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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE SEVENTH PARTY CONGRESS

Comrade Joe Slovo, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party,

Comrade Dan Tloome, Chairman of the South African Communist Party,

Distinguished delegates to the Seventh Party Congress,

Honoured Guests,

Comrades,

I am honoured today, on behalf of the leadership of the ANC, inside and outside our country. On behalf of its entire membership and in particular, the heroic cadres-in-arms of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe and our militant youth wherever they may be, as well as on my own behalf, to convey our revolutionary greetings to this historic Seventh Congress of the South African Communist Party, and to you personally, Comrade General Secretary, Joe Slovo .

We salute too, the great country which hosts this Congress. A land of true giants in revolutionary outlook, internationalists of the first order, who freely give their blood for the peace of humankind. Friends in need and friends indeed. This unique venue and the political climate it provides for the Congress, cannot but ensure that your deliberations will be characterised by most serious debate and analysis leading to decisions that will make an enduring impact on our overall struggle. The South African Communist Party has a proud record of firmness and resolution in struggle. Its history is replete with stirring examples of commitment to the cause of the oppressed and exploited, and the building of a just socio-economic system in our country.

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And the spirit of selflessness and dedication that has coloured its performance in a world distorted by extremes of lambast against communism, is a hallmark of its calibre.

Those of us who have traversed the arduous path of struggle for many difficult years, recall with great admiration the calm vision of many departed stalwarts of the Party, who even when condemned bell, book and candle, refused to forsake their posts and to shirk their responsibilities. We are speaking here of leaders of rare stature, like Albert Nzula, J.B. Marks, Mulume Moses Kotane, Bram Fischer, Moses Mabhida. We continue to be inspired by the fond memories we share of the gallant MK combatants who were also members of the Party such as the late Obadi, Lucas Njongwe and others. With such a heritage behind it, the Party must deservedly stand tall.

Your Congress, the Seventh in the history of the South African Communist Party, is an event of great moment, not only as being yet another beacon on the relentless road to a future South Africa, but also in terms of its timing. Taking place this year, which the ANC has declared the Year of Mass Action for People's Power, the Congress constitutes an indispensable factor, and a sure mainstay in the execution of our tasks for the advance towards the goal of People's Power.

The unity of our people, the motive force of which is the working class, is high up on the agenda of struggle and has been yielding positive results.

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As evidenced by the recent Cosatu-backed Workers Summit attended by seven hundred delegates, who met in search of united action - and found it - inspired by this and many other tactical victories, the indefatigable spirit of our people is heightening with each passing day. Bearing the masses into great transports of elation and expectation. Victory for the people is no longer a remote desire, but an unfolding reality.

You are also meeting, in a month which carries momentous events in our history. To mention but four: In April Jan van Riebeeck sets his ill foot on our soil; in April 20 years ago, the history making Morogoro Conference is held; in April 10 years ago, the people's hero Solomon Mahlangu is Martyred; in April 1st 1989, the seven months countdown to the end of seventy years of South Africa's colonial domination of Namibia begins. Might it be, Comrades that the month of April in the year 1989 will add this Seventh Congress to its galaxy of epoch-making events. Our entire movement is waiting to hear and to see.

There is forward movement in our region, but if the Pretoria regime remains true to its unreliable character, April 1st 1989, far from being the day the United Nations has waited for since SWAPO launched its armed struggle in 1966 may yet prove to have been international Fool's Day. But even if the Pretoria regime should honour the letter and spirit of Resolution 435 in every detail - which is inconceivable, its strategy remains oriented to the survival of the apartheid system of domination and exploitation .

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Central to this strategy is the regime's determination to get out of its isolation and move out to the outer world, to the Frontline States, Africa and beyond. A move designed and calculated to soften international attitudes towards the regime and its criminal apartheid system, and thus, put our struggle into isolation.

The thrust of Margaret Thatcher's current offensive in South Africa and the region, is to discourage international pressures and liberate apartheid South Africa. The New York Accords which had propelled her into action, have given rise to the general belief that, if the South African regime can negotiate an end to the conflict in Angola and Namibia, it should be ready and willing to negotiate an end of the conflict in South Africa.

There is, therefore, a new climate of hope. Our friends will see in this climate, the possibility of a compromise solution. Our enemies will see in it, the opportunity of denying our people the victory they deserve. Both will press for negotiations. The regime will encourage them without any intention to engage in serious and genuine negotiations.

What all this means, is that our people, our movement and especially our alliance can expect to be subjected to immense and unprecedented pressures. Pressures that could put a severe strain on our cohesion unless we react correctly. From our point of view, when the historic moment for negotiation comes in our situation - as it most probably will - we shall welcome negotiations. In a proper case they shorten rather than extend the route to victory.

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But we dare not allow our cause to be distorted and our objective deflected by the assumption that the conditions which compelled the Pretoria regime to negotiate, sign and honour the New York Accords, also exist in South Africa today, or that they will, in the immediate future.

There can be no doubt however, that correctly channelled and directed by us, these pressures, precisely because of their immensity, can bring our victory nearer. We therefore need to rally together and turn these developments against the enemy and towards the attainment of our revolutionary goals. We need to rally together in defence of our struggle and our ideals. As always, the best form of defence is the offensive. It is always in the attack that victory is to be found.

As never before, we need to move arm-in-arm, shoulder to shoulder with all our allies, friends and supporters. Within our movement, we need to close ranks now as never before and wage intensive struggle with reinforced vigour, including the intensification of armed struggle, that will give character and direction to the international support. And it is our own struggle, more than any other force, that will defeat the enemy and bring about a new order in our country and region.

We have reached a victorious phase in the struggle of the peoples of Southern Africa. The defeat of the bellicose South African army in Angola has turned the tide irreversibly against the Pretoria fascists. FAPLA, the Cuban internationalist forces and SWAPO of Namibia have done Africa very proud indeed.

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To paraphrase Comrade Fidel Castro: After Cuito Cuanavale, the history of Africa will have to be written anew. We are happy to reiterate this truth, with all the hope that the military victory, which was complemented by political and economic, as well as by internal pressures within our country and Namibia, will produce durable peace for the People's Republic of Angola, and spell the imminent demise of the UNITA bandits.

Comrades, our liberation alliance has a duty to take full advantage of the crisis facing the ruling clique in our country. We must transform the divisions among the enemy, into yawning dongas and fill those dongas with the rudiments of united popular power, so as to begin to give meaning to our aspiration to win a non-racial democracy in a united South Africa. We all have a duty to our country and people for a future of hope, where everyone of us will live in peace, progress and prosperity.

Our message to this Seventh Congress, therefore is: Let us consolidate and strengthen our alliance and advance in concert. Let us remain vigilant and watch out for those forces who never leave the boardrooms where they studiously plot our undoing.

Our victories are many and significant, but now, more than ever before, we need to defend them in order to secure our offensive and ensure our advance to the victory of our revolution. We wish your Congress every success.

ALL POWER!

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