Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure for me to be here and to have the honor of getting the words of praise, the tributes that are being hailed in favor of the people of Zimbabwe and in my own personal favor. When we decided to come to the United Nations, we did so in order to present our country and represent it an an occasion which we considered to be a very rare one because it comes only once in a country's life -- the occasion to be admitted to full international status by the United Nations and to receive therefore the honor of being a member of the most important organization in the international community, to be present with many others who had been allies and friends during this struggle, as we are accorded the status of member of the United Nations.

We also came here with a view to meeting people and being reunited with them as we have been united with them in the struggle. We therefore believe that the occasion is not just one which accords the honor to the people of Zimbabwe alone but one which accords the honor and praise to all those who stood with us, joined hands with us, suffered with us, even though from a distance, and carried on the struggle with us in one form or another.

You are those people -- in your various groups here, whether you belong to a voluntary, outright political organization that supported ZANU and the national struggle or you belong to a church group which on the basis of Christian principles, on the basis of moral principles, upheld the struggle that we were waging because for it and for the people who belong to that voluntary church group, what we were struggling for was the restoration in Zimbabwe of human dignity, the achievement of justice and peace, the correction of past wrongs, one of which was racism, inequality being another because of the racial system: inequitable distribution of land, inadequate educational facilities, health facilities, and the downgrading of the African through various forms of socio-economic pressures or discriminatory measures in the various fields which were meant to downgrade. That is what we fought for, but in fighting for the restoration of dignity of the Zimbabwean personality, you were also fighting for the restoration of your own dignity, your own personality. (Applause) As we suffered and died, you also suffered and died in your own hearts. The sorrow that we experienced was certainly the sorrow that you also experienced because you were one with us in spirit, you were physically one with us, you had organized support of various kinds for the amelioration of the problems that faced us during the struggle. We received lots of this material support: drugs, food from the funds that you sent us, clothes, literature to read, and other various forms of assistance that reached us. You also, in your way, denounced and condemned the regime in Rhodesia as it then was, and through pressures you were in solidarity with us, your voice was heard. We were therefore one in struggle, and I feel, now that we have achieved that victory, which is common to all of us, we shall continue to stand as one in celebrating that victory and remain one in transforming the country for whose independence we have all, on a joint basis, struggled. (Applause)
There is, therefore now that dimension of our struggle of our a luta continua that dimension which requires that we continue to join hands and raise a new kind of weaponry to meet the problems that face us today. For those of us who are directly in the front line, the problems that confront us are of an enormous character. First, we have to achieve peace and security for the country and for the people, and this is why we adopted the theme of reconciliation, the theme that although we might have been enemies yesterday, but the fact of the independence has transformed all of us into people of one nation, into a common brotherhood where we share a common loyalty, have love for our country and are therefore bound together in our commitment to the consolidation of our independence. And that is why we appealed to those who have fought hard and for so long unjustly to sustain their racist system that time had come for them to make amends, to transform and accept the hand of friendship we were extending to them. Were they going to do it? If they were, they had to accept of course that change had come, (Applause) that there was a new government with new objectives which were people-oriented, and being people-oriented, they did not seek therefore to confer privileges on any section of the population, whether that section was white or black, nor did they seek to perpetuate a system of privileges based on color. They had, therefore, to accept that change. If they accepted that change, there would be on our part no reason whatsoever to continue to regard them as enemies. There would be a readiness to forgive, to forget the past and to look to the future, which requirement would then mean that we would join hands in transforming our country and making it prosperous for all Zimbabweans.

That theme of reconciliation is the basis on which we are proceeding, but obviously, it is difficult to transform everyone in the country, especially if yesterday, they fought to prevent majority rule coming even in 1,000 years. (Applause) But I must say, my friend Ian Smith (laughter) is a changed man now! (Laughter & applause) Inasmuch as our victory has humbled us, his defeat has also humbled him in some way. He now believes that the government that I lead, which was elected popularly, is the government he has got to support. This is the spirit really which is in many members of our white community. But there are others, as I said earlier, who will not accept change and those are the people who are leaving the country. We have no regrets if such people leave. (Applause)

