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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF LIBERATION
MOVEMENTS AND SOLIDARITY WITH FRONTLINE STATES,
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Statement of the President of the
African National Congress of South Africa,
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The Afro-Asian solidarity movement has traversed a long and complicated but glorious path since the days, 25 years ago next year when a delegation of the African National Congress travelled from Johannesburg to Bandung in Indonesia to join hands with representatives of the peoples of the rest of Africa and of Asia to bring into being what has proved itself as a steadfast friend of all peoples fighting for national and social emancipation, the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation.

The African National Congress is proud that over all these years it has marched along the ranks of the peoples represented by this Organisation, participating in the great struggles that have seen the wiping out of colonialism from the African and Asian continents and the re-emergence of hundreds of millions of people in world politics as free and active participants in the collective construction of a better human destiny.

We are moved to recall the words of our late President Chief Albert Luthuli when he opened the 42nd Annual Conference of the ANC in 1953. To this day we repeat after him: "Our interest in freedom is not confined to ourselves only. We are interested in the liberation of all oppressed people in the whole of Africa and in the world as a whole..... Our active interest in the extension of freedom to all people denied it makes us ally ourselves with freedom forces in the world".

The struggles of this alliance of "freedom forces in the world" has brought us to the threshold of the realisation of the goals set out at Bandung. Beyond that threshold lie two great Asian and African questions of contemporary international politics, viz. the liberation of the people of Palestine and the restoration of their national rights and the liberation of the peoples of Southern Africa and the restoration of their national rights.

It is therefore appropriate that this conference should take place in Lusaka, the capital of the Republic of Zambia because, for Africa, this great Republic represents both actually and symbolically, physically and politically, the threshold to total liberation which we have reached as a result of the struggles of the people of this country acting in alliance with the freedom forces of the world.

This very setting, the commitment and the daily participation of the people and government, UNIP and the President of this country, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, in the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa, immediately suggest what tasks face this very important conference.

We think it is proper that this conference should strive to reach a comprehensive understanding of Southern African actuality and on the basis of that understanding and as fellow combatants for a common cause look once more into the question - what is to be done?

The question whether Southern Africa would ever be liberated was answered many years ago, and practically, by the victories of the African forces of national liberation over British, French and Belgian colonialism. These victories both prove that colonialism had outlived its time, and gave birth to a vast rear base which made possible the raising of the level of confrontation in those countries which were as yet in bondage.

The second question, whether the African liberation movements could in fact succeed in their struggles despite the stubborn armed resistance of the colonial powers was answered also in the affirmative, in the first instance by the victory of the people of Algeria under the leadership of the FLN.

The victories of PRELIMO, the PAIGS and the MPLA and no less that of the Vietnamese people over US imperialism, brought this lesson to the very door step of extreme and entrenched imperialist domination in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The answer was therefore simply this that - yes, the liberation movements will win regardless of what the enemy does to deny us our victory.

The third question, what kind of liberation this would be has, for us in Southern Africa, been answered again practically by the realisation of popular power in Angola and Mozambique and the process of social transformation which that popular power has started in these two countries.

Imperialism recognises that even in Southern Africa and in Palestine, naked colonial rule can no longer be maintained. The colonised peoples themselves are demonstrating in practice and in full view of the imperialists themselves, that they are determined to achieve victory or to perish in the pursuit of that victory.

Of course this is not the first time that imperialism has been faced with this reality. We all know what happened historically - the imperialists had to concede independence to the colonised peoples, as they will surely be forced to do in Southern Africa.

However, as an inevitable consequence of the development of the African revolution, as we have said, the liberation movements of Southern Africa as well as the imperialists themselves

are faced with the question what kind of decolonisation shall this be!

The fact that this question has become an issue of practical and immediate politics in Southern Africa is a sign of how much the balance of forces has changed in this region, in Africa and the world. A mere 20 years ago, this question was being laughed out of court as premature within the milieu of African politics.

Today, the imperialists themselves recognise the immediacy of this question. As President Samora Machel said at the end of January, 1979, speaking in Maputo before the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned countries:

"Even to imperialism itself, it has become clear that colonialism in Zimbabwe and Namibia and apartheid in South Africa, are doomed by history. The imperialist powers are carrying out manoeuvres of all kinds so as to ensure that the fall of these regimes does not mean the final liquidation of their interests, their hegemony and their power in this region. Their objective is to prevent the genuine and complete liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa and to deny them the right to break the chains of imperialist domination".

Thus while imperialism recognises that the time for the decolonisation of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe has come, it wants a type of decolonisation which will leave its interests, its hegemony and its power in the region intact, a form of liberation therefore which will be incomplete and fraudulent, leaving the peoples of Southern Africa bound hand and foot to the imperialist system of economic, military, political and other relations, the objects of imperialist exploitation and domination under a new guise. In short, imperialism aims for a neo-colonialist decolonisation.

