This evening -- for the third consecutive year -- we are gathered together to observe Africa Freedom Day. You have heard eloquent speeches by Senator Humphrey and by fellow freedom fighters from Angola, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and other parts of Africa about the struggles that are taking place today -- at this very hour -- in their home territories. Africa Freedom Day therefore is not merely a day to be observed but a time for re-dedication to that goal which the American Committee on Africa has well expressed as the theme of this evening's meeting: "Till Africa Is Free."

What do we mean when we talk of freedom for all Africa? Understand well that it is the deepest commandment of our whole being to be free. Our long-enslaved peoples have arisen, and, even when still partially blind and bewildered, have sworn that they shall be free. Freedom for us is the one purpose of all our struggles, toilings, and suffering.

The ideal of freedom is not the property of a given group, or race, or party, but a value that is fundamentally and universally human. No people will be truly free until all men everywhere are free.

What do we expect of America in this regard? As your great writer William Faulkner has said: "We can not choose freedom established on a hierarchy of degrees of freedom, on a caste system of equality like military rank. We must be free not because we claim freedom but because we practice it..."

And this is exactly what we expect of America: to put into practice those ideals you have always professed, to act on, not talk about, the teachings of the American Revolution. While we recognize -- and welcome -- that the wind of change has, after these many years, finally arrived in Washington too, we must also say with all candor that the mocking paradoxes inside America become so clear they can no longer be ignored. If you want to talk about freedom you must mean freedom for others as well as yourselves, and that includes freedom for everyone inside your frontiers as well as outside. Full equality -- nothing more, nothing less -- for American Negroes is an urgent question that can no longer be deferred. And by equality we do not mean tolerance, for this assumes superiority.

As I said in my speech of 1959: "Because of its history, its background, and its stand for democracy, the African people have come to expect greatness of the United States. We are therefore often surprised... at the apparent contradiction in standards and values where Africa is concerned."

We in Africa are being pressed to line up with the East, or with the West. Your journalists paint our leaders as pro-Communist or pro-West. The colonial powers, frequently assisted by the United States, continue to seek to manipulate us, to exploit our differences, to play personality against personality, leaders against leaders, country against country, and tribe against tribe. Instead of our being masters of events they would use us as tools in our own Continent.
But we do not intend to become pawns in the East-West struggle, nor do we intend to become victims of the cold war psychology. Africa does not intend to be known as anti-this or pro-that, of East or of West. Africa intends to stand for something that is African, something we will export to the rest of the world.

Those who look at us with glasses on which is written pro-West or pro-East, anti-West or anti-East, will find that we intend to change these glasses into an African looking glass that will portray the African personality, that will be recognized the moment an African is seen or the moment he starts to speak.

We do not wish to exchange British, Portuguese, Belgian, or French colonialism for American or Soviet economic or military imperialism -- whether of the new or old style. We wish to create an independent Africa -- independent in all spheres of activity -- convinced that Africa's ultimate redemption will come only from Africa and by the African people. For those who can not or will not understand what we mean when we say our policy is one of positive neutrality, I would remind them of what is said in the "Declaration of Freedom" by Archibald MacLeish written for your own Freedom House here in New York City, and I quote: "Freedom is the right to choose: the right to create for oneself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing." And we have shown in Kenya, especially since 1952, and more recently in Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, South Africa, and today in Angola, that above all we are and intend to remain men -- free men.

The Congo crisis is a case in point -- the case in point where the colonial powers actively assisted by the United States have sought to manipulate us, divide us, and break up that great territory into small, provincial, petty, and weak tribal states -- subject to easy manipulation from the outside. President Nkrumah has eloquently said for all of us: "... the Congo is the heart of Africa; any wound inflicted upon the Congo is a wound to the whole of Africa. Outside interference in the Congo is a threat to the independence of every African state and a further extension of the cold war." And there are other Congos perhaps to come and we must anticipate them rather than wait until there is a Congo, until a Lumumba is murdered.

