

RESTRICTED

CC(79)83

COPY NO. 89

THIRTY-SIXTH PLENARY SESSION

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE
LANCASTER HOUSE
LONDON

Summary of the proceedings of the
Thirty-Sixth Plenary Session of the
Conference, Tuesday 20 November 1979

Lancaster House
20 November 1979

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

PRESENT:

UK Delegation

Sir I Gilmour (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 C D Powell

Mr R Jackling

Mr P J Barlow

Mr R D Wilkinson

Mr S J Gomersall

Mrs A J Phillips

Mr M C Wood

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Mr Mugabe, Mr Nkomo and Delegation

Mr R G Mugabe	Mr J M Nkomo
Mr E Z Tekere	Mr J M Chinamano
Gen J M Tongogara	Mr J W Msika
Mr E R Kadungure	Mr A M Chambati
Dr H Ushewokunze	Mr D Dabengwa
Mr J Tungamirai	Mr R Mpoko
Mr S Mubako	Mr A Ndlovu
Mr W Kamba	Mr R Austin
Mr R Manyika	Miss E Siziba

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

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 K Allum
Mr K Flower
Mr P Claypole
Mr A MacMillan

Secretariat

Mr J M Willson

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

The session started at 09.12.

THE CHAIRMAN commenced by delivering a statement subsequently circulated as Conference Paper CC(79)84. He then invited delegations to comment.

MR MUGABE objected to the haphazard procedure proposed by the Chairman. Positions on these crucial matters had to be explained and dealt with in full, not in the cursory manner adopted by the Chairman. His delegation had stipulated basic principles. They had progressed towards the liberation of their country; the Conference should not be a forum for reversing those advances in order to promote the position of the other side. They had several times expressed the fear that the British Government were not really aiming to achieve peace, but rather to create what might seem peaceful conditions on the surface, but which would in fact promote greater chaos. The realities of the struggle had to be taken into account.

His delegation would not therefore be rushed through the British paper (CC(79)79) when doing so would promote further conflict rather than peace. They believed that their proposals (CC(79)82) could bring about peace; the British proposals were not adequate for this purpose.

The Chairman had only replied to one or two of his delegation's basic principles; the remainder had received no comment. Were the other provisions accepted or not accepted? They should be examined one by one and their merits and demerits argued. Conference procedure should not merely entail the

/presentation

RESTRICTED

presentation of the British viewpoint or British replies: what the British said was not always correct.

His delegation wanted to promote the creation of peace, peace in the objective sense; terms of surrender should not be dictated to the Patriotic Front. This was unacceptable.

MR NKOMO said that it was obvious that the Chairman was dismissing the Patriotic Front document without considering the reasons for which it had been tabled. The Chairman had not suggested that both the British and Patriotic Front documents should be examined to discover which of the principles would provide the conditions required for free and fair elections. His delegation would like the issues discussed in full. They were not just aiming at a lull in hostilities, they wanted peace. If the Conference was not ready to discuss peace, it should say so.

Mr Nkomo pointed out that they were talking about a war involving some 100,000 armed men and women scattered all over the country; they were not talking merely about a few bands of guerrillas. He did not think the Chairman realised that. A scheme should be worked out which would provide the conditions for free elections, and enable any party winning elections to have an army or a nucleus of an army to work with. The British proposals seemed to be designed to put the Patriotic Front forces on one side and the Rhodesian forces on the other, with a referee in the middle to keep both where they were. Supposing that this
/happened

RESTRICTED

happened, what would be done with the two armed forces by the party which won the elections? Would the winning side eliminate the other?

Mr Nkomo questioned whether the British plan created conditions for reconciliation during the crucial interim period. Did the British delegation realise that one could not move to independence with two independent armies facing each other? In such circumstances how could an independent Zimbabwe emerge free of the danger of war? The question before the Conference was one of life and death. They had to be certain that any agreed plan would bring about conciliation between the two fighting forces and among the people: anything short of that was unacceptable. They were here to work for peace and not a piecemeal solution which would bring disaster to the country and chaos to the region.

The Conference should look seriously at the Patriotic Front proposals and discuss those which the British delegation thought would not work.

Referring to those countries which had offered men for monitoring duties, Mr Nkomo asked who had invited them. Whom had the British consulted? Was this a matter on which the British issued instructions or was the Conference here to discuss and consult?

