

STATEMENT

by

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at the

CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN AND AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES

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I appreciate the opportunity to address this the final session of the Conference of African and American Representatives in Lusaka -- a Conference which has been particularly meaningful, and has provided a forum for discussion and for the exchange of viewpoints. It has furnished an opportunity for clarification of perceptions with respect to policy on African issues through open and forthright dialogue.

As I read the papers this morning and saw the myopic perspective of a well-meaning friend, the NEW YORK TIMES, in decrying the holding of the Security Council meeting in Addis, the need for such interchange was reaffirmed in my mind. The NEW YORK TIMES mentions the expenditure of \$150,000 and asks what is going to be the dividend. It then equates this to what the TIMES considers to be the impotence of the United Nations and rhetoric. The Editorial concludes by asking how is the problem of minority rule in southern Africa to be solved by rhetoric in Africa when it has not been solved by rhetoric there in New York.

Of course, rhetoric at the United Nations is only impotence to those who are not perceptive. It still stands as the only instrument through which African members can express themselves and have confrontations with the super powers and, in that

sense, it is not rhetoric. To move the site of the deliberations on African issues is to bring African issues attention they have not been getting. One of the main deficiencies in the whole African liberation movement is the failure to seize the attention of the super powers. It is a matter of priorities. A meeting in Africa will get priority, focus, drama and perhaps will make the dinosaur at least open one eye.

Another concept which I wish to address is that of violence versus non-violence. He who disassociates himself from the use of any violent means for winning the war of liberation lacks a historical perspective. One of the remarkable characteristics of the whole African liberation movement has been the reasonableness with which Africans have pursued their course so that, out of all the 41 African nations, only two have been forced to obtain liberation by violence, Kenya and Algeria. But the kind of resistance that is being experienced in pursuit of independence in the remaining areas to be liberated invites violence, invites the use of all means available and all means that are necessary. The only question is, do the majority of blacks in these areas have the will to make the supreme sacrifice; and it is clear, just from what has been happening in Zimbabwe, in the past few days, that they do. That is another myth that has been exploded in the past few days -- the myth that the Africans lack spirit -- as evidenced in Zimbabwe and in Namibia, and as evidenced by the desperate attempts by the colonialists to offset the onrushing drive for freedom in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau -- and as evidenced to us during our trip to South Africa last August in the growing determination and resistance in South Africa.

I am sure that the experience of my colleagues here at this Conference explodes any notion that our African brethren do not realize the implications of certain aspects of American foreign policy that affect their interests. They are

not fooled by the substitution of "foreign travel for foreign policy" as John Conyers so aptly phrased it. It is clear that our African brethren realize the meaning of recent United States actions:

- the renewal of the sugar quota for South Africa.
- the new statutory enactment authorizing the importation of chrome into the United States, notwithstanding United States international legal obligations under the Security Council resolutions.
- the complicity of the United States Government in failing to discourage investment or to encourage equality in South Africa.
- United States abstinence and negative votes on matters crucial to Africa at the United Nations.
- the enormous, unprecedented and anomalous commitment of the United States to Portugal in the Azores Agreement.

I am sure it has been informative to our African friends to learn firsthand of the complexities of our system of government as it relates to foreign policy in Africa or elsewhere.

- the fact that the Executive makes the decisions.
- the frequent conflict between the White House and foreign policy advisors and professionals in the State Department.
- the conflicting interests in the State Department itself between the African bureau and the European bureau which is following a pro-Portugal line, and with the Economic bureau which is protecting business interests, and with the military who insist on the retention of the Azores and who evidently promote a military interest in southern Africa.

It has been informative, I am sure, to learn of our complicated legislative machinery. I am sure that it has been informative to learn about the importance of American public opinion as it relates to the political implications of American foreign policy, and how our aid to Africa has been affected by adverse American reactions to our experiences in other areas.

I am sure it has been informative to learn more about the emerging Congressional Black Caucus and its interests, to be informed about the other encouraging signs which point to a growing constituency for Africa in the United States.

- over 100 college campuses.
- other organizations whose concern with foreign policy in the past has not been noticeable, particularly with respect to Africa, such as the United Nations Association.
- and other organizations which have been provincial in their outlook on civil rights are now beginning to see the implications of United States African policy for civil rights at home.

As testified to at the Congressional Black Caucus press conference, the presence here of four black Congressmen in Africa for the first time has been a renewal of our commitment. The Congressional Black Caucus has scheduled a National Conference on Africa in May.

A primary concern is the failure of the United States Government to have an AID concentration country in southern Africa.

Any position that it is only Africans seeking aid and that the United States has no interests in Africa is one-sided. African nations look to America for assistance in the development of their countries. What does America look to African countries for? What is the quid pro quo for the United States? I do not think the average American or even the average delegate has a real clear picture of this. What are our interests?

Africa is the land mass between Europe and Asia. Therefore, United States interest lies in the geopolitics of the situation of Africa and in the 300 million people of Africa, and in the fact that any serious instability in an area of this size, and involving this number of people, is a threat to the peace of the world.

Africa's strategic location in terms of world wide communication links and natural resources means that it is important to the United States. Moreover, any failure to recognize that the struggle in Africa will continue until liberation is won is myopic and inconsistent with United States interests.

And beyond independence, the United States needs the friendship and the good-will of Africa for these same geopolitical reasons. Further, who knows what potentials there are in the skills and brain power of Africans which are being lost to the world because of prejudice and neglect and divergence of interests.

Finally, Africans can learn much from their African-American brethren regarding the techniques of revolution and they ought to examine and draw the lessons that we have gone through in order to move forward.

Out of the marches, out of the civil disobedience, out of the demonstrations and out of the smoldering ruins of the ghettos of Detroit, Newark, Washington and Watts -- out of all of these there came a new recognition of the dignity of the black man. There came a realization on the part of the power structure that it is much simpler to share the benefits of our society equitably than it is to pay the price of repression.