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PUBLIC LECTURE BY AMBASSADOR SALIM A. SALIM
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
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"THE SOUTHERN AFRICA CRISIS"

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Academic Community
of the University
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to thank Dr. Mariiyo Nzuwah and the other organizers of this event for the honour accorded and the opportunity afforded to me to address this distinguished gathering. I do so conscious of the almost impossible task before me.

I have been asked to speak on "The Southern Africa Crisis" with special emphasis on Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Yet my audience will not fail to appreciate my obvious limitations in discussing such a comprehensive and highly topical subject. To begin with, each of the aspects involved in the Southern African confrontattion could well be a matter for separate and detailed treatment. Furthermore, almost everyone is now talking about Southern Africa and especially Angola that I am afraid I may not say anything new. But my more serious disadvantage is that many eminent African statesmen and spokesmen have addressed themselves to this topic and with such lucidity, clarity and profundity that I feel myself clearly disadvantaged and ill-equipped!

But in accepting the University's gracious invitation, two factors have weighed quite heavily in giving me the courage, to address you today. First, the coincidence with George Washington's official birthday. For what better occasion to remind responsible Americans like those gathered here that the same ideals for freedom and elimination of foreign domination that inspired and moved great Americans like George Washington are what sustains the African

freedom fighters in Southern Africa today? The African in Zimbabwe and Namibia desires nothing more than the right to decide his own destiny and to be rid of oppression and daily degradation and humiliation.

Perhaps the overwhelming majority of Namibians and Zimbabweans have never heard of Thomas Jefferson who wrote in the American Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal. That they are endowed with certain unalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, - that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new Government laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Many of the Africans in the two oppressed lands of Southern Africa as indeed in South Africa itself may not have heard those powerful words. But most certainly, they see nothing to contradict them. Above all, this Declaration has a lot of bearing with what is going on there. In simple terms, the struggle in Southern Africa is for the attainment of the inalienable rights of the dispossessed millions.

It is a struggle to change the Unrepresentative, white minority racist regimes and to create governments which are most likely to ensure their safety and promote their happiness.

In Zimbabwe, where a minority of 250,000 whites is oppressing the more than 4 million Africans; and in Namibia where South Africa continues to defy the will and outrage of the international community, the basic characteristics of the struggle, though perhaps in some cases relatively more complex, are not very different from that waged by the pioneers of American independence. The Liberation Movements in Zimbabwe and Namibia - ANC and SWAPO respectively are fighting for an end to foreign domination and the creation of truly representative governments.

But the Africans in Southern Africa are fighting not just for the elimination of foreign domination. They are fighting for their very humanity which is constantly challenged by their oppressors. You are all familiar with the nature of the Southern African struggle and I need not repeat the obvious. Suffice it to say that the struggle there is against colonialism and the vilest form of racism. And no true African, no patriot will condone such a perpetual state of humiliation. Yet, when the freedom fighters resort to legitimate struggle as they have, they are immediately given all sorts of labels. Terrorists or Communists or a combination of both is the most common reference. One expects the enemies of African freedom to do so, but when one hears similar expressions used in this country either verbally or by printed word, then it is only right that we should use occasions like these to recapitulate what should in fact be obvious! Wasn't George Washington branded by the British as a "terrorist", an anarchist and a renegade too? Of course, in 1776, Karl Marx had not been born! Otherwise, considering the convenient labels loosely used by the antagonists of the freedom struggle whether in Zimbabwe or in Angola, it is not farfetched to imagine that both Washington and Lincoln had they lived in the post October Revolution and preached some of the ideals they did, they would possibly have been classified as "communists."

Therefore, as this country prepares to celebrate its 200 years of its independence, it is only relevant to bear in mind that the aspirations and expectations of the Africans in Southern Africa are not a new phenomenon! Nor for that matter is armed struggle to attain that objective, a recent African invention. Those American revolutionaries of 1776 would feel insulted if any aspersions were thrown at the legitimacy of their armed struggle! This awareness of some aspects of American history and the need to draw some relevant analogies in this bicentennial year is the other factor which prompted me to accept the challenge of discussing the Southern African crisis with you today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now turn to the specifics of the Southern Africa situation and offer some general observations.

I do not believe that there is any responsible person either in this country or in other world capitals who now doubts the

seriousness and explosive nature of the problem. I should only point out, as a matter of record, that long before the issues of that part of our continent began to attract prominent headlines in this country and elsewhere in the Western World - thanks to the struggle in Angola - many eminent African Heads of States and particularly those bordering the areas [like Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda] had repeatedly warned that the situation in Southern Africa poses a real threat to the peace and security of the African continent and that it has all the makings of a racial conflagration with unforeseen international repercussions. For the confrontation between the forces of freedom and those of oppression were nowhere more sharply drawn. Yet, there were those who considered these warnings as alarmist and in some cases treated them with cynicism, confident as they were in the invincibility of the so-called "white redoubt"! To them, it was simply inconceivable that the unholy trinity of Portuguese fascism, apartheid South Africa and the minority Smith regime would be seriously challenged.

