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STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,  
OLIVER TAMBO, AT THE NINETEENTH AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE:  
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA. JANUARY 12, 1989.

Mr Chairman,

Your Excellencies, Ministers, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Comrades and friends:

The Chairman of our Conference, His Excellency the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Zambia, Luke Mwananshiku, as well as the President of this country, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, have already extended their welcome especially to those of our friends present here who come from outside of our region of Southern Africa. We take this opportunity to join them by expressing the same sentiments.

We are indeed most grateful to the African-American Institute both for convening this timely Conference and for inviting us to participate. As President Kaunda said in his opening address, the two issues we have met to discuss are the major questions that face the peoples of our continent. We, too, therefore feel greatly inspired that so many of you could spare the time to come to Lusaka to attend this gathering.

Conference is now in session to discuss an issue of immediate and urgent concern to the overwhelming majority of humanity, the question of South Africa and apartheid. Without any fear that we might be wrong, we dare say that everybody present in this hall seeks a speedy end to the apartheid system.;

In this regard, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the message sent to this Conference by US President-elect George Bush, in which he stated his own commitment to work for the earliest possible transformation of South Africa into a democratic country. We are ready to join hands with him, as with the rest of the world, to achieve this shared objective whose accomplishment is necessary, possible and inevitable.

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Twenty years ago, US policy towards Southern Africa was predicated on a denial of that inevitability. All of us present here will remember the 1969 US Government document, known as the National Security Study Memorandum 39. Among other things, this document said:

" The whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them.

There is no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek, through violence... We can, through selective relaxation of our stance toward the white regimes, encourage some modification of their current racial and colonial policies."

Looking at this statement, 20 years after it was written, what is of course most striking about it is how terribly wrong the UB administration of the day was. -In one country after another, the blacks have, through struggle, gained the political rights they seek. Where the Nixon Administration sought modification of racial and colonial policies, the victims of colonialism and racism fought for and achieved an end to colonial and racial domination. The people of Namibia are today on course to gain their independence and Therefore the political rights they have fought for, through armed struggle.

There is, of course, a lesson to be learnt from all this. It is that the apartheid regime in South Africa is not here to stay. Change will not come about through this regime. The black people will achieve their political rights through struggle, including armed struggle. What will be achieved is not a modification of apartheid, but its total abolition. To arrive at a correct policy towards South Africa, the new US Administration will have to recognise and base itself on these self-evident truths.

What Memorandum 39 described as "selective relaxation of our stance towards the white regimes", was reborn under the Reagan Administration as "constructive engagement", with disastrous consequences for the whole region of Southern Africa. It would seem to us that the lesson to be drawn from that experience is that the US Administration should seek to be engaged on the side of the forces in South Africa that represent democracy and non-racialism and adopt a stance of consistent and effective opposition to those who represent and seek to perpetuate racial and colonial policies.

Our region entered a critical stage with the signing of the historic Treaty on Angola and Namibia in New York on December 22. this past year. What will happen from now onwards, especially with regard to Namibia, will have a direct and important bearing and impact on South Africa itself.

We would like to assume that all of us recognise the fact that the apartheid regime has not changed its spots. It entered into negotiations and came to an agreement with the governments of Angola and Cuba because it had no choice. The fact of that important agreement neither changes the nature of the Pretoria regime nor alters its resolve to maintain the apartheid system in South Africa.

Proceeding from this understanding, it is therefore clear to us that the Botha regime will not abandon its programme to destabilise the countries of our region, among them Namibia. It is in the fundamental interest of this regime that the effort to transform independent Namibia into a democratic, non-racial, non-aligned, peaceful and prosperous country should fail.

The reality in our region is that Pretoria has never accepted that the peoples of Southern Africa have a right to determine

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their future free of all interference from apartheid South Africa. One of the things that Pretoria has feared most is that when these countries emerge as democratic, non-racial, non-aligned, peaceful and prosperous societies, the mere example they would set would constitute a threat to the apartheid system.

Translated into policy, this has meant destabilisation of all the countries of our region to produce a situation of permanent instability, no economic development as well as increased dependence on South Africa, weak governments that would be subservient to Pretoria - an overall situation in which apartheid South Africa would be the dominant regional power whose interests

would determine the destiny of the entire region. What we are

arguing is that the Pretoria regime has not abandoned this policy position.

# Namibia is a South African colony. In this sense, the

decolonising power, in the context of the 435 process, is South

Africa. We should bear in mind that none of the other countries of our region, which are now independent, were South African colonies. Therefore, the question posed by the Namibian independence process is whether it is politically or even logically possible for regime to dismantle white minority

domination across its borders, while continuing to maintain and entrench the same system at home.

If the decolonising power accepts that a system of one person one vote in a united, democratic and non-racial Namibia is acceptable, how does it justify the rejection of the same outlook with respect to its own country! In brief, can one be a colonialist at home and a democrat abroad! Pretoria's solution to this conundrum will be to ensure, through destabilisation, that the democratic system in Namibia fails. It would then use the fact of that failure to justify its perpetuation of apartheid within South Africa.

We are of course speaking about what we believe the Pretoria regime will seek to do. It is not pre-determined that its schemes will succeed. We are convinced that SWAPO, supported by the overwhelming majority of the people of Namibia, has the strength to resist and defeat the plans of the Pretoria regime. The rest of the world community also has a responsibility to assist SWAPO and the Namibian people to achieve this objective.

