

Addendum

1. Mbeki's 'Castro Hlongwane' bombshell

I mentioned my concern in the preface to this book that my disclosures about Roberts's fraud might cause Mbeki some embarrassment, but my worry was entirely allayed two days after completing it. On 7 November Mark Gevisser released his biography *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2007), and in it he tells the remarkable story of how in June, in the month that *Fit to Govern* was published, Mbeki moved to set the record straight concerning his thinking on AIDS – phoning him 'late one Saturday night' to ask whether he'd read 'Castro Hlongwane, Caravans, Cats, Geese, Foot & Mouth and Statistics: HIV/AIDS and the Struggle for the Humanisation of the African'. Gevisser responded that indeed he'd seen it, and enquired whether Mbeki was its author – to which Mbeki replied that it had been written by a 'collective' of ANC leaders. Asked whether it represented his views, Mbeki confirmed that it did.

Circulated as a discussion paper at a meeting of the ANC NEC in March 2002, 'Castro Hlongwane' is a radical, uncompromising analysis and repudiation of the American-invented African HIV-AIDS paradigm, both on medical and ideological grounds (Google it).

'The following day,' Gevisser writes,

a Presidency driver delivered a hard copy almost twice as long as the one circulated in 2002, with citations from publications as fresh as August 2006. Mbeki had never previously contacted me unsolicited, and my reading of this unusual interaction was that he wished the record to reflect that – despite his near-silence since

it was initially distributed – he still held to the views expressed in ‘Castro Hlongwane’, which clearly remained a living, breathing document on his desktop. ... There is no question as to the message Thabo Mbeki was delivering to me along with this document: he was now, as he had been since 1999, an AIDS dissident.

This explains why at the launch of *Fit to Govern* at the Presidential Guesthouse in Pretoria on 22 June, arranged by the book’s sponsor Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad, Mbeki was rather less enthusiastic about it than its author, and why he didn’t also rush over to the podium to join Roberts, Pahad and the other speakers all gushing over how marvellous it was (Mbeki did diplomatically autograph some copies of the book on request). Plainly put, concerning his thinking on AIDS – the big issue that *Fit to Govern* promised to explain – Mbeki thought the book total garbage.

On Monday morning, 19 November, having couriered a hard copy of *Lying and Thieving* to Mbeki in Pretoria via his Cape Town office the week before, as a courtesy in anticipation of prominent reporting about it in the weekend papers, I was delighted to learn how it had gone down.