

November 4, 1974

Meeting in Pretoria between Zambian, Rhodesian and South African Representatives

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"Meeting in Pretoria between Zambian, Rhodesian and South African Representatives", November 4, 1974, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Rhodes University, Cory Library, Smith Papers, 4/002 (M) Mr. J.G. Gaylard, Records of meetings, 1973-1978. Included in "Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974," edited by Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart Van Wyk. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/118524>

Summary:

Zambia wishes to assist in the normalization of the political situation in Rhodesia and the promotion of genuine peace.

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Contents:

Transcript - English

Meeting held in Pretoria 4 November 1974

Present: Mark Chona and George (Zambian Representatives)

Gaylard and EAT Smith (Rhodesia)

Attorney General Brand Fourie (SA Secretary for Foreign Affairs)

Chona: began by saying that Zambia wished to assist in the normalisation of the political situation in Rhodesia and the promotion of a genuine peace so that Southern Africa could move into a new era. There were two problems-existence of a conflict and second was the escalation of this conflict was a certainty and this was Zambia's fear. While he had no doubt that Rhodesia could contain the conflict, Rhodesia could not end it but together we could bring it to an end. He said they wanted to look at the fundamentals and not the effects. The growth of militarization in Rhodesia was dangerous and there as a desire on the part of Zambia to end the confrontation... Zambia wanted liberation movements to negotiate and their response had been positive. The Zambians now wanted to create favorable conditions for negotiations. The guerrillas were not Communists though they were supported by them. Communism was going out; it was not attractive to Africans. Zambia wanted to move the African nationalists to negotiate and our (Rhodesian) help was needed to do this. The Zambians felt that they could be of assistance in this exercise. President Kaunda had asked him to say that no-one wished to humiliate Mr. Smith. As a politician he understood Mr. Smith. President Kaunda himself was in a difficult position because he had to convince a lot of people that he was embarking on the right course. There would be no question of victors and vanquished... President Kaunda needed Rhodesia to strengthen his hand so that he could assist. Chona emphasised that they wished to assist but not to interfere. Otherwise there would be no end to the situation in Rhodesia. They were concerned that there should be no humiliation for the Whites in Rhodesia, nor that they should be caused any alarm. Law and order was necessary as also was peace and freedom for all. Their aim was racial harmony.

The question then, was one of mechanics, of looking for the best formula which could be sold successfully. Therefore we must all be realistic. Everyone wanted to end the war and to talk, provided the talks could take place on realistic and acceptable basis.

He then said that the next step, if we agreed, would be for him to meet the three African leaders, Nkomo, Sithole and Muzorewa that he would be advised by us as to what he should say to them. He, Chona, would then go back to Lusaka and report to President Kaunda who would get in touch with his colleagues, President Nyerere, Seretse Karma and Samora Machel, and arrange for them all to meet in Lusaka.

Subject to our agreement, before Nkoma and Sithole were released from detention, the four presidents together would talk to them and to Muzorewa in Lusaka and impress upon them that the time had now come for talks....

Chona throughout the meeting gave out that this was a matter of extreme urgency and was intent on everything moving at a fast pace. This was related not only to the proposed early meeting of the four Presidents in Lusaka but also to the Mogadishu Conference at which the ZAPU representative in particular, Silundika, would be president and might be won over by the Russians to a policy of continued violence. Furthermore, according to Chona, if the Russians were to get wind of the attempted settlement of the Rhodesian situation, they might well do all they could to sabotage it.