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CC(79)78

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THIRTY-FOURTH PLENARY SESSION

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

LANCASTER HOUSE

LONDON

Summary of the proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth
Plenary Session of the Conference, Friday
16 November 1979.

Lancaster House

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PRESENT:

UK Delegation

Lord Carrington (in the Chair)

Sir I Gilmour Bt

Mr D M Day

Mr R W Renwick

Mr P R N Fifoot

Mr N M Fenn

Mr G G H Walden

Mr C D Powell

Mr P J Barlow

Mr A M Layden

Mr S J Gomersall

Mrs A J Phillips

Mr M C Wood

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Mr Mugabe, Mr Nkomo and Delegation

Mr R G Mugabe

Mr J M Nkomo

Dr H Ushewokunze

Mr J M Chinamano

Mr D Mutumbuka

Mr J W Msika

Mr S Mubako

Mr W Musarurwa

Mr W Kamba

Mr A M Chambati

Mr L Baron

Mr D Dabengwa

Mr A Ndlovu

Miss E Siziba

Bishop Muzorewa and Delegation

Dr S C Mundawarara

Rev N Sithole

Chief K Ndiweni

Mr D C Smith

Mr L G Smith

Air Vice Marshal H Hawkins

Mr D Zamchiya

Mr M A Adam

Mr P Claypole

Mr D V M Bradley

Mr A MacMillan

Secretariat

Mr J M Willson

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The session commenced at 10.15.

THE CHAIRMAN delivered a statement, subsequently circulated as Conference Paper CC(79)80, in which he introduced the British proposals for the ceasefire (Conference Paper CC(79)79).

MR NKOMO noted that the Chairman had referred to the considerable concessions made by the two delegations; this was certainly true of the Patriotic Front, nor would he say that others had not made concessions. He was not, however, sure that the UK delegation had made any substantial concessions; their unwillingness to compromise on some issues had delayed the Conference. The Conference was now to tackle the very difficult subject of a ceasefire. Everyone wanted the war to end; if this could be done in hours rather than in days, it would be appreciated. Mr Nkomo hoped that the British proposals for the ceasefire did not follow the example set by their previous proposals on the independence constitution and the interim arrangements. These documents had been difficult for his delegation to appreciate.

Mr Nkomo noted that the Chairman had mentioned that the ceasefire would be assisted by a Commonwealth monitoring force, and that a number of countries had been approached and had indicated their willingness to take part. This surprised his delegation, which had not been consulted on this matter. They did not know the criteria used in considering approaches to Commonwealth countries, nor which countries were involved. This placed his delegation in a very difficult position. In the

/proposals

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proposals tabled by his own delegation, it had been stated that the names of those countries which might contribute to such a monitoring scheme should be agreed at the Conference. The British decision to go ahead and to announce its approaches to the press was not likely to enhance the prospects for a quick agreement, but would invite lengthy debate. Mr Nkomo asked the Chairman to explain why these countries had been approached and their offers to participate apparently accepted without prior reference to the Conference.

DR MUNDAWARARA hoped that everyone accepted that it was essential to reach final agreement as soon as possible. An agreement would remove the sense of uncertainty in his country. Lives were being lost daily. The Conference had taken three weeks to agree on the interim arrangements. His delegation, in a spirit of conciliation and constructiveness, had accepted the British proposals a few days after they had been tabled. The other delegation had taken three weeks to agree, with no substantial changes to what had originally been proposed. Dr Mundawarara urged that the Conference should proceed in a manner which accorded with the seriousness of its task in order to come to a conclusion as soon as possible.

THE CHAIRMAN accepted Dr Mundawarara's view of the urgency of agreement on the next stage of the negotiations. He said that, in the light of the atmosphere created by the agreement of the Patriotic Front on the previous day, he would not take up in detail the points raised by Mr Nkomo, /but

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but urged him to examine the British ceasefire proposals.

The Chairman pointed out that, in order to put realistic proposals to the Conference, the British Government had had to take soundings of some Commonwealth countries to determine what was and what was not possible. He asked the other delegations to consider the British proposals urgently in preparation for work over the weekend.

The session ended at 10.27.

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