The stability of Southern Africa was conceived in terms of the so-called stability of the impregnable forces of this unholy alliance. But the liberation movements of the former Portuguese colonies - PAIGC of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, FRELIMO of Mozambique and the MPLA of Angola, through their resilience and sacrifice, supported by Free Africa, the Third World nations, the Socialist and Scandinavian countries as well as many people outside the governments in the Western World, among whom are many Americans - shattered this myth.

The defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Africa and the collapse of Portuguese fascism brought a new era in Southern Africa. The Balance of Power has changed radically in favour of the forces of freedom and against the forces of racism and colonialism. In the words of the Dar es Salaam Declaration adopted by the Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity held in Tanzania in April 1975, the frontiers of freedom have been extended in that part of our continent. Yet, one must recognize that the victories won had been at great sacrifice, both human and material! Africa lost some of its finest sons in that struggle. Most certainly we would all have preferred a less violent path. Historical evidence fully supports Africa's desire to effect peaceful changes.

In 1969, the countries of East and Central Africa evolved the famous Lusaka Manifesto. That historical document which was endorsed by the OAU and the United Nations clearly stipulated Africa's option to attain freedom and racial equality through peaceful means. "We would prefer to negotiate rather than destroy, to talk rather than to kill. We do not advocate violence; we advocate an end to violence against human dignity which is now being perpetrated by the oppressors of Africa", so declared free Africa's leaders. The Lusaka Manifesto went further, "if peaceful progress to emancipation were possible, or if changed circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change." This was a call to reason, a call for negotiations. Regrettably, the Lusaka Manifesto was rejected by the regimes of Pretoria, Salisbury and Lisbon. But even more lamentable was the fact that the foreign allies and supporters of these regimes while paying lip-service tribute to the Manifesto, did nothing to promote meaningful negotiations. On the contrary, five years later - after thousands of casualties - fatal and otherwise - the ideals espoused by the Lusaka Manifesto triumphed, thanks to the perseverance and resistance of the Liberation Movements. The Liberation of Mozambique and Angola which is currently successfully waging a struggle for the consolidation of its independence - has ushered new hopes and expectations for the freedom of Namibia and Rhodesia and finally, for the triumph of equality and justice within South Africa itself.

But whether Zimbabwe and Namibia attains this freedom through the ballot or the bullet is really not up to the Africans. The ball is in the court of their oppressors and those who collaborate with them. Africa's desire to seek peaceful changes has never diminished. The Dar es Salaam Declaration is a clear testimony to this end. But Africa's enemies show no such peaceful desires. This brings me to the Angolan question.

The People's Republic of Angola is of vital and strategic importance to the Southern African struggle. But the concept of strategic value of that country should not be confused or deliberately distorted. Attempts to consider Angola in pure cold war calculations is not only to do disservice to the Angolan struggle but also to underestimate the passionate nationalist yearnings of the Angolans. It is above all to de-

monstrate sheer ignorance on the history of nationalist resistance in Africa - the MPLA no exception.

From our point of view, the strategic importance of Angola lies in that country's monumental potential in the contribution to the liberation of Africa. Free Angola will certainly greatly enhance the prospects of early liberation for Namibia and also Zimbabwe. South Africa knows this. We know it too. All the noise of Angola going communist or being a satellite of the Soviet Union is utter nonsense. South Africa knows that and we know it too! And we are not in the least surprised that the Pretoria regime resorts to the spectre of communism to justify its invasion in Angola. They thought they could bamboozle world public opinion and thus, buy more time. Fortunately, they have failed miserably. They have certainly failed in Africa.

What then are the issues concerning Angola? The South Africans have invaded that country with one single objective: attempting to thwart the establishment of a government in Luanda which would be genuinely serving African interests and thus, diametrically opposed to the grand design of Pretoria's expansionism. In brief, South Africa aimed at establishing in Angola a clientele regime. This attests to its support of those factions in Angola which were prepared to lend themselves to be used by Africa's arch enemy, and its outright incursions into Angola, moving hundreds of miles in the interior. Fortunately, South Africa's invasion boomeranged. It made more and more African states vigilant and come out in support of the MPLA's - led Government of the Peoples Republic of Angola.

