



Remarks
made by

His Excellency Dr. Kenneth D. Kaunda President of The Republic of Zambia

at a
White House Dinner Given in His Honour
by

His Excellency Mr. Gerald R. Ford President of The United States

April 19, 1975

Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, Brothers and Sisters,

I first want to express my deep appreciation and gratitude for inviting me to visit Washington D.C. I also thank you, the Government and the people of the United States for their warm welcome and kind hospitality given to my wife and I and the entire Zambian delegation.

We are happy to be in Washington D.C. It is a very brief visit, but since we come for specific objectives, it is not the duration that matters, but the results. So far, we have done a lot. We find we have a lot in common on vital issues affecting mankind. Our discussions have been characterized by a spirit of frankness and cordiality. This spirit coupled by the definition of areas of urgent action should move the U.S. and Africa closer towards the attainment of our common objectives.

We come to America with a clear purpose. We simply want to be understood. We seek American understanding of Africa's objectives and America's fullest support in the attainment of these objectives.

The relations between Zambia and the U.S. cause me no concern because they are cordial, although there is room for improvement through more sound co-operation.

What gives Zambia and Africa great cause for concern is America's policy towards Africa or is it the lack of it—which, of course, can mean the same thing. For I have been told of U.N. tricks in which an abstention in a vote can be a vote for or against. A no-policy position may not be a neutral position, indicative of passive posture, but a deliberate act of policy to support the status quo or to influence events in one direction or the other at a particular time. We have in recent years been most anxious about the nature and degree of the United States participation in building conditions for genuine peace based on human equality, human dignity, freedom and justice for all particularly in southern Africa.

You will forgive us, Mr. President for our candour if we reaffirmed, on this occasion, our dismay at the fact that America has not fulfilled our expectations.

Our dismay arises from a number of factors. We are agreed that peace is central to all human endeavours. Our struggle for independence was designed to build peace, and, thank God, our people have enjoyed internal peace. We are agreed that we must help strengthen peace wherever it is threatened.

There has been no peace in southern Africa for a very long time even if there was no war as such. The absence of war does not necessarily mean peace. Peace is something much deeper than that. The threat of escalation of violence is now real. It is our duty to avoid such an escalation. We want to build peace in place of violence, racial harmony in place of disharmony, prosperity in place of economic stagnation, security in place of insecurity now digging every family everyday.

To build genuine peace in southern Africa, we must recognise with honesty the *root causes* of the existing conflict.

FIRST: Colonialism in Rhodesia and Namibia. The existence of a rebel regime in Rhodesia has since compounded that problem.

SECOND: Apartheid and racial domination in South Africa. Over the last few years, a number of catalytic factors have given strength to these forces of evil. External economic and strategic interests have nourished colonial and apartheid regimes.

Realism and moral conscience dictate that those who believe in peace must join hands in promoting conditions for peace. We cannot declare our commitment to peace and yet strengthen forces which stand in the way to the attainment of that peace.

The era of colonialism has ended. Apartheid cannot endure the test of time. Our obligation is that these evil systems end peacefully. To achieve our aim, we need America's total commitment to action consistent with that aim.

So far, American policy let alone action has been low keyed. This has given psychological comfort to the forces of evil.

We become even more dismayed when the current posture of America towards Africa is set against the background of her historic performance in late 50's and early 60's. We cannot but recall:

America that did not wait for and march in step with colonial powers, but rather boldly marched ahead with the colonial peoples in their struggle to fulfill their aspirations.

An America undaunted by the strong forces of reaction against the wind of change, whose nationals helped teach the colonial settlers about the evils of racial discrimination.

An America whose Assistant Secretary for Africa Affairs "Soapy" Williams, could be slapped in the face by a white reactionary on our soil and yet, undaunted still smile, still stand by American principles of freedom, justice and national independence based on majority rule. Yes, the reactionaries hated Americans for "spoiling the natives," for helping to dismantle colonialism.

What has happened to that America? Have the principles changed? The aspirations of the oppressed have not changed. In desperation their anger has exploded their patience. Their resolve to

fight if peaceful negotiations are impossible is borne out by history. So their struggle has now received the baptism of fire, victories in Mozambique and Angola have given them added inspiration. Africa has no reason not to support the liberation movements.

