

UNOFFICIAL RECORD

Discussions between the President of the Thirty-fourth Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington

Date: Monday, 24 September 1979

Venue: Office of the President, GA-200,
United Nations Headquarters

Present: H.E. Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, President of
the Thirty-fourth Session of the United
Nations General Assembly;
Lord Carrington, British Foreign Secretary *

Time: 9:45 a.m.

Lord Carrington: I have been informed that you have the Assembly under control. It is encouraging to observe that you start our meetings on time.

President: We are trying but as you know old habits die hard.

Lord Carrington: Well, so far you have managed to bring people in the Plenary on time however, let me say how happy I am to see you preside over the Session.

President: I thank you for having found some time to come and see me. I know how busy you are since you left the Constitutional Talks in progress in London and I am sure you want to go back in time

Lord Carrington: Yes, I should be departing soon after making a statement in the Plenary.

President: How are the Constitutional Talks going?

* The British Foreign Secretary was accompanied by Sir Anthony Parsons, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

Lord Carrington: The Talks have managed to generate a momentum. As you know the British Government has presented the parties to the Talks with a constitution. The Bishop has in principle accepted this constitution. The Patriotic Front is rather unhappy about the "white seats" and of course they would prefer a "Presidential Constitution". The history of Zimbabwe is such that one has to make a judgment on what the Bishop wants and what the Patriotic Front wants. From what I observed, I think the Patriotic Front will accept the Constitution in principle. As you are well aware, in Lusaka it was agreed that elections to be held in Zimbabwe should be free and fair and Britain was empowered with the responsibility of supervising these elections. This position presented a departure from the Anglo-American proposals which though they called for "free" and "fair" elections was supposed to be supervised by the United Nations. But in Lusaka the 39 Heads of Government called on Britain to supervise the elections and we are going to supervise "free" and "fair" elections. There are outstanding problems of cease-fire, security and so forth. These are our concerns and the concerns of the parties in the negotiations.

President: I am familiar with these negotiations. I spent three months in Geneva with my good friend Ivor Richard. As far as the Constitution is concerned I think there will not be many difficulties but difficulties will strongly surface when negotiations assume consideration of transitional arrangements. Issues of cease-fire, police, security are bound to create difficulties.

Lord Carrington: We are appreciative of the role of your

President and President Machel.

President: As far as we are concerned here at the United Nations, we will do everything possible to facilitate the Talks in London. In other words, we will give you the necessary time. I have consulted with various African Ambassadors and there is a general agreement that the debate in the Fourth Committee on the question of Southern Rhodesia should be postponed to a later date. We are clearly following the Talks in London with tremendous interest and I feel that for as long as there is progress in the Talks nothing should be done here which would detract from those discussions. Indeed, I have been in contact with the Chairman of the Fourth Committee and we have agreed that the question of Southern Rhodesia be taken up sometime in November. But I should also point out that while presently there is a general feeling that the debate should not take place while discussions are going on in London, this trend cannot be of an indefinite duration. As time goes on there ^{is} bound to be an increasing feeling among some members of the Committee that the Fourth Committee should also address itself to that problem. I believe nonetheless that for as long as the Talks in London appear to be moving in a positive direction and for as long as people feel that something is likely to come out of the London discussions, it is unlikely that the Fourth Committee or for that matter the United Nations as a whole would do anything to detract from those Talks.

Lord Carrington: That is good to hear. In London we are trying our best to see to it that these Talks produce required results.

That is why we have prevented other people from the Conference Hall.
No journalist, no Frontline States, nobody.

President: I think that is good because the presence of other people could influence the parties in the negotiations to take stances aimed at public consumption which at the same time could complicate the talks. However, we wish you the best. We will make things less difficult for you here at least for the next month.

Lord Carrington: We do not want another Geneva. The British Government will make a position and that will be it.

President: That is encouraging. I remember during the Geneva Talks the British Government had not made up its mind. They came to Geneva playing the role of a referee. But if this Government has made up its mind then there will be a headway.

Lord Carrington: We have made up our minds and we are trying to have a settlement.

President: What about Namibia?

Lord Carrington: I will be horrified if the Security Council meets on Wednesday to consider the question of Namibia. If this Council meeting takes place it will make South Africa difficult to deal with. But is it necessary to have the meeting of the Security Council now?

Sir Anthony Parsons: Right now the document on D.M.2 is undergoing finishing touches. It is finished. It is our intention, on the basis of this document, to engage in consultations with the Frontline States

and others. If the Council meeting is called at this point in time it will make our negotiations with South Africa impossible. Moreover, some delegations are talking of pushing for Chapter 7. What good will this do at this present moment?

Lord Carrington: Please use your influence to prevent such a meeting. Speeches will not help anything.

President: I have not heard anything about the meeting of the Security Council. However, South Africa should be told to respond soon. SWAPO has made once concession after another while South Africa has moved from one fait accompli to another. South Africa's prevarication and stalling cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. Indeed, there is already considerable concern within the African Group that this whole situation simply seems to work in South Africa's favour and I should say in all frankness that not only has the credibility of the Western Five been eroded but people are beginning to look askance at any one who seems to be seriously advocating the continuing support of the initiatives of the Western Five. Consequently therefore, it is extremely important that this sense of concern should be properly understood by the Western Five. More particularly, it is important that pressure be brought to bear on the South African regime so that the latter responds positively and without further delay.

New York

K. K. Suedi
Special Assistant to the President