I realize that Angola is a hot issue in this country. But, as time does not permit, I shall confine my remarks to only a few additional observations:

The Apartheid regime is the main enemy of the Africans in our continent. That regime oppresses non-whites in South Africa proper; it is a colonial power in Namibia and an illegal one at that; it is the main bulwark of resistance against international action against the illegal white minority regime in Southern Rhodesia. Thus, whether one refers to Namibia or Rhodesia, in the final analysis, we must reckon with South Africa. It should therefore not be difficult to comprehend the concerns and fears of countries like mine to South Africa's aggression in Angola. Nor should our

reaction surprise anyone. Tanzania was one of those countries, which though had ardently supported the MPLA throughout its liberation war did not immediately recognize the MPLA-led government after independence. At one time, we also advocated a government of national unity. We worked tirelessly in collaboration with many other African states to avoid a civil war. But with the advent of South Africa's intervention, the struggle in Angola ceased to be a simple civil strife. It was a struggle to resist foreign aggression and racism. The alternative before us was clear. We felt it as our responsibility to fully and unequivocally support the MPLA government as only that government could ensure the freedom and independence of Angola and thus ensure the onward march of the African revolution. Through its heroic resistance, the MPLA had more than justified our confidence.

Today, the Peoples Republic of Angola is being recognized and supported by no less than 36 African states. It is already a member of the Organization of African Unity. I have no doubt that in days and weeks to come, more and more African states will recognize and support it. For it should be emphasized that those African states which have yet to recognize the MPLA government - have not done so not due to lack of commitment to the struggle for Africa's freedom and against South Africa's aggression but rather out of genuine differences of approach. I remain confident that as the Peoples Republic consolidates its independence and eliminates foreign aggression, it will, true to the historical traditions of the MPLA, promote national concord and national harmony and in the process, win even broader support to its cause both within and outside Africa. Those of us who have had close links with the MPLA and its leaders, who know of their non-racial, non-tribal and non-sectarian appeals, are confident of Angola's future under their dynamic leadership.

Addressing a distinguished American gathering of this nature, I must express our satisfaction at the increasing understanding shown by many sectors of the American public and its legislators on the nature of the struggle in Angola. This is of vital importance. For it would be most unfortunate and indeed tragic to fail to evaluate properly Angola's struggle for meaningful independence and be swayed by cliches and highly over-simplistic propaganda.

The struggle in Angola as indeed in the rest of Southern Africa is not a struggle for or against communism. The MPLA govern-

ment is a nationalist, non-aligned and yes, admittedly, staunchly anti-colonialist one. The MPLA is no more communist than for example is TANU of Tanzania, PDG of Guinea, FRELIMO of Mozambique and UNIP of Zambia.

Angola will be nobody's satellite. It will certainly be a strategic rear base for the liberation struggle in Namibia as was Tanzania in the case of Mozambique and as is Zambia and Mozambique in the case of Zaimbabwe. No amount of pseudo-strategic cold war conceptions should be used to distort the true nature of Angola's quest for real freedom and the reasons for the support that the MPLA government enjoys from the ever-increasing majority of African states. Those who really understand Africa's aspirations realize this.

The Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olof Palme, one of the outstanding Western statesmen with a clear sensitivity to Africa's legitimate struggle for freedom, recently made very pertinent remarks concerning the Angolan situation and the propagandistic onslaught against the MPLA. Writing in the Stockholm Newspaper Dagens Nyheter, the Swedish Prime Minister explained that the MPLA had asked for weapons from most countries in the west before turning to the Soviet Union. He rightly pointed out that hardly a state in Africa had turned into a Soviet satellite after receiving such assistance, adding:

"I see in the press the MPLA practically, always is depicted as 'Marxist', pro-Soviet or even communist. This is propagandistic simplification."

Mr. Palme, whose country's links with the MPLA - like that Movement's relations with other Nordic countries and the Netherlands - have been quite extensive ∟a fact conveniently not publicized by the mass media here[/], further asserted that MPLA differed little from other liberation movements long accepted in the west. The Swedish leader then declared:

"There is, of course, a reason for these labels, it is more legitimate to attack "communists" and "terrorists" and to support their opponents."

These are wise and pertinent remarks indeed.

Mr. Chairman,

The liberation of Angola and Mozambique, changing the geopolitical situation in Southern Africa, has opened new horizons in the tide for Africa's freedom and human dignity in Southern Africa. But the war is far from being won. Indeed the obstacles are many and no less formidable. And once again, the old question of whether there would be violent or peaceful - or to be more accurate, less violent - means of struggle comes into the fore. And again, the choice is neither that of the liberation movements of Zimbabwe, Namibia nor that of free Africa. For Africa's objective of liberation cannot be compromised. President Nyerere, addressing the commemorative session marking the Silver Jubilee of the United Nations in October 15, 1970 explained Free Africa's alternatives on Southern Africa in the following items:

"For Africa there is no choice. We have to support the freedom fighters. Theirs is merely a continuation of the freedom struggle which has already resulted in 41 African nations being represented in this General Assembly. For the national freedom and human equality for which these people are fighting are not only the same rights which the rest of Africa claimed and won; they are also the only basis on which free states of Africa exist."

