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CC(79)108

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FORTY-FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

LANCASTER HOUSE

LONDON

Summary of the proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Plenary
Session of the Conference, Saturday 15 December
1979.

Lancaster House
15 December 1979

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PRESENT:

UK Delegation

Lord Carrington (in the Chair)

Sir I Gilmour Bt

Sir M Palliser

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 B Watkins

Mr A M Layden

Mr S J Gomersall

Mrs A J Phillips

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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
Mr D Mutumbuka	Mr W Musarurwa
Dr H Ushewokunze	Mr D Dabengwa
Mr R Manyika	Mr L Mafela
Mr E Zvobgo	Mr R Austin
Mr S Mubako	
Mr W Kamba	

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Bishop Muzorewa and Delegation

Dr S C Mundawarara

AVM H Hawkins

SECRETARIAT

Mr R S Dewar

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The session began at 12.45.

THE CHAIRMAN opened the session by delivering a statement, subsequently circulated as Conference Paper CC(79)109.

MR NKOMO said that everybody agreed that the Conference had solved a number of the issues before it. They had agreed to an Independence Constitution, subject to agreement on the interim arrangements, which in turn was subject to agreement on the cease-fire. The Conference had agreed to the principles of a cease-fire; they had agreed to the concepts of a cease-fire placed before the Conference by Britain.

What remained, as the Chairman had said, was the concern felt by the Patriotic Front over the numbers of assembly places. It was not just a question of numbers, although this was one concern; rather the most serious concern of the Patriotic Front was the location of the assembly places allocated to the Patriotic Front by the British, possibly in consultation with Salisbury, but certainly without any consultation with the Patriotic Front. Those areas had been chosen and the number determined without consultation with the Patriotic Front. When the Conference had moved from discussing interim arrangements to the cease-fire, there had been delay on that issue for two weeks, because the Patriotic Front had contended that the question of the numbers and location of the assembly places were not a question of principle but one of detail, to be discussed when details of implementation were discussed.

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His and Mr Mugabe's view on this had been accepted by the Conference.

MR NKOMO said that the Patriotic Front delegation wanted to remove any misunderstanding to the effect that the Patriotic Front was refusing to sign a cease-fire document. The Chairman's statement had been that assembly places would be placed in relation to the operational areas of both the Salisbury and Patriotic Front sides. When his delegation had come to look at the maps, however, it had been plain that the assembly points were not in relation to the Patriotic Front's operational areas. The Patriotic Front's chief concern, therefore, was that their men in the country's heartlands had to be found assembly areas within that area, not be taken out to the periphery.

Mr Nkomo continued that no-one in the Patriotic Front delegation was against the principles and concepts; what they were concerned about was just the placement on the map. There could therefore be no doubt as to the Patriotic Front's stand regarding the conclusion of the Conference. Before they could initial and sign the agreement, the Patriotic Front should be placed in accordance with their operational areas so that they were not placed at a disadvantage vis a vis the Rhodesian forces. That was all they asked. They were not asking for their men out in the periphery to be brought in; the map showed disparities and

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unfairness, however, in removing the Front's forces to the borders. While the Patriotic Front had operational bases in these areas, they also, as the British map showed, operated in other areas where the Patriotic Front wanted assembly places. Mr Nkomo expressed the hope that, after the Conference, it would be possible for the military experts of the UK and Patriotic Front delegations to plot these places. The question of numbers ought to be discussed as well. Important details such as the placing of men needed to be discussed at the Conference. The military experts should discuss the practicalities together, without the politicians.

D R MUNDAWARARA said he had nothing to add to his statement made at the Forty-Fourth Plenary Session (Conference Paper CC(79)107) to the effect that his delegation accepted the cease-fire agreement and were ready to initial it. His delegation sincerely hoped that this would be the position taken by all others at the Conference - it was absolutely essential that a cease-fire should be effected as soon as possible.

MR MUGABE said that he wanted it placed on record that the Patriotic Front objected very seriously to the way Britain had proceeded in respect of the Conference and in respect of the implementation of the conditional agreement reached at the Conference. The Chairman had spoken of the Independence Constitution having been agreed, and of agreement on cease-fire proposals having been reached. He had not mentioned that that
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agreement was conditional upon agreement being reached on every successive stage. Each stage was dependent on agreement on the following one. The Chairman had also stated that the Patriotic Front had accepted the cease-fire proposals. The principles had been accepted, as a basis for agreement; agreement could not be reached before the details for the implementation of the cease-fire had been agreed upon. His delegation were surprised that the Chairman talked of agreement having been reached, as if it were conclusive and absolute.

The British Government had also proceeded to send a Governor to Salisbury, on the basis of what they had interpreted as conclusive agreements. The Patriotic Front felt cheated. Full agreement had not been reached when Britain had sent the Governor to Salisbury, with the result that the Governor was there without the full powers he should have had: he could not implement the cease-fire; he could not even proceed to take the first steps towards opening the way for free political activity and movement.

The Governor's presence in Salisbury and the fact that the Rhodesian regime had surrendered its authority and full powers to the Governor had deprived the Salisbury delegation of their status. Who did Dr Mundawarara now speak for? If he was to initial the agreement, on whose behalf would he do so? He did not have the requisite status. The ceasefire proposals and the implementation proposals should have been worked out and agreed
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by the three parties. Air Vice-Marshal Hawkins had the requisite status under the British Governor (and should be seated with the British), but Dr Mundawarara was in an embarrassing position. The Patriotic Front did not accept that Dr Mundawarara had the requisite powers and status to sign any agreement at the Conference; they would oppose any signature on the document as it would lack validity.

Mr Mugabe continued that the Patriotic Front delegation did not think they had been treated fairly by the British Government. The points of assembly, the numbers and the positioning of the Patriotic Front's troops had been determined with Salisbury, in consultation with General Walls and the other commanders, and without any consultation with the Patriotic Front. The Patriotic Front's position and opinion had been ignored and the result was the present impasse. In asking for final acceptance, the British Government were in fact asking the Patriotic Front delegation to accept what the Salisbury delegation had determined in advance. That was unfair and unacceptable. The UK delegation should have consulted the Patriotic Front. The British Government now asked for acceptance on the basis that the Governor would later determine additional places on the map if he should prove that the Patriotic Front had larger numbers - in fact Patriotic Front numbers were as had been notified to the UK Delegation. That was not acceptable. If an agreement was to be reached it should be

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reached at the Conference. His delegation could not reach ancillary agreements with the Governor in Salisbury. The UK delegation had to negotiate Patriotic Front points with the Patriotic Front delegation. The Patriotic Front commanded their own forces, and knew what was good for their forces and people.

THE CHAIRMAN said that he did not intend to respond to the previous statement. He was naturally disappointed that Mr Mugabe had made such remarks about his chairmanship and the attitude of the British Government over the past 14 weeks. He found it deeply depressing that this should be Mr Mugabe's attitude after what the Conference had achieved.

With regard to what Mr Nkomo had said, the Chairman hoped that he and the Patriotic Front delegation would look again very carefully at the words used by the Chairman, which he hoped would narrow what he believed to be a not very wide gap between the two positions. Members of the UK delegation and the Chairman would be available during the afternoon if members of Mr Mugabe's and Mr Nkomo's delegation wished to see them.

The session ended at 13.10.