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CC(79) 31  
FOURTEENTH PLENARY SESSION

COPY NO 89

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE  
LANCASTER HOUSE  
LONDON

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Summary of the proceedings of the  
Fourteenth Plenary Session of the  
Conference, Monday 22 October 1979

Lancaster House  
22 October 1979

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PRESENT:

UK Delegation

Lord Carrington (in the Chair)

Sir I Gilmour Bt

Sir A Duff

Mr R W Renwick

Mr P R N Fifoot

Mr N M Fenn

Mr G G H Walden

Mr C D Powell

Mr A M Layden

Mr R M J Lyne

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 S V Muzenda

Mr E Z Tekere

Mr J M Tongogara

Mr H Ushewokunze

Mr D Mutumbuka

Mr J Tungamirai

Mr E Zvobgo

Mr S Mubako

Mr J M Nkomo

Mr J M Chinamano

Mr T G Silundika

Mr A M Chambati

Mr John Nkomo

Mr L Baron

Mr S K Sibanda

Mr W Musururwa

Miss T Siziba

Bishop Muzorewa and Delegation

Bishop A T Muzorewa

Mr E L Bulle

Mr F Zindoga

Mr D C Mukome

Rev N Sithole

Mr L Nyemba

Chief K Ndiweni

Mr Z M Bafanah

Mr I D Smith

Mr R Cronje

Mr C Andersen

Dr J Kamusikiri

Mr G Pincus

Mr L G Smith

Air Vice Marshal H Hawkins

Mr D Zamchiya

Mr S V Mutambanengwe

Secretariat

Mr J M Willson

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The session commenced at 15.05.

THE CHAIRMAN began by saying that the British delegation had been asked at the previous session on 19 October to table its proposals for the interim period. Before doing so, he wished to emphasise that it had been agreed at Lusaka that there should be free and fair elections supervised by the British Government. The British proposals had been put forward on that basis, and had been accepted by Bishop Muzorewa. He was therefore surprised to read and to see on television over the weekend that Mr Mugabe had said that the Patriotic Front did not accept elections held under British authority. The Chairman then read out a transcript of an interview with Mr Mugabe in which Mr Mugabe had said that he certainly did not accept the British as an impartial authority to supervise the elections; that the British were biased and the elections would be rigged; that British conduct during the Conference had revealed that they favoured Bishop Muzorewa; and that it was impossible to accept a supervisor whose mind was already made up. The Chairman referred also to a statement attributed to a Patriotic Front spokesman, Mr Zvobgo, in which the latter had said, in effect, that it was intended to seize land and not pay a penny to anyone. This, the Chairman said, did not seem to be compatible with the Independence Constitution. He therefore asked whether Mr Mugabe would clear up these two issues.

MR MUGABE said that the Conference was in session in order to discuss Conference business, and not statements made to the press. His delegation's position was represented by what was said at the Conference. What was said outside was not the

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business of the Conference. THE CHAIRMAN said that the Conference had been convened on the basis of the agreement at Lusaka - that there should be free and fair elections supervised under the British Government's authority. Mr Mugabe had said specifically on television that he did not accept that. This obviously put the Conference in a very serious position. MR MUGABE said that if this was the position of the Patriotic Front, they would say so. His saying it on television did not mean that it constituted an official Patriotic Front position. His delegation's proposals on the interim period (Conference Paper CC (79)16) were quite clear. They put over a different point of view on the supervision of elections. His understanding was that the parties present at the Conference were free to agree on something different from what was suggested in the British proposals.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he therefore understood that Mr Mugabe was saying that the Patriotic Front did not refuse to accept the British as impartial supervisors of the election. MR MUGABE said it was not possible to draw that inference. His delegation's position would be made clear when appropriate in Conference. His delegation's position was clear in any case from their proposals. During a brief discussion of Mr Zvobgo's statement, THE CHAIRMAN remarked that it was difficult to have a conference where agreements were made, only for spokesmen outside to disagree on them. MR NKOMO said that the Chair's responsibility was Conference business, not press matters.

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His delegation did not question what was said by others outside the Conference.

THE CHAIRMAN then read out a statement (subsequently circulated as Conference Paper CC(79)33) in which he introduced the British proposals for the pre-independence arrangements (Conference Paper CC(79)32). Having done so, the Chairman then said that he hoped that the delegations, after having read the British proposals, would be prepared to discuss them at their next meeting.

MR NKOMO said that the Chairman had implied that he had a sort of mandate from the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka to conduct the present negotiations in a certain manner. His delegation had said that it appreciated the role of the Commonwealth as a catalyst in bringing about the Conference. He did not, however, believe that the Commonwealth Conference had prescribed how this Conference should run. If it had, there would be no need for a Conference. His delegation was therefore very apprehensive at the suggestion that the Conference should be run in a certain way, and that any variation would fall outside what was prescribed by the Commonwealth. Views had been offered from certain members of the Commonwealth; but at no time had they said that other methods of running this Conference were precluded if the parties present agreed.

Mr Nkomo said that his delegation had tabled proposals for interim arrangements which would suit the conditions in Zimbabwe today. His delegation was serious and meant what it had said. They were therefore surprised that the Chairman believed that,

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under those conditions, it was possible to complete the necessary arrangements in two months. His delegation wanted to see an end to the present situation in Zimbabwe. They were much involved, and wished for an end to British colonialism there. But he did not want things to be done in a manner which would bring about more suffering. Any agreement which failed to bring peace and security to his people, both during and after elections, would fail. A war was going on. His people should be able to take part in elections freely and without fear. It was essential to take account of the realities of the situation and to give maximum security to all concerned, especially those who had suffered so much from the war. A six-month interim period might not therefore be too long if it brought about peace both during and after the elections.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he took note of what Mr Nkomo had said; his views would no doubt be the subject of discussion, along with the two papers on the interim arrangements already tabled. He asked Bishop Muzorewa if he wished to say anything.

BISHOP MUZOREWA said that at that stage he only wanted to look at the British proposals. MR SILUNDIKA asked whether the British paper was being tabled merely for reaction or for negotiation.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he had been asked by Mr Silundika's delegation to put his proposals on the table and these were now for discussion.

MR TEKERE asked whether the Chairman would circulate as a Conference paper his statement introducing the British proposals.

THE CHAIRMAN said that this would be done.

The Conference was then adjourned.

The session ended at 15.29.