Yet, as was aptly put in 1969, Africa does not advocate violence. Rather, we advocate an end to violence. Thus, in spite of the victories won, the OAU Council of Ministers in their extraordinary meeting in Dar es Salaam in April 1975, went on record as follows:

"Africa's objective in Zimbabwe is independence on the basis of majority rule. This can be achieved either peacefully or by violent means. Either way, Africa will lend its unqualified support to the freedom fighters led by their nationalist movement - the African National Council. As long as the objective of majority rule before independence is not compromised, Africa would support all efforts by the Zimbabwe nationalists to win independence by peaceful means."

This declaration by the Organization of African Unity was made amidst a background of the efforts made by the African

National Council of Zimbabwe to attempt a negotiated settlement. These efforts began in December 1974 with the encouragement and support of Presidents Seretse Khama of Botswana, Samora Machel of Mozambique, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Regrettably, these efforts have been frustrated by the intransigency and recalcitrancy of the minority regime in Southern Rhodesia. And thus making an intensification of armed struggle in Zimbabwe inevitable. For the alternative to a negotiated settlement is not an impasse or status quo. Rather, an intensification of armed resistance. Africa's role is clear. It was in fact already enunciated as an alternative strategy of the Lusaka Manifesto:

"But while peaceful progress is blocked by action of those at present in power in the states of Southern Africa, we have no choice but to give to the people of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors."

The situation in Namibia is no less disconcerting. In 1966, the United Nations terminated South Africa's mandate over that territory. This decision has been endorsed by the Security Council. In June 1971, the International Court of Justice delivered an advisory opinion confirming the illegality of South Africa's presence in the territory. In December 1973, the Security Council unanimously and I emphasize the unanimity of the decision - called upon South Africa to withdraw from the territory; to respect its unity and territorial integrity and affirmed the right of Namibians to self-determination and independence. South Africa has treated all these decisions with characteristic contempt.

On the 30th of last month - when I had the honour and privilege to preside over the Security Council - that important United Nations body which is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security took another unanimous decision. While reiterating its previous demands, the Security Council specifically called upon South Africa to declare its readiness to allow free elections to be held in Namibia under United Nations supervision and control. Can the South Africans really be allowed to continue their defiance with impunity?

I have already pointed out that South Africa as the colonial power in Namibia and a de facto authority in Rhodesia holds

the key to the solution of the two problems. The freedom fighters have made their decision. Faced by South Africa's obduracy and the arrogance of the minority regime in Rhodesia, they will intensify their armed struggle so as to facilitate eventual serious negotiations. But what of the world community?

I would like in this connection to refer to the role of the Western countries and more particularly the major powers in the coming confrontation in Southern Africa.

They are the main supporters of the Pretoria regime. They supply it with economic and other types of support. Above all, they give that regime political respectability and protect it from universal ostracism and isolation. They do have then a great responsibility. They ought to search their conscience and consider ways and means at least to reduce the level and intensify of the inevitable confrontation. We hope that as the leader of the Western World, the United States will assume a responsible position in that direction. Nothing could be more fitting in a bicentennial year.

Their responsibility is grave indeed. For us in Tanzania, as indeed the whole of free Africa, our choice is clear. We shall reinforce our support for the liberation struggle. We expect no less from the traditional allies and supporters of the liberation movements.

I should like to end with one sombre observation. Since the Angolan events, we have heard a lot of moralising. Africa has never had so many advocates of "good advice". We have been warned of the danger of recolonization! Some of these remarks have come from well-meaning, even if misguided advisers. Others from cynics. And yet others from apologists of apartheid and colonialism in Southern Africa. To the cynics and apologists, we need not waste our breath. But to those well-meaning people, we can only say that it is important to examine one's role if one's advice is to be taken seriously. In the days of the armed resistance against Portuguese colonialism, Africa - through its highest authorities, pleaded in vain to many western governments for supports. Not only were the freedom fighters refused military assistance but in some cases, not even an aspirin was spared. To compound the rebuff, some of the governments from whom Africa expected understanding and sympathy, chose instead to fill the coffers and provide equipment, military or otherwise, to the very oppressors. The collusion

with Portuguese colonialism is still fresh in our memories. It is to be hoped that the rich experience accumulated, would solicit more understanding of the legitimate struggle for national liberation. Only then can those nations have any moral right to expect to be taken seriously by the freedom fighters and their supporters in free Africa.