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RECORD OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT NYERERE
OVER A WORKING DINNER AT 10 DOWNING STREET ON 14 SEPTEMBER 1979
AT 2030

<u>Present:</u> Prime Minister	President Nyerere
Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary	Mr. Benjamin Mkapa (Minister for Foreign Affairs)
Lord Harlech	H.E. Mr. Amon Nsekela (Tanzanian High Commissioner in London)
Sir Antony Duff	Captain Joseph Butiku (Private Secretary)
Sir Peter Preston	
H.E. Sir Peter Moon	
Mr. M.O'D.B. Alexander	

Constitutional Conference

President Nyerere said that so far as he could judge the Constitutional Conference had so far gone well. A good atmosphere had been established and this was important. It would be important not to push the participants too hard. He was confident that progress could be made. It was unlikely that the Conference would break down on the question of the constitution. In particular it would be surprising if the Patriotic Front were to try to break on this issue. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary asked whether the Patriotic Front might not find the concept of reserved seats for the white population unacceptable. President Nyerere said he did not see a major difficulty here. The Patriotic Front wanted a settlement and knew that, while they might be tempted to ignore Bishop Muzorewa, they could not ignore Mr. Smith. President Nyerere commented that the original Tanzanian constitution had not accorded the President all the powers he needed: this had not prevented him from changing the constitution subsequently. (The implication that the Patriotic Front could change the constitution if and when they came to power was clear.)

Interim Arrangements

President Nyerere said that in his judgement the Conference would have to take up the question of the interim arrangements at an early stage. If he were leading the Patriotic Front delegation he would be saying that the constitution could be discussed by

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the lawyers while the main Conference got down to discussing the transitional period. He asked what Lord Carrington had in mind. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he was conscious that the negotiations in Geneva had broken down on the question of transitional arrangements and that it would be important to try to keep the arrangements as simple as possible. The Prime Minister said that there would have to be a ceasefire and the armed forces in the field would have to return to their barracks. It had been agreed in Lusaka that the bullet was going to be exchanged for the ballot and that HMG should concentrate on the arrangements for the election. It would be the responsibility of the military commanders to get their soldiers into barracks before the election campaign began. It would be the responsibility of the victor in the election to weld the existing armies into a single national force.

President Nyerere rejected this approach. If HMG wanted a peaceful Zimbabwe the problem of the three armies had to be solved now. If the participants in the Conference wanted a free and fair election the armies would have to be merged before that election. This was a condition for a peaceful transition. If they were not prepared to accept the merging of the armies it could only be because they were not prepared to accept the results of the election. The men who controlled the armies were at present in London and there was no need to postpone tackling the issue. If HMG allowed the discussion to be postponed it would mean that they were only trying to get out of the situation and that they were prepared to condemn the country to civil war. If HMG and the Zimbabweans agreed to proceed to independence with three armies in the field, he would not seek to interfere. But, equally, he would not back the settlement. He would not support any arrangement that guaranteed a civil war and he had no interest in postponing the civil war. He would rather that it took place now.

Sir Antony Duff said that it would be impossible to achieve agreement now on the creation of a single army. It might be possible to move to discussion of a merger once agreement had been reached on the constitution and other aspects of the interim arrangements but the negotiation was certain to be difficult and prolonged. A lengthy pause between agreement

on the constitution and the holding of an election would be extremely dangerous. Analysing President Nyerere's fears about the implications of the continued existence of three armies after an election, Sir Antony Duff pointed out that the newly elected government would be basing the national force either on the forces at present based in Salisbury or on those at present opposing them. In the first case, the loyalty of the present defence force was assured. The Patriotic Front would have to decide to allow their forces to be merged and presumably, an election having been held and they having lost, they would be deprived of the support of the Front Line States. It would be impossible for them to continue the struggle. In the second case, the national force would be based on the Patriotic Front's own soldiers. Some of the forces of Bishop Muzorewa's administration would adhere and many would leave the country. Again, it would be impossible for them to continue fighting. President Nyerere asked about the South African reaction to the defeat of Bishop Muzorewa's administration in an election. Would they not back Bishop Muzorewa and Mr. Smith in continuing the struggle? The Prime Minister said that the South African reaction would be irrelevant because many of the whites would, in any case, leave Zimbabwe. Sir Antony Duff said that the risk of continuing civil war after an election, described by President Nyerere, existed but was not a large one. President Nyerere said that he was not prepared to accept it.

