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STATEMENT BY AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (SA) TO THE MEETING  
OF THE FRONTLINE STATES AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. HELD IN  
LUANDA, APRIL, 1977.

It is right and proper that Your Excellencies, as heads of Governments which have earned the honoured title of Front-line States, should deem it fit to exchange views with the Front-line liberation movements on matters which are our common concern and which will, in the long run, determine our common fate.

Consultations like these are both appropriate and necessary because the front-line against racism and minority domination in Southern Africa is not only to be found on the borders threatened and (in the case of Angola, Zambia, Mocambique and Botswana) already violated by Vorster's and Smith's aggressive war machines, but also cuts deep into the very heart of the unliberated South where the racist assault on the dignity, rights and lives of the majority is intensified with each passing day.

In Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, the people led by the liberation movements represented here, have only one choice before them; either to submit or to press home relentlessly their historic duty of completing the liberation of our sub-continent, by a combination of mass political mobilisation and armed struggle.

The indivisibility of the freedom struggle, both regionally and internationally, is nowhere more clearly evident than in our sub-continent. The stirring victories of our brother liberation movements in the former Portuguese territories had a significance beyond the liberated zones. These victories helped topple the whole Portuguese fascist empire and created conditions for democratic advance within Portugal itself. Apart from changing the whole geography of struggle in Southern Africa, these victories became a source of dramatic inspiration to the people still beleaguered by the racist regimes. The renewed vigour with which the enemy is being defied and challenged, both politically and militarily, in all these regions gives concrete expression to this inspiration. The attempt by Vorster and his imperialist allies to reverse the gains of the Angolan revolution by open

intervention was resoundingly rebuffed by the heroic Angolan people, reinforced by internationalist solidarity.

Despite a humiliating defeat in Angola's second war of liberation, we have no doubt that Vorster and those in his side will continue to be tempted to embark upon new adventures against the territorial integrity of the border states. Whether they do so or not will be influenced not only by the economic and military strength of these states and the support of the progressive and democratic world, but also by the level of the intensity of the national liberation struggles in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. And in each of these territories the ongoing struggle against the enemy will be strengthened or weakened in direct proportion to the intensity of the struggles in the others.

We are all of us - those in the front-line on the borders and those in the front-line inside - thus bound together not only by a belief in the justice and humanity of our cause, but also by the reality that a gain or a reverse in any single sector of the front line is at the same time a gain or reverse for both the liberated and unliberated sectors. We are bound together, also, by a common determination shared by the member states of the OAU, to secure the total liberation of Africa from all forms of colonial oppression and exploitation.

We, for our part, consider it more urgent than ever to mobilise and organise our people, and especially our militant working class, peasantry and youth, in growing struggles against the racist regime. We are called upon too, at this momentous phase in the long history of our freedom drive, to work with a renewed urgency to create conditions in which our people will be able to face the enemy in armed confrontation. In carrying out these tasks we firmly believe that we will be responding to the deeply-held wishes of the mass of our oppressed; we will be doing service to our brother fighters in Zimbabwe and Namibia; and we will be acting in the best long-term interests of those whose independence and security continues to be threatened by Vorster as the chief gendarme of imperialism in Africa.

The internal and external conditions for raising our struggle to new levels have never been more favourable than they are today. Despite the mass killings on the streets, tortures and murders in the jails, and the mounting terror against our organisation, our people remain defiant and are bristling to come to grips with the enemy. On no less than three occasions last year, our working class, in their hundreds of thousands, expressed their organised strength in response to calls for political strikes in solidarity with the ferment in the streets. Our new generation of student and working youth remains uncowed by the enemy's brutal display of force. Its readiness to sacrifice, even unto death, is clearly demonstrated by the unending challenge in the streets of struggle and by the numbers who have flocked into our armed wing - Umkhonto we Sizwe - in order to equip themselves with the skills of modern peoples war. And this heightened mood of revolutionary enthusiasm has emerged at a time when the whole structure of apartheid face a general economic and political crisis.

In short, the changed Southern African situation and the internal factors we have touched upon, have created a basis for a real breakthrough on the road to fulfilling our historic mission to destroy racism and the system of economic exploitation on which it rests. Our people expect from the African National Congress - acknowledged by the enemy to be its most serious threat - the kind of revolutionary lead that will measure up to the needs of the new conditions of struggle. We accept this challenge in the knowledge that a failure to do so now will dampen the present high state of revolutionary ardour and facilitate the regime's efforts to encourage counter-revolutionary forces within the black communities and to impose Bantustan-style solutions. We act in the confidence that our cadres who sacrificed so much during the past few decades in the face of serious internal and external obstacles, will rise to the occasion.

We harbour no illusions that the road we still have to tread will be an easy one. Our enemy has at its disposal considerable material resources and is closely linked with the system of world imperialism

which regards the minority regime of South Africa as the most important mainstay of its neo-colonial ambitions in the whole of our continent and especially in Southern Africa. They are well aware that a revolutionary solution in South Africa will greatly reinforce the struggle for social progress and peace on our continent. This is the spectre which is today haunting world imperialism and it is responding to it by a series of desperate manoeuvres to pre-empt further revolutionary transformations in all parts of Southern Africa. The new world balance of forces makes it more difficult for imperialism to impose solutions by direct external force and it is therefore compelled to rely increasingly on indigenous collaborationist groups and bogus 'liberation movements' in support of settlements and constitutional reforms which will safeguard the exploitative interests of the minorities and preserve the continent for neo-colonial incursions.

We stand four-square behind the struggle of our brothers in Zimbabwe. Fighting under the banner of the Patriotic Front, they have refused to lend themselves to a solution which avoids real people's power. We also stand four-square behind our brothers in SWAPO in their struggle against Vorster's colonisation of their country and in their rejection of the Turnnalle proceedings which in practice, aim to transform Namibia into another of South Africa's Bantustans. In proclaiming this solidarity with our brother liberation movements, we reemphasise our belief that an effective heightening of confrontation on our own fighting front will, at the same time, add strength to their freedom forces and bring nearer the day of their victory.

We proclaim too our solidarity with those of our brothers in Southern Africa whose sacrifice and heroism has brought freedom and independence for their peoples, but who still face internal and external forces bent upon reversing their hard-won gains. We regard it as one of our primary internationalist duties to do all in our power to help safeguard these gains and to support their continuing struggle to build further on the foundations of their achievements.

The task of liberating our country undoubtedly rests with our own oppressed masses led by their own national movement. We expect no external force to carry out this historic task for us. At the same time, the experiences of the past decade in Southern Africa have made it crystal clear that the pace of development of the struggles in those regions, which have won their independence was undoubtedly influenced by the degree of solidarity displayed by those who had already been victorious. This has been the pattern throughout our globe. The solidarity displayed towards struggling peoples everywhere by the democratic and socialist world and by progressive alliances such as the OAU, has made an inestimable contribution to the fight for freedom and independence. In our case, history has placed you in the frontline of this solidarity and we are confident that you will continue to carry out a duty which is in the deepest interests of all of our people.

O.R. TAMBO.  
ACTING PRESIDENT GENERAL.  
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (S.A.)