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CC(79)85

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THIRTY-SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE  
LANCASTER HOUSE  
LONDON

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Summary of the proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh  
Plenary Session of the Conference, Thursday  
22 November 1979.

Lancaster House  
22 November 1979

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PRESENT:

UK Delegation

Lord Carrington (in the Chair)

Mr R Luce

Mr D M Day

Gen M Farndale

Mr R W Renwick

Mr P R N Fifoot

Mr N M Fenn

Mr G G H Walden

Mr C D Powell

Mr R Jackling

Col C Dunphie

Mr P J Barlow

Mr B Watkins

Mr A M Layden

Mr S J Gomersall

Mrs A J Phillips

Mr M C Wood

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Bishop Muzorewa and Delegation

Dr S C Mundawarara

Mr D C Smith

Dr J Kamusikiri

Air Vice Marshal H Hawkins

Mr D Zamchiya

Gen P Walls

Mr P Allum

Mr P Claypole

Mr A MacMillan

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Mr Mugabe, Mr Nkomo and Delegation

Mr J M Nkomo	Mr R G Mugabe
Mr J M Chinamano	Gen J M Tongogara
Mr J W Msika	Dr H Ushewokunze
Mr A M Chambati	Mr D Mutumbuka
Mr W Musarurwa	Mr J Tungamirai
Mr D Dabengwa	Mr E Zvobgo
Mr A Ndlovu	Mr S Mubako
Mr R Austin	Mr W Kamba
Mr E Siziba	Mr R Manyika

Secretariat

Mr J M Willson

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The session started at 17.04.

THE CHAIRMAN opened the proceedings by delivering a statement which was subsequently circulated as Conference Paper CC(79)86. He said that he would circulate the proposals referred to in the third paragraph of the statement after he had heard any comments either delegation wished to make. The proposals were subsequently circulated as Conference Paper CC(79)87.

MR NKOMO said that reaching an agreement on the ceasefire as soon as possible was also the aim of the Patriotic Front, but a quick agreement should not be at the expense of going into detail on matters essential for peace. A lasting peace could only be reached if an agreement were worked out covering those elements/essential to bring it about. It had been agreed that small groups should meet for discussions; his delegation had been meeting the British delegation for the last two or three days and had stressed the importance of meeting the Salisbury group. He took a ceasefire to mean a ceasefire between the Patriotic Front forces and the Salisbury regime forces. He had thought that the Patriotic Front and the Salisbury Delegation would meet together, under a British Chairman, to discuss these essentials but this had not happened. How then could they move towards an agreement?

Mr Nkomo went on to say that the other statement made by the Chairman came as a surprise to his delegation. The

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Chairman had said that there was a need for an agreement and had asked for a reply the following day. He was not very certain of the implications of this but if it were about the Salisbury forces' destruction of Zambian infrastructure that could not be attributed to the Patriotic Front forces moving on bridges in Zambia. They were in Zimbabwe; if any bridges were to be destroyed they should be in Zimbabwe, not in Zambia. The Patriotic Front did not use transport which required bridges. This was aggression against Zambia and the British should address themselves to those people who were violating the territorial integrity of Zambia, and not to the Patriotic Front. They had a duty to do that while the men who controlled the Zimbabwe forces were in London.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he would try to answer the two points made by Mr Nkomo. He was glad that Mr Nkomo saw the need for speed in reaching a ceasefire agreement and he felt that as time went on there was a danger that the achievements of the Conference would be lost. If agreement were not reached all those at the Conference would be culpable at this very last stage; he feared that the longer the delay the more likely that was to happen.

Mr Nkomo had said that he would have preferred other sorts of meeting; a Chairman was always in a difficult position on these matters. He could not tell people to meet if they did not want to. What a Chairman had to do was to decide how to achieve the best progress towards an agreement.

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The British delegation had concluded that, in the circumstances, the only way to get progress was to talk individually to the delegations and to obtain their reactions so that they had an idea of their thinking. Both delegations had been good enough to accept, subject to certain reservations, the earlier proposals made by the British Government. The British proposals had been put forward in the real belief that, insofar as was possible, they took account of the fears and difficulties of each side. In a discussion neither side could get all it wanted.

He was now asking both delegations to look at the paper which would shortly be circulated (CC(79)87). It was broader in scope and longer than the previous paper (CC(79)79), and he would like to have their reactions. These were broad proposals which he asked them to accept and details could be thrashed out later. If delegations did not agree to this procedure he did not see how the Conference was to make progress.

On Mr Nkomo's second point, about the situation in Zambia, the Chairman said that he was not seeking to place the blame on anyone. He wanted to achieve a situation in which a ceasefire could be agreed. Over the past few days a situation had arisen in Zambia which, unless steps were taken, could make the work of the Conference much more difficult. If there was no cross-border movement of Patriotic Front forces from Zambia into Rhodesia, then neither the Patriotic Front nor the Zambian Government had any problem. In return, the Rhodesians would

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be asked to give an undertaking not to mount cross-border operations. The object of his proposals was to seek to reduce the tension which had grown in the last few days, and to try to prevent the Conference breaking down at the last moment. He asked the delegations to look at the British proposals and let him know whether or not they could accept them.

MR MUGABE said that the British delegation had suggested that the Conference now proceed to discussions of a second, more detailed, stage of the ceasefire arrangements. The British had already circulated their broad outlines and basic principles; so had the Patriotic Front, but their proposals had not been discussed. There appeared to be a reluctance on the part of the Salisbury group to participate in discussions with the Patriotic Front. If this were so, it should be made clear and the Patriotic Front would consider alternatives. Until this was done, discussions could not proceed; essential principles had not yet been agreed. The Chairman should address himself to the correct procedure. The political aspects of the Conference had been concluded, but the implementation of any agreement would depend on a ceasefire. There were two forces in conflict but he could not see how a ceasefire agreement could be reached on the basis of discussions with the British alone. Were the British involved directly in conflict with the Patriotic Front? How could progress be made without involving the other side? Were the Salisbury delegation prepared to discuss this issue with the Patriotic Front?