The Prime Minister asked whether it was realistic to suppose that in the aftermath of an election the losers would be able to continue the struggle. The pressure of world opinion would be intense. She asked President Nyerere whether he would continue to support the Patriotic Front, supposing they lost the election, against a democratic constitution and an elected government negotiated in accordance with the Lusaka agreement. President Nyerere said that if he was not put in a position to tell the Patriotic Front to disband/^{their forces} before the election he would not be able to do so after an election. Sir Antony Duff asked whether, in the event that an effort was made to secure the merger of the armies before an election and failed, President Nyerere would be prepared to back whatever other agreements might be reached at the Constitutional Conference. President Nyerere said that if a serious effort to create a single army were made and failed the

question then would be whether HMG were prepared to put in a military force or to organise a Commonwealth force. If they were not prepared to do this, the Conference was a waste of time. The Prime Minister asked if President Nyerere thought it would be helpful to introduce a fourth army into Zimbabwe where it would simply become bogged down in guerilla warfare. President Nyerere did not respond. The Prime Minister asked what proportion of the Patriotic Front's forces would be prepared to go on fighting once a constitution had been agreed and the arrangements for an election were in train. Mr. Mkapa said that if no agreement on a merger had been reached, he would expect the Patriotic Front's commanders to ensure that their men remained in the field. So long as the various armies were in being a genuine election campaign would be impossible.

President Nyerere said that if his government were satisfied that HMG were implementing the Lusaka agreement in full, they would not back the Patriotic Front in rejecting it. They would if necessary ask forcefully why the Patriotic Front wished to keep their army in being. They were already telling SWAPO that they could not use their troops in Angola and Namibia to reject the results of an election in Namibia. They were telling ZANU and ZAPU the same. But who was telling Smith? If HMG were not prepared to pursue the issue, they were, he repeated, wasting their time at the Constitutional Conference. One had only to think of what Mr. Sithole would have done earlier this year if he had had an army behind him. If a civil war broke out following agreement on a constitution, the United Kingdom would not be involved but Tanzania would. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that President Nyerere's approach to the problem represented by the three armies was logical but, in his judgement, impracticable. He considered that HMG's approach was the right one and that the President's fears were misplaced.

The Prime Minister asked whether, if General Walls were prepared to say before an election that he would accept the government resulting from that election whatever its complexion, the military commanders of ZANLA and ZIPRA would be prepared to do the same. President Nyerere, while not replying directly to the Prime Minister's question, said that it would be important to

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make an effort to secure commitments of the kind she had outlined. But once the commitments had been obtained, HMG would then have to ask why the commanders would not proceed forthwith to the creation of a single army. His test of the genuineness of any agreement would be the merger of the armies. The Prime Minister said that an undertaking from the military commanders would nonetheless be a very substantial step forward.

President Nyerere began the concluding part of the discussion by saying that he was sure that the Patriotic Front wanted a settlement. Long discussions with them in Lusaka and Havana had convinced him that they had come to London to do business. It would be essential now to maintain the momentum of the discussions and not to allow any of the participants to absent themselves from London. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary urged that President Nyerere should see the Patriotic Front while he was in London and press them to participate constructively in next week's discussion of the constitution. President Nyerere, having noted the importance of not allowing Bishop Muzorewa to get away with nothing more than agreement on the constitution, said that while he would tell the Patriotic Front of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's concern, he was not prepared to exert any pressure on them. The Prime Minister ended the discussion by saying that if things did not go well at the Conference she might well wish to get in touch again with the Presidents of the Front Line States.

The talk ended at 2230.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

15 September 1979