House Divided.

Our message at the 8 January event, included the following lines:

"The people have told us that we are too busy fighting each other and we do not pay sufficient attention to their needs. Our own research and interactions with members of the ANC demonstrate clearly that the people abhor the apparent preoccupation with personal gain. People are clear: their main priorities are jobs, fighting crime and corruption. Our task, therefore, is to grow the economy, create jobs and rigorously fight crime and corruption."

The opposition in this House, are doing all they can, including sponsoring this motion, further to divide the ANC so that we are a shadow of what we are

during the 2019 general election. And they want ANC members to help them achieve that goal.

The word "conscience" has been bandied about so many times in the past while. People have been calling on members of the ANC to use their "conscience" to remove President Zuma, as if we ordinarily have no conscience. But, let me tell you what my conscience tells me:

It reminds me that it was South African voters who sent us to our Parliament to represent them - all of us; Ruling Party and the opposition.

The ANC, has received more votes than all of the parties in this Chamber and became the ruling party since the first election in 1994. My conscience tells me we all need to respect the votes that brought us here.

The only way the ANC can lose power is by way of a negative vote at the next general election. We cannot use means other than the people's votes to try and topple the ANC. Remember, as you yourselves in the opposition benches have said, the ANC is the target. Removing the ANC from power is the main aim.

Let's go to a general election for that. We should not use gerrymandering to get rid of a governing party. That would be akin to a coup.

There is a phrase I want to introduce in the context of this debate: "political consciousness".

My political consciousness tells me I have a duty to defend the ANC. I am standing on this podium to defend the ANC. I spent my youth as a member of the ANC. I am now approaching the twilight of my political career. I came into this House in 1994 as part of the First Parliament. I have been a leader in the ANC and ANC Women's League for years. I believe, therefore, I have served my people the best way I could in those years. But, I will always defend the ANC, which, at the helm but always together with the masses of our people, helped to usher in the democratic dispensation we are enjoying these days.

Perhaps in keeping with the historical significance of the moment, we should allow history to be our teacher.

On 23 May 2014, the then Leader of the Democratic Alliance, Helen Zille, while making her final election campaign call to the voters, summed up the message of her party, when she said this to South Africans:

"Remember that in a democracy, the government is supposed to work for you. You hire it. And you can fire it. And we all know how it's done: You hire with your vote and you fire with your vote."

Few days later, South Africans voted in an overwhelming majority and rejected her invitation to "fire the ANC government". She was correct however, in her assertion that "we all know how it is done", referring to the electoral process as the most credible test to determine what the people

want. It is the only way voters can truly express themselves, directly, on what is in their best interest.

While we admitted our problems, we also recommitted ourselves as the leaders of the ANC to address those warts to ensure we continue to contribute positively to South Africa's body politic. We travelled quite some distance at our policy conference last month to put in place policy determinants to deal with all manner of wrongdoing in our ranks and within our various communities in the country.

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It is however, also important, to make the following point: by continuing to place their confidence and their hopes in the ANC, our people do not do so out of an act of naivety. Neither do they do so out of a belief that they owe the ANC anything. Their reason for their support is that they remember that the ANC was the premier force that led them in struggle to liberate our beloved country.

To round off my input, let me remind ANC members that this Movement does not belong only to the South African masses. It is a Movement of the people of the Continent. What used to be the ANC anthem, based on Enoch Sontonga's composition, Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika, continues to be the national anthem of some of the Continent's countries. They claim the ANC is their own and want the ANC to do good, as we have done through our project of the African Agenda and support to various African countries in their times of need. We owe it to the Continent and all her peoples, particularly during this year of Oliver Tambo, the internationalist, astute politician and committed revolutionary, to defend the African National Congress.

As we know, leaders in the ANC come and go. President Zuma will not be president of the ANC by the end of December this year. Some of the current leadership of the ANC's National Executive Committee will also not retain their positions. A new leadership corps of the Movement will be elected at the conference. The new leadership corps will continue to clean up the ANC as part of the Movement's character of self-correction.

It is expected, certainly I expect, that the ANC must be defended so that it continues to lead the people of our country and introduce programmes that will create the necessary circumstances for the provision of a better life for all our people, black and white.

Thank you.