The continuation of imperialist hegemony in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa aims not only to protect the immense imperialist interests in these countries. To return again to the statement made by President Machel from which we have already quoted:

"(Southern Africa) is probably the region which will become the pivot and the main site of confrontation, the region in which the fundamental principles of nation independence and human equality are still contested. Here, imperialism refuses to recognise the existence of genuinely sovereign, genuinely non-aligned African States. It violently opposes the establishment of socialism in Mozambique and Angola. It tries to preserve the racist states as an operational terrorist force against free Africa".

Thus imperialism wants to maintain its hegemony in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa in order to use this area as its base to put back under its hegemony the independent states of Southern Africa. Conversely, imperialism is haunted by the spectre that the more than 30 million people of the unliberated south of Africa will succeed to break the chains of imperialist domination and achieve complete and genuine liberation, an event that would have radical and fundamental repercussions, further altering the relations between Africa and the imperialist world in favour of the masses of the ordinary working people of our continent.

The critical factor that confronts imperialism is that its antagonists as represented by the PLO in Palestine, SWAPO in Namibia, the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe and the ANC in South Africa represent a future that is not anti-colonial merely but anti-imperialist as well. These liberation movements are the midwives of a future which will be characterised by the transfer of all power to the people:

by all power this conference should understand exactly that we mean political power, economic power, military power - a genuine and meaningful transfer of power to the people.

It would be of little moment to the racists of Southern Africa, the zionists in Israel and their international allies if these organisations represented a minority tendency on the fringes of a largely so-called "moderate" broad liberation movement.

The fact however, is that these movements are the genuine representatives of their peoples. They constitute the core and the vanguard of the liberation forces of their respective countries without whom and against whom no just and lasting solutions of the fundamental problems of the Middle East and Southern Africa are possible.

The imperialists themselves recognise this reality. Take for instance the statement made by Chief Sebe, appointee of the South African regime who has the task to administer the Ciskei Bantustan. Here is what he said at the end of last year:

"The Rhodesian and South West African questions will be settled one way or other within the next six months and an evaluation of certain aspects of the conflict which occurred there needs to be made as it is relevant to our own future..... It would seem inevitable that immediately the Rhodesian and South West African problems are settled, the ANC will begin a determined onslaught on South Africa, both externally and internally in a bid to obtain added recognition for itself, initially among third world powers, but later internationally. Events of the past have shown that should the ANC be determined enough in their efforts, they have a very good chance of success.

Firstly, they can succeed in obtaining recognition for themselves as being the only relevant opposition to the white South African government, with UN membership to back their claim. When once that happens, the leaders of homelands and independent (Bantustans) will be in an invidious position".

We should however remember that exactly because they recognise this reality, the imperialist powers are carrying out manoeuvres of all kinds so as to ensure that the fall of the racist regimes does not mean the final liquidation of their interests, their hegemony and their power in this region".

To achieve this result imperialism has embarked on an ambitious, integrated and brutal offensive designed to produce a solution in Southern Africa and the Middle East which will guarantee the permanence of its hegemony in these regions.

What are the principal moments of this offensive?

- (a) the racist regimes and their allies aim physically to liquidate the liberation movements in Southern Africa, both within their respective countries and in their areas of sanctuary in the Frontline States;
- (b) simultaneously they aim to compel the neighbouring independent States to turn against the liberation movements. For this purpose, as we all know, they have resorted to regular military raids deep into the Frontline States, annihilating hundreds of people and destroying property;
- (c) they are also very busy creating such forces among the black oppressed as would replace the white minority regimes as the guarantors of the permanence of imperialist

hegemony in Southern Africa in exchange for high-sounding titles and a life of luxury for a handful of black traitors;

- (d) imperialism is at the same time continuing to pour military and economic support into South Africa and Rhodesia to ensure that the racist regimes in these countries remain continuously the principal factor determining the content and pace of any process of decolonisation;
- (e) imperialism has also stepped up its intervention within the world democratic movement, to turn this movement away from its anti-imperialist positions and step by step to detach from it important contingents and use these in its global offensive against the forces of national liberation, social progress and peace.

Among other things, this strategy means that:

In opposition to each genuine liberation movement created by the masses of the oppressed people to serve as the representative of their aspirations, imperialism is trying to create its own "decolonisers" whom it describes as internal as opposed to our being external and therefore not representing the people, to serve as the representatives of continued imperialist domination:

In direct relationship as the forces of reaction are doing everything in their power to bolster these hired decolonisers, so also are they intensifying their campaign physically to liquidate the authentic liberation movements within their respective countries and in their temporary homes in the Frontline States, to ensure that we who are dying to secure our liberation do not force our people to vote for their own liberation!

Simultaneously as they raise a clamour about human rights and shuttle to and fro between Pretoria, Salisbury and Windhoek and the capitals of the western world professing a determination to bring about a just and peaceful solution, the imperialist countries are stepping up their aid to the racist regimes, to guarantee the continued existence of these regimes.

To our strategic line that armed struggle is a necessary and decisive factor in securing victory, imperialism answers by seeking to cut us off from the Frontline States, the socialist countries and the rest of progressive humanity while working rapidly to create new puppet military forces in Southern Africa and to increase the level of participation by foreign mercenaries, amid more strident calls for a peaceful solution and touching expressions of grave concern that unwittingly we have turned ourselves into tools of so-called Soviet imperialism.