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With regard to the attacks in Zambia, he saw no reason why this had been raised at the Conference. The British Government knew who the aggressor was. Why did they not speak directly to them? Attacks of this kind had gone on for a long time and now the British Government suggested restraint should be exercised in respect of the incidents in Zambia. But what about incidents in Mozambique, Botswana and Angola?

THE CHAIRMAN said that the British had put forward the proposal on Zambia in a genuine effort to defuse the situation; it would be a great pity if it were rejected. He merely sought an undertaking that the movement of armed Patriotic Front personnel from Zambia into Rhodesia should cease. The reason which had been given for the action by the Salisbury forces was cross border movement by Patriotic Front personnel. He made no judgement on this; he merely wanted the situation to be defused.

On the earlier matter mentioned by Mr Mugabe, the Chairman said that the Conference had been discussing the British and Patriotic Front proposals for quite some time, and the British had made clear their views on the Patriotic Front proposals. He now wanted the Patriotic Front to look at the second British paper to see whether or not they could accept it. Any detailed points arising could be discussed later.

MR MSIKA said that he personally considered that the Conference had not succeeded in doing what a normal conference would do. The Chairman had admitted that he was  
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not able to compel people to discuss matters if they did not wish to do so. The Chairman had earlier insisted that a Governor would be appointed who would carry out certain functions. But why should he be able to do what the Chairman had not been able to do? Was the Chairman trying to say that, though the Salisbury group refused to discuss matters with the Patriotic Front in London, they would do so in Rhodesia? Did he want the Patriotic Front to gloss over problems which could lead to disaster, just because the Chairman wanted a speedy agreement? The two delegations should sit down and discuss matters with the Chairman present. How otherwise could lasting peace be achieved? Was he asking the Patriotic Front to surrender to the Salisbury régime?

THE CHAIRMAN said that what he was asking was that both delegations should accept the basis of the paper which he was about to circulate. MR MSIKA said that the paper did not address the issues. THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that the other delegations had not yet seen the paper. What he was asking was that they should look at the British proposals over the weekend and give him their reaction to it. Criticisms of the way he was running the Conference had been made but there had been a measure of success. No one was asking the Patriotic Front to surrender; he was asking both delegations to agree to the basis of the paper which would now be circulated. The Salisbury delegation had indicated that they were prepared to undertake further discussions on the basis of the original

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British paper. He would be asking the Patriotic Front on the following Monday if, having read the second British paper, they would be prepared to do the same.

MR MUGABE asked whether the Salisbury delegation had refused to negotiate direct with the Patriotic Front under the Chairman. THE CHAIRMAN said that they had not done so to his knowledge, but that they should speak for themselves.

GEN TONGOGARA reminded the Chairman that, during the bilateral meeting with the UK delegation the previous day, the Patriotic Front delegation had asked Britain to request the Rhodesian delegation to meet the Patriotic Front so that these problems could be gone through. At the bilateral meeting the Patriotic Front delegation had insisted that they had laid down the basis of a ceasefire. They wanted the other side to put down their basis for a ceasefire also. These were the two forces in conflict; his delegation could not secure an agreement with Britain. His delegation had expected the Chairman to reply on that point, ie whether the Rhodesians were or were not prepared to discuss matters with the Patriotic Front. The agreement that the Conference was seeking would be put into effect in Salisbury; his delegation could not sit with the Rhodesians in Salisbury if the latter were not prepared to talk to them.

THE CHAIRMAN confessed that he was more interested in proceeding with the substance of the matter than in dealing with procedure. He repeated that he would shortly circulate some detailed proposals, and his delegation would like a

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response to those from both delegations. Both visiting delegations would be involved in that response through participation in the Conference; the Conference could then proceed.

MR NKOMO requested an answer to the question put earlier by Mr Mugabe. THE CHAIRMAN again said that the Salisbury delegation could answer for themselves. MR NKOMO responded that they seemed rather to answer proposals from Britain. If they would not talk, this should be stated.

THE CHAIRMAN reiterated that the visiting delegations had not yet seen the British Government's proposals which were now being tabled and which took account of their discussions with both delegations. He asked the Patriotic Front delegation to be prepared on the following Monday to let him know their views on the proposals. MR NKOMO replied that this was not the British role on this issue.

THE CHAIRMAN said he did not understand how the Conference could proceed unless the British delegation put forward proposals which both sides could accept or reject.

MR MUGABE questioned the procedure to be adopted. His delegation had put forward basic proposals and did not know what the Salisbury delegation thought of them. He did not say that proposals should not be put forward; the question was, however, who were the parties to agree to them and in what form.

THE CHAIRMAN replied that both parties had to agree. The Conference would reconvene to discuss the proposals in order to

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accept or reject them. The Salisbury delegation had not seen the proposals at that point either: their attitude, and that of Mr Mugabe's and Mr Nkomo's delegation, would become known at a subsequent session. He repeated his proposal to circulate the British document, and again requested delegations to consider it and give their answer to it the following Monday.

MR NKOMO made a plea that the Chairman should not act in that way. One could not have a ceasefire by proxy through Britain. He warned the Chairman not to come the following Monday and expect an answer from his delegation without discussions: the Chairman would not get one. The issue needed to be discussed. THE CHAIRMAN reiterated his hope that delegations would look at the proposals and reflect on what he had said.

The session ended at 17.42.