

Bedie Opens National Assembly; Warns of Rumors
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[Excerpts] The first regular session of the National Assembly for 1988 opened this morning. Bernard Ake, who witnessed the opening ceremony, reports:

[Ake] It was in the presence of a cross-section of personalities — members of government, of the Economic and Social Council, the Supreme Court, the diplomatic corps, traditional chiefs — that Mr Henri Konan Bedie, speaker of the National Assembly, this morning opened the deliberations of the first ordinary session of our parliament for 1988. This inaugural session was marked by the election of officials of the National Assembly. Incidentally, all the former officials of the assembly were reelected. The inaugural session was also marked by the important speech of Speaker Konan Bedie, a speech in which he reviewed national and international political developments. Speaker Konan Bedie called on Ivorians to mobilize in order to strengthen unity and peace in Ivory Coast. He then made some suggestions that can enable a people like ours to keep hope and act on their destiny. We must know how to be organized to resist the crisis, Mr Bedie said. We must have national cohesion:

[Begin recording] We are convinced that the unity and solidarity of Ivorians in the face of the challenges of the times can overcome the uncertainties and the servitude that is going on in our universe, which has become

unpredictable. As to how to go about this, it should be through dialogue, which is our practice of social rapprochement and an all-embracing political rallying. [passage omitted]

We should not look elsewhere for the solution to our problems. It is within our own selves that we can have the strength capable of overcoming the dangers that assail us. National sentiment is the guide to our behavior. Patriotism, as a social function, should be cultivated constantly and Ivorian citizenship, our common parent-hood, should be based on solidarity. [end recording]

In addition to national cohesion to win our development efforts and cope with the crisis, there is another imperative — the development of the Ivorian political culture, according to Speaker Konan Bedie:

[Begin recording] This is not paradoxical; man does not live by peace alone, he also lives by the ideal. There is no point in outlining projects for tomorrow if we are not sure of existing politically, I mean, as a nation that can be referred to in history. In the comity of nations of this world, to live without a fatherland is like existing without human rights. In this fluid atmosphere, our constant preoccupation should be the Ivorian nation first. For this nation our efforts to educate people about our institutions should be intensified in order to raise the political consciousness of all Ivorians. I believe such education should include the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast, our other institutions autonomous organizations, non-governmental organizations, associations of our families, and our schools. In the circles that I mention that carry out civic education, the duty of all those charged with this education is to inculcate a knowledge of democracy, a notion of the republic, and political culture. Yet on this basic and essential duty, people get confused and concentrate more on nonessentials.

In such a situation a betrayal of the fatherland can easily be hidden. We must redouble our efforts at civic education and popular self-education to counter the aberrations that abound in the rumors circulating in Abidjan. [end recording]