

SUBJECT

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cc. Master Set

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Rhodesia

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Lord Harlech and Sir Antony Duff called on the Prime Minister on 26 June at 1030 in order to discuss the outcome of Lord Harlech's first mission in Southern Africa and its implications for the Government's next moves. Lord Harlech agreed with the Prime Minister's conclusion, from his reporting telegrams, that no change of heart would take place among the Front Line Presidents unless there was some amendment to the present constitution of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. He said that even President Banda and Sir Seretse Khama were unable to stomach the idea of a constitution which had been cobbled together by Mr. Smith and his assistants and owed nothing to UK sponsorship. The Africans seemed to attach great importance to British input into any constitutional arrangement: even the Nigerians admitted that the UK's record on independence was good. It was, therefore, important to give the constitution a measure of UK sponsorship. The Prime Minister commented that the constitutional arrangements which had been offered to Rhodesia in 1963 and then on "Tiger" and "Fearless" were in fact less favourable than the present constitution.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that there were certain constraints of timing on the Government's future steps. There was a House of Lords debate on 10 July. Bishop Muzorewa would be going to Washington on 7 July and to London, where he would see the Prime Minister, on 11 or 12 July. Lord Carrington said that he proposed that Lord Harlech should go to Salisbury on 2 July, have exploratory discussions with Bishop Muzorewa and then report to a meeting of OD on 5 July.

Lord Carrington went on to say that it was clear that if the UK were to recognise Zimbabwe-Rhodesia straight away, without securing any amendments to the constitution, nobody in black Africa would support us. If, on the other hand, the UK were to make arbitrary changes in the constitution, the Government would have considerable political difficulties at home. It was therefore essential to convince Bishop Muzorewa that he must

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himself introduce constitutional changes. Sir Antony Duff was working out the minimum degree of change which would be necessary to win African support without upsetting the Rhodesian whites. Lord Harlech's consultations had shown that some of the Front Line Presidents accepted that there had to be a degree of constitutional entrenchment for the whites. If the Bishop could be persuaded to move beyond purely cosmetic changes towards a position which other Africans might be disposed to accept, the British Government could then make a public proposal to the effect that the constitution would be amended in certain respects, which would be specified, and that they therefore wished to invite the Patriotic Front leaders and Bishop Muzorewa to attend a constitutional conference in London. One of two things would then happen. Either the Patriotic Front would refuse the invitation, in which case they would be publicly wrong-footed: or they would attend the conference with the result that it would break down and they would be seen to be responsible for this. In either event, the British Government could then recognise Zimbabwe-Rhodesia on the basis of the amended constitution.

The Prime Minister said that it would be important to ensure that the amended constitution had aspects in common with the "standard" UK-sponsored constitutions which had been given to Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and other countries; a degree of similarity would be needed for use in argument with the Front Line Presidents. Sir Antony Duff agreed and said that the amended constitution had to be sufficiently similar to the existing one to be acceptable to the supporters of the internal settlement but at the same time sufficiently different to be defensible outside Rhodesia. At present, the FCO judgement was that the first factor was the more important of the two. As an example of the kind of change which might be made, Sir Antony Duff said that the white representatives in Parliament could be reduced from 28 to 20 and the arrangements for Commissioners could be altered. Lord Carrington agreed that the power of the Commissions to impose a veto was a major problem with the present constitution.

/The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister enquired about the timescale which was envisaged for this procedure. Lord Carrington said that he thought that the Prime Minister might float the Government's ideas at the CHGM in Lusaka. The Prime Minister indicated that she thought that progress would have to be faster than this, since Bishop Muzorewa's party might otherwise fall to pieces before the Government had taken action. Lord Carrington said that Sir Antony Duff would be giving further thought to the question of timing and proposals would be put to the Prime Minister in due course.

The Prime Minister said that, in answer to questions in the House, she would say that Lord Harlech's purpose during his forthcoming visit to Salisbury would be to engage in friendly consultations with Bishop Muzorewa in order to find a basis for a way forward.

In a short discussion of the activities of Mr. Tiny Rowlands and Lonrho, Lord Carrington commented that Mr. Rowlands was evidently trying to cobble together an opposition faction in the African National Congress which could eventually topple Bishop Muzorewa and bring Nkomo back to Salisbury.

In further discussion, it was agreed that the suggestion that junior FCO Ministers might begin to disclose some of the Government's thinking to backbenchers in the corridors of the House should not be pursued. Enough would be happening during the next few weeks to convey the feeling of movement and Lord Carrington would say in the debate on 10 July that the Government would have certain proposals to make in due course. It was agreed that a meeting of OD should be arranged for 5 July.

Lord Carrington told the Prime Minister that in Mr. Andy Young's view the US House of Representatives would not support the lifting of sanctions. If they did, President Carter would veto. But, in Mr. Young's view, the President would not impose his veto if the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia constitution had been modified in the meantime. Mr. Young had indicated that the British Government should not read too much into President Carter's

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determination on the sanctions issue; his main concern had been to establish the best basis for himself on which to argue with Congress. Mr. Young thought that President Carter was basically in favour of Bishop Muzorewa. It was agreed that when the Prime Minister saw President Carter bilaterally in Tokyo she should inform him about Lord Harlech's mission and consultations with Bishop Muzorewa but that she should not, at this stage, apprise him of the Government's plans for further moves. She would impress on him the need for Bishop Muzorewa to be made aware, when he visited Washington, of the importance of being seen to govern in Salisbury and to make his government a going concern. The Prime Minister would tell President Carter that Lord Harlech's talks had revealed a measure of flexibility among the Front Line Presidents; and that they had shown that there was some possibility of finding a formula in which they could acquiesce - there was a chink of light, she would say, for a possible solution. The Prime Minister would also stress to President Carter that the Front Line Presidents would not necessarily object to a special constitutional position for the whites in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

Uganda

In a short discussion of current developments in Uganda, the Prime Minister agreed that the British Government should take no action on the question of recognition of President Binaisa's regime for the time being but should await developments. She did not dissent from Lord Carrington's suggestion that ex-President Lule should be allowed to come to the UK when President Nyerere agreed to release him from detention.

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