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CHGM Bilaterals.

NOTE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSION WITH LIFE PRESIDENT BANDA OF
MALAWI IN THE MULUNGUSHI VILLAGE, LUSAKA, ON 31 JULY 1979 AT 1630

Present: Prime Minister Life President Banda
Mr. B. G. Cartledge

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After giving the Prime Minister an enthusiastic account of The Queen's visit to Malawi, Dr. Banda told her that it should be her turn next. The Prime Minister thanked Dr. Banda and went on to say that the CHGM would be a difficult meeting for the United Kingdom at which complex issues affecting her would be raised. The local press had not given the meeting an encouraging start. The Prime Minister said that she would greatly welcome Dr. Banda's advice on how to approach the meeting. It was important that Rhodesia should not dominate the Conference: the problems of South East Asia, the Caribbean and of the refugees were all of great importance, as was the future of the world economy, and all these questions should be given proper weight. Nevertheless, Rhodesia would inevitably be the main focus.

The Prime Minister said that she had tried to make the British Government's position clear in the House of Commons a week before; but no decisions had been put to the Cabinet for approval. The British Government first wished to complete the process of consultation on which it had embarked and the CHGM was its last stage. The Government was concerned to bring genuine majority rule to Rhodesia, to restore legality to that country and to stop the war which was costing 500 African lives every week. Lord Harlech's mission had shown that there were three points on which everybody was agreed: that the election in Rhodesia was a great advance which had changed the situation; that it was the responsibility of the UK to restore Rhodesia to legality; and that the new constitution was open to criticism with regard to the blocking power of the minority of white Members of Parliament and to the manner in which the Commissions operated. The fact that the Prime Minister could not choose his own top officials, rather than the existence of the Commissions as such, was open to challenge. The situation should be reversed so that the Prime Minister had the power while the Commissions were consulted. The Prime Minister repeated that she would welcome Dr. Banda's advice, as an old hand at Commonwealth meetings and as an old friend, on how to tackle these issues in Lusaka.

/ Dr. Banda

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Dr. Banda asked the Prime Minister whom she had already seen. The Prime Minister said that she had called on President Nyerere, whose views did not appear to be very different from those which the British Government had recently put forward. She had stressed to President Nyerere that it was vital to end the war and that Rhodesia's return to legality should be the signal for its termination. The question was, would Rhodesia's return to legality be sufficient in itself to bring the war to an end? The Prime Minister said that she assumed that all the participants in the Conference wished to achieve an acceptable settlement in Rhodesia : she would welcome Dr. Banda's views.

Dr. Banda said that the Prime Minister might not like his views. He had maintained, ever since 1965, that Rhodesia was Britain's problem and that Britain should solve it as she thought best. Other countries must accept the course which Britain chose to adopt; they had no right to interfere or to dictate to Britain. Some governments threatened to leave the Commonwealth if Britain failed to take this or that step: when Mr. Wilson had asked him for advice, he had said that these countries should be told that they were welcome to leave the Commonwealth if that was their wish. Dr. Banda said that he had never changed this view and still believed that nobody should dictate to the UK.

The Prime Minister said that she totally accepted this assessment. The UK had given Malawi an independence constitution as the result of agreement between their two governments; the same had been true of Nigeria and of other countries. The same should be true with regard to Rhodesia. But it was also important that this should be the signal to an end to the war and that other countries should recognise Rhodesia in company with the UK. Dr. Banda repeated that it was all right for the UK to consult and to discuss; but she should not accept dictation from anybody.

Reverting to the constitution, the Prime Minister said that the two criticisms which had been made of it - relating to the blocking mechanism and to the Commissions - were valid. The blocking mechanism did not appear in this form in any other independence constitution, although there were many precedents for reserved Parliamentary seats for minorities. Dr. Banda commented that, nevertheless, some people might oppose this provision, on the grounds that all Parliamentary seats should be elective. The Prime Minister

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said that the function of reserved seats was to give confidence to minority groups. Dr. Banda agreed and recalled that Malawi's independence constitution had contained such a provision.

The Prime Minister said that she accepted that Rhodesia should follow precedent and accept her constitution from the UK. The UK nevertheless wanted other countries to recognise Rhodesia as well; and to help to bring the war to an end.

Dr. Banda, telling the Prime Minister that he would like to speak freely and honestly, said that some people were disposed to introduce the factor of their personal friendships into the Rhodesian problem. This should not be allowed to happen. It would be quite wrong if he were to say that he would like a friend of his to be President of Rhodesia. Mr. Sithole was his friend, but he had told him frankly that only two men could assume power in a democratic Rhodesia: Bishop Muzorewa or Mr. Mugabe. This was because they were both Shonas. Dr. Banda said that he did not like Mugabe because he was too close to the Russians; but he was a Shona nevertheless. Joshua Nkomo could never rule Rhodesia since he came from a minority tribe and had no chance of winning power. Bishop Muzorewa commanded a majority, whether one liked him or not. The Bishop hoped to make his government acceptable to the rest of the world but it was the UK's problem to bring this about.

Dr. Banda commented that what had happened in Rhodesia was not just an advance but a revolution. Many people forgot that Rhodesia had never been a British colony in the classical sense, but the private property of Cecil Rhodes and subsequently of a company. Eventually, in 1922, the Rhodesians had been asked to choose between union with South Africa, union with Northern Rhodesia or going it alone. Not wishing to accept Boer rule or indefinite support for a poor Northern neighbour, the Rhodesians had chosen to go it alone. This did much to explain, although not to excuse, the phenomenon of UDI.

The Prime Minister said that, given the current attitudes of the local press, the situation could only get better. Dr. Banda said that he thought that the press would remain sour for a while longer yet. The Prime Minister said that she was anxious not to drag her feet in resolving the Rhodesia problem and Dr. Banda agreed that she should not. It was sometimes argued that Nkomo and Mugabe would continue to fight on after independence had been granted. He did not share this view, which assumed that the Russians would

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intervene openly; there was so far no evidence that they might. The Prime Minister asked whether Mugabe was under Russian control. Dr. Banda replied that he thought not; equally, President Machel was not in his view a client of the Soviet Union. Shonas like Robert Mugabe were very individualistic by temperament. The Prime Minister commented that this should make them capitalistic as well!

The discussion ended at 1720.

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31 July 1979