Some of the new United States policies expressed in your recent United Nations votes on Angola, and the questions of South West Africa and Ruanda-Urundi, have had the effect of opening windows in a stuffy room, and have gone some way toward washing away the dust and dirt from the past which had lain heavy on the Statue of Liberty. But pious resolutions and hopes will not lead Africa to the goal which we have set for it. A dedication to action and action itself -- that is what counts. There has been much talk in this country about the missile gap and whether the Russians or the Americans have bigger, better, and more effective missiles. I would seriously suggest that a more important gap to be faced by America is the moral gap between words and deeds. Africa is no longer interested in words alone.

Some of us are bewildered from time to time about your inconsistencies in African policy, and apparent lack of understanding on those issues most vital to us. Notwithstanding the frequent references in your press, the Congolese people and leaders today are neither pro-West nor pro-East. A more significant and meaningful division is that between those whose friendship can be bought -- temporarily I might add -- and those whose friendship must be earned, since they have popular
strength which is solid and enduring. The United States has been betting much more heavily on the former than on the latter.

Those you have chosen to support want to dismember the Congo and further its internal disintegration. The Belgian influence, which encouraged the recent Tananarive Conference, has -- to the extent such dismemberment proceeds -- scored a victory. Yet, despite the death of Lumumba, which was a catastrophe since he was the only leader of a national coalition, that national coalition still does exist. Its neutralist position should not be confused with the Communist one since there are no Communist cadres in the Congo and their ideology is essentially anti-colonialist and nationalist.

I support without reservation President Nkrumah's 8-point program for the Congo given at the United Nations last month. And we wonder why the United States has difficulty in accepting it. What the Congo is going through today is similar to the period that you yourselves went through during the Federalist debates. The United States in particular because of its own constitutional structure should be especially understanding of the Congo situation. In 1787 the United States decided that dominant national power must reside with a strong central government. And you have grown and prospered as a result. Why would you try to force the Congolese toward the road that you yourselves have consistently rejected throughout your history?

Just think if each of your 50 states had its own private army, its own foreign minister, and so on. There would be chaos. Yet you have suggested by your support of the divisive elements that the Congolese can do no better.

While it is true that throughout Africa there is a deeply rooted belief that the United States betrayed Lumumba, this disillusionment with the West is not ideologically based. We do not reject democracy for that is the heart of all we have been struggling for. Africa's disillusionment with the West comes not because we are devoted to democracy less, but from our own experiences, and from judging and watching actions of the West in Africa. Also experience has taught us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when outside powers' purposes appear beneficent. We who value freedom are naturally alert to repel invasions on our liberty by evil-minded countries. But the greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.

There is only one basis upon which a meaningful relationship can arise between Africa and other nations: mutual respect and recognition. Only two days ago President Kennedy himself said, and I quote: "Washington told our forefathers in this country to reject permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others, and said any nation failing in this is in some degree a slave. He warned against foreign influences which seek to tamper with domestic factions, who practice the arts of seduction to mislead public opinion. " It would appear that the "Father" of your country was the world's first positive neutralist. George Washington's advice and President Kennedy's comments encourage us as to the essential soundness of those policies we have adopted for our own and about which I have spoken this evening. We are convinced that the problems of Africa can not be met in the context of the East-West power struggle but require African solutions. Any country interested in a fruitful relationship with Africa must first know how we the African leaders and people regard these various matters of concern today. It is perhaps time that you recognized that there is now an African personality on the world stage.

Speaking of the father of your country, let me speak for a while about the father of my own country, Uenya, the man who, perhaps more than any other,
represents the African personality: Jomo Kenyatta. He has been imprisoned for the past nine years, most of that time not only deprived of his liberty, but deliberately made to suffer: confined in areas which are unhealthy, extremely hot, mosquito-ridden, and deserted. Jomo Kenyatta is still imprisoned in this the year of 1961 -- despite that wind of change we have heard so much about. How can his continued imprisonment do anything but poison relations between Britain and ourselves, between white and black?

Denial of freedom to Jomo Kenyatta and the other detained people of Kenya is a mockery of justice. It is a sheer injustice and a contravention of the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights to restrict anyone without a trial or after he has completed a prison sentence. The demand that the Governor of Kenya must know what Kenyatta thinks before he can release him conflicts with his assertion that Kenyatta is a security risk -- since he confesses ignorance of Kenyatta's views -- and in the minds of our people smacks of blackmail. If the Governor wants to know Kenyatta's views why doesn't he visit him? He has consistently refused to do so.