Can America still end only with declaration of support for the principles of freedom and racial justice? This will not be enough. Southern Africa is poised for a dangerous armed conflict. Peace is at stake. The conflict with disastrous consequences can be averted but there is not much time. Urgent action is required.

At this time, America cannot realistically wait and see what administering powers will do or to pledge to support their efforts when none are in plan. America must heed the call of the oppressed. America, once an apostle in decolonisation, must not be a mere discipline of those which promise but never perform and thus give strength to evils of colonialism and apartheid.

If we want peace we must end the era of inertia—in Rhodesia and Namibia and vigorously work for ending apartheid. America must now be in the vanguard of democratic revolution in southern Africa. This is not the first time we make this appeal. It is Africa's constant plea.

Now Africa has taken an unequivocal stand on decolonisation. We do not want to fight a war to win freedom and full national independence in southern Africa. Africa wants to achieve these objectives by peaceful means, i.e. through negotiations. Our declaration to give high priority to peaceful methods to resolve the current crisis is a conscious decision. We feel it to be our moral duty to avoid bloodshed where we can. We are determined to fulfill this obligation but not at any price, not at the price of freedom and justice. No.

Africa has made it clear that if the road to peaceful change is closed by the stone walls of racial bigotry and force of arms by minority regimes then we are equally duty-bound to take the inescapable alternative. The oppressed people have a right to answer force with force and Africa and all her friends in the world will support them. Liberation movements fought fascist Portugal. We supported them. They won. Now we must turn to Rhodesia and Namibia.

Can America stand and be counted in implementing the Dar-es-Salaam strategy adopted by Africa. In Dar-es-Salaam early this month Africa reaffirmed its commitment to a peaceful solution to the crisis in southern Africa as a first priority. Our strategy opens even new doors to peaceful change if those caught up in the crisis seek honourable exit. Here is a chance in a century to achieve peace based on human equality and human dignity without further violence.

We call upon America to support our efforts in achieving majority rule in Rhodesia and Namibia immediately, and the ending of apartheid in South Africa. If we are committed to peace, then let us join hands in building peace by removing factors underlying the current crisis.

If the oppressed peoples fail to achieve these noble ends by peaceful means we call upon America, not to give any support to the oppressors. Even now we call upon America to desist from direct and indirect support to minority regimes. For this puts America in direct conflict with the interests of Africa i.e. peace, deeply rooted in human dignity and equality and freedom without discrimination.

We have recently demonstrated our readiness to make peaceful change possible in Mozambique and Angola. We are equally committed to assist the oppressed if they should convince us that the road to peaceful change is closed and armed struggle is the only alternative.

The rebels in Rhodesia, assisted by South African troops have committed some of the worst atrocities on the continent. Africa cannot allow them to continue and we urge America not to allow them to continue. Victory for the majority is a matter of time. Let us, therefore, make it as painless as possible to those who have dominated their fellowmen for years.

Mr. President, we wish America to understand our aims and objectives. We are not fighting whites, we are fighting an evil and brutal system. On this there must be no compromise. America should also understand our strategy. We want to achieve our objectives by peaceful methods first and foremost. Africa is ready to try this approach with patience and exhaust all possible tactics. For peace is too precious for all of us, but our patience and the patience of the oppressed has its limits.

Mr. President, we are here only for a short time. We have no other mission except to take the opportunity of the visit to put Africa's stand. We want to avoid confrontation, but let us not be pushed into it.

Once again on behalf of my wife and my compatriots and indeed on my own behalf I thank you for this warm welcome and hospitality. This is indeed a memorable visit, memorable because it has been fruitful and it coincides with the launching, only yesterday, of your bicentenary celebrations. We congratulate the people of the United States for their anti-colonialist struggle of their founding fathers.

Finally, I take the opportunity of inviting you, Mr. President and Mrs. Ford, to pay a visit to Zambia. We will be happy to receive you in our country at anytime convenient to you.

I now invite you ladies and gentlemen to join me and my wife in this toast:

To the President and Mrs. Ford.

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