

CONFIDENTIAL

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Prime Minister  
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JW  
27/11



FCS/79/184

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. Thank you for your letter of 14 November about your proposed announcement in Parliament on the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions with regard to the matters in the Bingham Report.

I agree that the timing of this is a delicate matter and am grateful to you for consulting me. I also agree that it would be better to avoid an announcement until the Constitutional Conference is over. I cannot give you a firm forecast of when this will be, but it is unlikely to be later than the last few days of this month.

2. My intention is to deal with amnesty in the context of independence rather than at the time sanctions legislation lapses. The Independence Bill which is now being drafted will contain an amnesty provision for 'political' offences and that Bill will be introduced into Parliament at an early date after the end of the Constitutional Conference. (We have the power to grant amnesty for sanctions offences under the Enabling Act but I would propose to defer exercising that power until about the time the Independence Bill is enacted). The Independence Bill will in effect be the first public announcement of an intention to grant amnesty in the law of the United Kingdom for offences in connection with UDI and its consequences. The interval, possibly of several days, between the end of the Conference and the tabling of the Bill would probably be an appropriate opportunity for you to make your statement: in the light of recent events, you will probably not wish to make the announcement sooner than is necessary in terms of the Rhodesian timetable. I shall ask my officials to keep in touch with yours about the precise timing.

3. I am sending copies of this minute and of your letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and the Secretary to the Cabinet.

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(CARRINGTON)