

SENEGAL

Diouf Addresses Party National Council Meeting

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[Excerpts] The National Council meeting of the Socialist Party [PS] ended early this afternoon after adopting a resolution on general policy. This morning delegates heard an introductory report by their secretary general, President Abdou Diouf, followed by a speech by Health Minister Mrs Marie Sarr M'Bodj on the government's health policy. [passage omitted]

Henceforth the political debate in Senegal will be direct. President Abdou Diouf, secretary general of the PS, in a direct, firm, and very political speech, urged party militants to register for the elections and do all in their power to ensure that the forthcoming elections of 26 February 1988 be held in an atmosphere of openness, clarity, and sincerity. [passage omitted]

[Begin Diouf recording] Now, as head of the majority party, this majority party to which you belong and which has the major task of translating into reality the vision of a new society accepted by the people, I must say that the PS will not sit idly by in the face of the perverting and undermining of democratic principles, and also in the face of mounting nostalgia and futile quarrels that those who do not even trust the Senegalese people are trying to impose on us. This is the truth: People who do not trust the Senegalese people now want to ask the Senegalese people to trust them. That would be taking too much risk of destabilizing the country! [applause] (?As far as I am concerned), I have never done this, and I will never do so! (passage omitted)

The perfect and obligatory role of democracy is to fight against violence, lies, and false conceptions of freedom. The Senegalese PS accepts change because [words indistinct] accepts change. [Words indistinct] they imagine that power should change hands because they [words indistinct]. [cheers from crowd]

Comrades, I say no, and you should say after me, no! [passage omitted including indistinct passage]

There are some foreign press reports that are critical of our country, but there are many more serious and favorable articles on our country that report our economic performance and the extent of our achievements, despite our democratic multiparty system. There are many such reports. But I have to say that there are also some which, unfortunately, say anything, or rather, they know what they are saying — lies, calumny. They want to arouse

hatred and they advocate some preconceived formula, which the Senegalese people automatically reject.

The best proof of this unhealthy propaganda is the rumor and the naive thought that the head of state, unhappy with articles in some newspapers, had ordered their seizure. I have never banned any newspaper since I became president of the Republic. [applause] I have never had a single edition of any newspaper confiscated. [passage omitted] [end recording]