Immediately, the world public, including the people of the United States, should exert maximum pressure to ensure that the strength of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) is not

reduced. Indeed, given the size of Namibia and the nature of the South African regime, it would seem logical to us that the strength of UNTAG should be increased, so that it has the ability to ensure Namibia's successful transition to independence, whatever the wishes of the Pretoria regime might be.

These developments within our region, attempts to resolve various

leading questions in world politics and the situation within South Africa itself, emphasise the urgent necessity to get rid of the apartheid system and transform South Africa into a non-racial democracy. The reality however is that the Botha regime is as determined as ever both to cling to power and to defend the system of white minority rule to the bitter end. Some of our compatriots who came here directly from South Africa will provide some of the details of continuing repression, the further strengthening of the apartheid security machinery and so on.

The positions taken by the Pretoria regime inside our country can only lead to further conflict and polarisation. As determined as the regime is to maintain itself in power, so are the oppressed firmly resolved to liberate themselves. And what these oppressed but struggling millions are after is the transformation of South Africa into a democratic and non-racial society. This is the central issue of the day without whose achievement none of the problems facing our country can be solved.

However much the Botha regime intensifies the campaign of repression and however much it tinkers with the apartheid system to make it look better, there is no possibility whatsoever that the South African political agenda can be re-written so as to remove from the top of the list the question of the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial democracy. The longer such a solution is postponed because of the obduracy of the Botha regime, the more bitter and bloody the Conflict in South Africa will become. Such is the reality of our situation.

To end apartheid, liberate the millions of our people and bring peace to our region, we have to intensify our struggle in all its forms. The fact that we have to move our military personnel from Angola, as our own contribution to the process of achieving peace for Angola and independence for Namibia, will not affect the issue of the need for us to escalate our offensive against the apartheid system using both political and military means. We draw strength and encouragement from the incontestable fact that, despite the state of emergency and the adverse effect it might have had on some of the organisations of the people, the millions of the oppressed and growing numbers of whites, are committed to fight on until victory is won.

We neither relish nor look forward to the prospect of a bloody conflict. Forced to take up arms because we had no other choice, we have not become slaves to violence and are today as ready as we have been in the past, to participate in any meaningful political process to achieve the objective of a non-racial democracy. But, as we all know, Botha continues to reject the very notion of a non-racial democracy and believes he has enough strength to maintain white minority domination for the foreseeable future.

More than a year ago, the National Executive Committee of the ANC published its positions on the issue of negotiations. We said

then, as we say now, that we are not opposed to negotiations. But for such negotiations to become an issue of practical politics, the necessary climate would have to be created. This would include the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and detainees, the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations, the lifting of the state of emergency and the repeal of all repressive legislation and a commitment by all to the perspective of a democratic and a non-racial society.

A few months ago, we also published a set of Constitutional Guidelines, being our own contribution to the ongoing debate within our country on the issue of a new constitution and an effort to build up a national consensus around definite and fundamental political issues, precisely to improve the possibility to arrive at a political solution acceptable to all the people of our country.

The response of the apartheid regime to these important initiatives has been to increase the number of political prisoners and detainees rather than reduce them, to increase the number of organisations that are banned, to perpetuate the state of emergency and to reaffirm the continuity of the apartheid system.

Rather than abolish the apartheid tri-cameral parliament, the Botha regime is actively considering elections to be held this year to renew this racial institution. Last October it conducted local government elections once again on a racial basis and is therefore reconstituting local government precisely on this apartheid basis. It will also try to proceed further with its constitutional plans, based on racial principles and designed to entrench apartheid.

Consequently, it should be perfectly clear that in practice the Pretoria regime says no to all real and fundamental change. And to make sure that no change takes place, it is prepared to and is involved in spilling the blood of many innocent people and is not at all concerned that its actions can reduce our country into a wasteland.

The conclusions from what we have said are obvious. The internal and international struggle to rid our country of the apartheid regime must continue and intensify. As I have said, our own people have taken up this challenge. The international community still has a responsibility to ensure the total isolation of the apartheid regime through the imposition of sanctions in all areas of human activity. We cannot overemphasise the importance of sanctions as a peaceful means of pressure to help create the conditions in which the racist regime will no longer be able to resist the tide of change.

In this regard, we look forward to the US Congress imposing further and meaningful sanctions against apartheid South Africa.



We trust that President-elect, George Bush, will not follow the

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unhelpful example set by President Reagan and veto what Congress might decide. We are also of the view that the US Administration will have to do more to convince the other major Western powers to join the United States by also imposing effective sanctions.

We would like to take this opportunity to urge British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to shed the mantle in which she has clothed herself, of being Pretoria's principal protector. The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers will meet in Harare next month to discuss the question of further sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Hopefully, this time, she will listen to the voice that

we are sure will emanate from this meeting and join in the common effort to find the speediest possible ways and means to end the inhuman system of apartheid.

There is a noticeable trend in international politics for the nations of the world to come together to resolve issues that are of concern to all humanity. Apartheid is such an issue. We firmly

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concert, regardless of ideological differences and power blocks to help us end the apartheid system without any further delay.

As before, our own continent Africa and the OAU will continue to stand at the centre of this process. But equally, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations have a critical role to play in this process. We would like to believe that all of us present here would use our influence to move our countries and our governments to join this mighty and united international movement whose clarion call should be - the world united to end apartheid now.

We, for our part, will continue to work without resting to unite the people of South Africa, both black and white, to act together to liberate themselves and our country from the apartheid crime against humanity. We are confident that victory is certain.

Thank you.