Reactionary groups and newspapers -- particularly your own press -- have painted Kenyatta as the leader of Mau Mau. These efforts to bring back the horrors of the past including reproduction of texts of alleged Mau Mau oaths and atrocities attempt to connect Kenyatta with these activities. Yet no African believes in the verdict at Kapenguria in 1953. The judge -- a retired white settler -- was brought back and given special powers and jurisdiction to try Kenyatta; he was promptly retired after the trial! The witnesses were hand-picked and especially sheltered -- if not trained. Three years ago the chief witness against Kenyatta confessed that he had committed perjury, and had been bribed by the Kenya Government to do so. The atrocities referred to in the press were committed long after Kenyatta's arrest and imprisonment. He could not have committed them.

The present crisis in Kenya will not be resolved, can not be resolved, until Jomo Kenyatta is given his unconditional freedom. Our people love him and are determined to make this undisputed leader of the African people the head of our first independent government. Our people respect him, not only for himself, but for his character, for his integrity and judgment and iron will; but they love him most for the enemies he has made.

There are those who cry "Wolf, wolf!" by pointing at the Congo and suggesting that the future of the immigrant communities in Kenya is in similar danger should Britain grant African self-rule too soon, or those who say economic disaster would follow if Kenyatta were released. These people have failed to study the background of the Congo. They do not appreciate that it was the direct result of the bankruptcy of Belgian rule.

These are the same people who ask our people in Angola to be nonviolent! Yet Angola was always there. Nyasaland was always there. It seems to some of us that it is only when these eruptions take place that concern is manifested. My friend from Northern Rhodesia has told us dramatically this evening how the just demands of his people have been and are being denied. How much longer can he and his people exercise patience? How long do you expect his people to restrain themselves when exposed to the daily cruelties of a handful of white settlers? Yet, only recently one of your most prominent citizens, the head of one of your major banks, advised the world what a wonderful climate for investment there was today in the Rhodesias and in South Africa! And he and his colleagues for years have been making and are making substantial investments in these countries -- assisted by your government. Direct private United States investment in South Africa alone aggregates approximately $600,000,000.00! Do you ever stop to think how this dollar
support of these reactionary, colonial, white-settler-dominated regimes in Central and South Africa serves those keeping our people in bondage?

Our people in South Africa have asked that economic sanctions be voted against the Union government, and that collective action be taken against her. Yet only a few days ago the United States government did not find it possible to support the African draft resolution and clause calling for these measures. However effective or ineffective such a resolution would have been in practical terms, the fact is that failure to pass this resolution was a tremendous blow to the morale of our people in South Africa. Must there now be another Sharpeville massacre before anything is done about that chronic disease down in the South?

We believe strongly that the settlement of world problems or differences must not be done through force. The United Nations Organization may prove to be the best forum in which some of these urgent problems may be resolved. We shall support the U.N. in this purpose. We are urgently concerned about what actions the U.N. will take -- not pious resolutions -- what action will be taken on the questions before it -- the question of South West Africa, of Angola, of the Congo, of South Africa, and of all the other dependent territories.

The United Nations can play the greatest part in the development of the new underdeveloped countries. We shall work for the realization of this objective which is already included in the U.N. Charter. At the same time we shall strongly resist any attempt by the United Nations to become a dominating force or a tool of a super power, or if it tries to reduce any country to a position of perpetual trusteeship.

We believe in positive independence for only is this consistent with our dignity and freedom. We shall not be neutral where we feel we must take sides with what is right and where truth and justice are concerned. We shall not refrain from denouncing that which is wrong, unjust, and inhuman. Between truth and wrong there must be no middle way, or non-committal attitude. We shall not compromise with what we regard as truth or right. It will be the basis of our very independence to positively choose right wherever we see it.

I believe the true discovery of Africa is before us. I think the true fulfillment of our spirit, of our people, of our mighty and immortal land, is yet to come. I think the true discovery of our own strength and freedom is still before us. And I think I speak for all Africans when I say that this glorious assurance is not only our living hope, but our dream to be accomplished.