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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

10 January 1980

*As heavily
modified
ml*

Dear Michael,

Rhodesia : Message to the Prime Minister from Mr Mugabe

Robert Mugabe has sent a message (text enclosed) to the Prime Minister protesting at the Governor's decision to allow a contingent of South African troops to be stationed at the Rhodesian end of Beitbridge and his use of Rhodesian security forces to deal with breaches of the cease-fire. The message also accuses Lord Soames of deliberately preventing the return of ZANU personnel to Rhodesia, and of failing to act impartially. The tone of the message is provocative, and Mugabe has released it to the press. This suggests that its primary purpose is propaganda. Mugabe appears to be going ahead with plans to return to Rhodesia, despite the charges he makes in the letter.

During the next two months there will inevitably be other occasions on which the various parties in Rhodesia will feel aggrieved at the Governor's decisions and accuse him and HMG of bad faith. Once Nkomo and Mugabe have returned to Salisbury they will be able to raise such points directly with the Governor, which is the appropriate way to deal with them. The Patriotic Front representatives on the Ceasefire Commission are already able to raise in that body any problems arising from the Ceasefire Agreement. We do not wish to encourage Nkomo and Mugabe to appeal over the Governor's head and would not recommend that the Prime Minister should reply personally to Mugabe's message. This would seem to attach more importance to his allegations than they warrant. We propose therefore that HM Ambassador in Maputo should be instructed to reply orally to the various points made, and at the same time to draw to Mugabe's attention the substantial evidence of continued infringements of the cease-fire by ZANLA. I enclose a draft telegram of instructions for which we are seeking Lord Carrington's approval. It takes account of views expressed by Lord Soames from Salisbury. I should be grateful to know whether the Prime Minister is content with this means of dealing with Mugabe's message.

In briefing the press we would propose to draw heavily on the instructions to the Ambassador and to stress the need for ZANU and ZANLA to comply strictly with the agreements reached at Lancaster House. We shall be instructing posts to speak in similar terms.

*yours ever
Roderic Lyne*

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