Having said that, I must say now that in coming to the United States, we also had the view to carry the theme of reconciliation not only into the orbit of the United Nations, but also into the United States itself. (Applause) Over the last 15 years, when we were waging a bitter struggle for the liberation of our country, the media castigated us and presented us as the monsters of Zimbabwe. We were the terrorists, we were the Communists, we were everything that was bad. And this propaganda which emanated from Salisbury and came to you perhaps via Apartheid South Africa, was believed by many people here except of course those who had known us for a long time, people like Judge Booth, George Houser, and many of you who had associated with us -- yes, who had associated with us for a long, long time. But as events started unfolding and we achieved our independence the truth, and I think it is correct to say so, is as impossible to soil as is the sunbeam. The truth speaks for itself. We were never monsters, we never hated the white man because he was white. We never hated him as a person even; we hated the system that he had established in the country. And it was that system which we fought. If we directed our guns at him, pointed them at him, and fired our bullets at him, it was because he was stubbornly resisting change. Stubbornly resisting change by force of arms. And there was no alternative, no other way of doing it than to use arms to overthrow an armed regime. (Applause)
We may have offended the sensibilities or sensitivities of moralists, or of people of a non-violent persuasion. But let me say, we ourselves are also men of non-violence. But non-violence to the extent that there are no people in society who will use violence, because if there are others who would want to impose their will against the will of the people by way of violence, then we must adopt violence in order to achieve a state of non-violence. (Applause, cheering) And Mr. Chairman, this is why I said this afternoon in addressing the United Nations General Assembly that we resorted to war as a means of creating peace. And this is precisely what we did. Now that peace has been created, what need have we to use guns to harass anybody? No, we must now proceed non-violently to work together with even those who were our enemies yesterday so that we can create a peaceful state of Zimbabwe, consolidate our independence by creating a base of peace.

We are glad and gratified and proud that you were our partners, you were our allies, in the process of creating peace. We would want therefore the theme of reconciliation to be understood also here in the United States — that if there were people who thought we were their enemies yesterday, well, they were wrong anyway. But we shall not be wrong in holding them onto the wrong beliefs that they had; we shan't hold anything against them; we would want to be friends with them. And we would want also the friendship of the United States administration in that our young republic in need of friends of substance, (Applause) friends of substance — when I say substance, I mean substance not only in the material sense, but also substance in their humanitarian philosophy, and that they must combine their well being with a virtue of being well-disposed toward those who are still developing and would want to achieve the same goals as they have achieved. We are happy that the United States did associate itself with us at a higher level, at a governmental level, by extending to us humanitarian assistance, mainly foodstuffs that came to us for refugees in Mozambique and Zambia, but we also are happy that what we had tried to achieve at the stage of the Anglo-American proposals, was achieved last year when we struck an agreement at Lancaster House. But we know that the work which people like Andrew Young and Donald McHenry had put into earlier negotiations and the trend they had set in motion was what was finally utilized as the process which led to an agreement at Lancaster House.

We naturally will be asking the United States to give us more aid, more aid because we must be assisted in becoming fully ourselves and not more aid to get us to become part of the United States. (Applause) We cherish our independence very dearly, and this is why we have retorted to those who have asked us the question, "If you get Soviet aid, Soviet arms, aren't you going to end up as a puppet of the Soviet Union?" and we have said quite firmly that we will not be puppets of anybody. (Applause) Friends and allies, yes, we shall be of any country, regardless of the bloc to which it belongs, and we remain non-aligned and we cherish dearly the right to self-determination, right to independence which we have achieved after a long struggle which cost us so many lives. We cannot surrender our sovereign being to anybody. (Applause)

And so we felt that whatever aid is given us must be given us in order to enable us to become masters of our own destiny. I hope we are understood. We wish to remain in amity and friendship with all those countries which have shown themselves as our friends and allies but we treasure the friendship of the ordinary man in the street, the ordinary United States citizen, more than we treasure
friendship at government and administrative levels, because that is more meaningful -- the friendship at the top has no heart; the friendship at the base with people has a heart and a soul. (Applause) That is why we value the aid you gave us more than we value the millions that might have come by way of the food program the United States gave us through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Not that we are not grateful; grateful we indeed are, but it is the human element that brings us into close contact with other human beings, that makes us find a greater forum of friendship and alliance that we value.

May the good work that you have done continue. I promise you that we for whom you raised so much aid, we for who you have struggled, shall always reciprocate your hand of friendship with our hand of friendship. Let our friendship therefore continue for all time. Long live our solidarity. Thank you. (Sustained applause)

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