

Carrington blows up Rhodesia talks

War, not a settlement to the Rhodesia question, is the likely outcome of the London conference on the form of the Rhodesian government that has been taking place this month.

The talks involving the current fraudulent government of Rhodesia, the British government represented by Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, and the Patriotic Front liberation group, have broken down thanks to an ultimatum delivered by Lord Carrington that the Front accept without any changes British proposals for a Rhodesian constitution. This week, after failing to force the Patriotic Front to either accept his demand or walk out of the conference, Carrington simply excluded the Front from the six-week-old conference and met only with representatives of the Salisbury regime, whose titular head is Bishop Abel Muzorewa.

The Patriotic Front is supported by the Organization of African Unity as the legitimate representative of the Rhodesian black majority. Carrington's decision to throw the Front out of the talks can only signify that Great Britain, with Muzorewa and South Africa as its allies, is ready for a bloody confrontation in southern Africa, not only with the Patriotic Front but against the black frontline states bordering Rhodesia that also support the Front.

In addition to meeting exclusively with Muzorewa this week, Carrington also met with the real leaders of the Salisbury regime—Lt. General Peter Walls, the commander of the Rhodesian armed forces and Police Commissioner Peter Allum.

In addition to the arrival of Walls in London, South Africa foreign minister R. Botha is also in London. R. Botha and South Africa prime minister and defense minister P.W. Botha have both recently indicated that South Africa would militarily intervene into Rhodesia to defend the Muzorewa government should the British seriously negotiate with the Patriotic Front. British sources now say, however, that Carrington will push for official recognition in Great Britain for the Salisbury regime and lift the sanctions against it.

British interests at stake

The day before Carrington excluded the Patriotic Front, he once again delivered his ultimatum to the liberation group: before the talks continue, Carrington said, the Front must unconditionally accept his proposal for a constitution. The British proposal has built into it clauses, especially with respect to citizenship and land-holding, that essentially guarantee large-scale British influence.

It was Carrington's hope that this would force the Patriotic Front to make the move to leave the conference, thus offering the British Tory government the opportunity to recognize the Salisbury regime without fear of international disapproval. Instead, Patriotic Front leader Joshua Nkomo declared: "Carrington has no right to throw us out of our own conference. We have a right as members of that conference to continue, and we want to continue. We are not walking out."

It was pressure from the Third World members of the British Commonwealth which had forced British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to postpone her campaign promise to recognize the Salisbury regime. During the August Conference of the Commonwealth nations, Thatcher was forced to accept the conference as a means of stalling.

Now Carrington is once again coming under heavy attack from the Commonwealth nations for his heavy-handed tactics in London. The group's secretary general, Shridath Ramphal said this week that Commonwealth leaders had endorsed the London talks on the condition that they would involve "all parties in the conflict." According to the Oct 12 *Financial Times*, "There were fears in Commonwealth circles last night that Britain was intent on pushing the Patriotic Front to walk out of the conference, thus opening the way for unilateral negotiations with Salisbury." War is now the next item on the agenda in London. Military attacks have escalated from Rhodesia against the two frontline states of Mozambique and Zambia. Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda is also coming under intense economic pressure: On Oct. 12, the two main bridges from Tanzania into landlocked Zambia were blown up in special operations ordered by Rhodesia's Lt. General Walls. Zambia is now dependent on route through Rhodesia and South Africa for export and import.

On Oct. 17, the frontline presidents will meet in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for a strategy session in the aftermath of Carrington's decision to end negotiations. It is expected that the frontline heads of state will reject proposals coming from Washington that they pressure the Front to accept Carrington's demands. It can also be expected that if the British government, along the South Africa government, continue in the direction toward war they are now pursuing, that the frontline states will be forced to call upon the socialist sector for aid, and there will be no protests against this from the rest of black Africa. The British government has succeeded in putting this region once again on a course for a superpower showdown.

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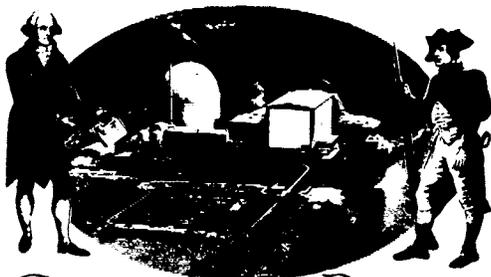
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