In the Middle East the desperate American effort to establish peace and work towards the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people has resulted in the detachment of Egypt from the rest of the Arab world, the heightening of tension in the region, a treaty undertaking by Egypt not to allow the Palestinian people to continue their struggle from Egyptian soil, the offer of Bantustans to the Palestinians and the release of Israeli pilots to fly combat missions against the peoples of Southern Africa.

In the far East the normalisation of relations between the People's Republic of China on the one hand the Japan and the USA on the other, aimed, we were made to believe, at the relaxation of international tensions and the extension of the frontiers of peace, have been followed by the obrogation by China of a peace treaty of long-standing, the invasion of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and military missions from Peking to acquire the most modern weapons from western world.

It should therefore be clear that the perspective that confronts us here in Southern Africa is one of an intensified counter-offensive by the racist regimes and their allies. This offensive is made all the more necessary from the point of view of the enemy by the very fact of the strength of the liberation movements and the level of consciousness among the broad masses of our people. The steadfast support for and involvement in the common struggle of the Frontline States, the rest of Africa, the socialist and other progressive countries as well as other contingents of democratic mankind, including the forces represented at this Conference, have enabled us to raise the intensity of the confrontation between the forces of progress and those of reaction. The genuine liberation of Southern Africa is nearer today than it has ever been in the past.

As a result of all this, the fascist regime of Botha and Vorster is confronted with the further deepening of the general crisis of the apartheid system. It finds itself unable to solve any of the fundamental problems that inexorably lay the basis for its own destruction.

As the racist regime sees greater need to entrench the apartheid system, the more the masses of our people and the international community reject it, compelling even the most timid to cry out - enough, no more!

It is this failure which has resulted in the so-called information scandal whose significance lies in the fact that it has exposed to the white population what the black people have always known to be true; that the apartheid system is based on murder, theft, lies and corruption, all perpetrated by a group of people who would like everybody to believe that they are deputies elected by God.

Similarly the implementation of the Bantustan programme serves further to convince our people that by sacrificing their lives in the struggle for the seizure of power, they have nothing to lose, and their country to gain.

In his brief but full life Solomon Mahlangu towered like a colossus, unbroken and unbreakable, over the fascist lair. He, on whom our people have bestowed accolades worthy of the hero-combatant that he is, has been hanged in Pretoria like a common murderer. Alone the hangmen buried Solomon, bound by a forbidding oath that his grave shall remain forever a secret. because, in his death the spirit of Solomon Mahlangu towers still. lie a colossus, unbroken and unbreakable, over the fascist lair.

To malign him, to malign his comrades and his organisations which have yet to discharge their historic mission, and which will avenge the assassination of this and other prisoners of war, the fascist tyrants put out the story that Solomon had ceased to be as we know him, brave, confident and fearless of death. But we knew they lied. Now the whole world knows that he approached the gallows as befits a loyal and disciplined combatant of Umkhonto we Sizwe, sworn to liberate his people whatever the cost, as that Solomon who had volunteered to serve his people until victory or death.

On behalf of the African National Congress, our people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe and the struggling people of South Africa, we would like to take this opportunity to salute all who are gathered here for the battle you fought to save the life of Solomon. We would also like to extend that sentiment to those others who are not with us here, governments, national and international organisations, communities and individuals who also added their voices to the demand to save the life of Solomon.

Our people inside South Africa have done as we expected them to. Unequivocally they stood by Solomon to the last moment because to them he was a son, a brother, their product, his cause theirs; his death a challenge spurring them to greater efforts to remove the regime which continues to display such callous disregard of everything that is moral and just and humane.

At the end of the day, the fascist regime of Botha and Vorster stood alone in front of all humanity, alone in its regard of the pursuit of freedom as a crime punishable by death, alone in rejoicing that a life so young and so full of promise had so suddenly and so brutally been terminated.

In Pretoria, on the 6th April, at dawn, a heinous crime was committed against our people, against humanity. For our part, there can be only one reply one reply to the murder of Solomon Mahlangu and that is to intensify our general offensive against the regime of assassins that holds our people in servitude. The African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe and our people have the will and the determination to succeed. Indeed with such stalwarts as Solomon Mahlangu in our midst, things could not be otherwise, especially in this centenary year of the victory of our people at Isandlwana, a year which our people designate as the Year of the Spear.

We are convinced that out of this very important conference will come a clear call:

- to consolidate and raise the level of unity among all anti-imperialist and anti-racist forces;
 - to increase material and political support to the ANC, SWAPO and the Patriotic Front, and rally to the support of the PLO;
 - to increase support to the Frontline States;
 - to isolate further the fascist regimes in Pretoria and Salisbury;
- to compel the western countries to cease their support for these regimes.

The dangerous situation that has arisen in Southern Africa itself a reflection of how close we are to real and genuine victories throughout Southern Africa makes imperative the practical realisation of these demands. We can, with certainth say that such is the nature of the forces represented here that the results of this Conference will indeed take us one giant step nearer to the full accomplishment of the tasks laid down at the Bandung Conference.