Mr Nkomo said that if the British could explain what they proposed for the two forces after elections his delegation would consider the British paper. Why could the British not
/assist

RESTRICTED

assist the eventual winner of elections by making an effort to bring the two forces together during the interim period? His delegation would not sign any document which would lead to an escalation of the war, disaster and chaos in the region.

DR MUNDAWARARA said that, having received a reply to the questions he raised the previous day, his delegation were now prepared to discuss the British proposals more fully. However, his delegation's discussions would be confined to the British proposals; they would not take part in discussions of any other proposals. THE CHAIRMAN said that he thought that everyone would agree with Mr Nkomo that all present were working for peace, and with Mr Mugabe that the question of the ceasefire was crucial, as indeed was the whole Conference. It was a mistake to think that the British Government were not prepared to discuss the proposals submitted by the Patriotic Front, and he had given some of the reasons why it was considered that they would not lead to a satisfactory agreement. He said that all the proposals would be discussed in the order of the headings of the British paper. It was not his intention to stampede the Conference but it was to everyone's advantage that the ceasefire negotiations should be concluded as soon as possible. The British delegation had been trying to arrange detailed discussions since the previous Saturday; he was sure that the only way to proceed was by preliminary discussions with both delegations, and in view of what had been said it would be better for these to take place with each delegation separately. It would be the quickest way of

/proceeding

RESTRICTED

proceeding, on the understanding that the Conference would meet in Plenary if necessary. He proposed that delegations should be in touch in order to arrange meetings later that morning. He hoped that these discussions would remove some or all of the fears expressed by Mr Mugabe and Mr Nkomo.

MR NKOMO said that, in the case of bilateral discussions, his delegation would not know what the Salisbury delegation had said to the British, and equally the Salisbury delegation would not know what his delegation had had to say. He felt that it was important for each delegation to know what transpired between the other two. Otherwise it would look to his delegation like an orchestrated way of reaching agreement. This had happened during the discussions on the constitution and on the interim arrangements, and now a similar procedure was contemplated for the much more crucial ceasefire discussions. Perhaps when Mr Day was in Salisbury the British had concluded a deal there. Had the British brought the Patriotic Front to London merely to orchestrate matters?

THE CHAIRMAN said that he believed that the best way to proceed would be to have bilateral talks between the Patriotic Front delegation and his delegation, because they had serious doubts about the British proposals and this was the way to dispel the fears which had been expressed. He therefore proposed bilateral discussions later that day.

GEN. TONGOGARA said that the British delegation should not treat this phase of the discussions as they had the earlier

/ones

RESTRICTED

ones. The Patriotic Front had put forward their proposals and they expected the Salisbury Delegation to put forward their own proposals, not simply to say they agreed to the British proposals. Attempts to isolate the Patriotic Front would not solve the situation. When the Patriotic Front had started guerrilla warfare they were in small units; the other side had said they would crush them, but they never did. Neither delegation had come to London as losers, but to seek peace. They did not want to leave London saying they had achieved peace when they had not. They did not wish the British Government to rush them; it was important that every possibility should be explored. The British had not fully understood the situation in Zimbabwe; but the Patriotic Front and Salisbury delegations did. If agreement were not reached at the Conference there would never be peace in Zimbabwe.

THE CHAIRMAN said that of course everyone desired peace; all he was now proposing was that discussions proceed with the Patriotic Front in an attempt to dispel their doubts; it was not right to say that the British were trying to isolate them. If these discussions failed, they would have to think of some other way of proceeding, but he strongly urged that this was the right way to proceed.

MR MUGABE said that the problem of irregular procedure had not been solved. At a Conference such as the present one it was important that the views of the parties, in the form of proposals, were known to all the other parties. He felt that

/if

RESTRICTED

if a party made proposals to the Chairman, whether in plenary or in bilateral session, these should be made available to the other side. At the Geneva Conference the third party had always been informed of what transpired at bilaterals between the other two; this was not the case with the present Conference. Were secret deals taking place? Was there collusion between the Salisbury delegation and the British? He did not know what proposals had been made by the Salisbury delegation. THE CHAIRMAN said he did not think there was any general procedural point in any Conference involved; /there were discussions behind the scenes, "through the usual channels". The British delegation had for several days proposed discussions with the Patriotic Front and with the Salisbury delegation; the latter had accepted. They should now proceed with a bilateral meeting as soon as possible to try to resolve the Patriotic Front's doubts.

The session ended at 10.02.