

Subject filed on: Sierra Leone
UK/relations 01/82

T 209B/82

RESTRICTED

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 209B/82

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FM FREETOWN 041420Z NOV 82
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 207 OF 4 NOVEMBER
AND TO IMMEDIATE DOT (FOR WAKELING IAT)

FROM HEAD OF CHANCERY
YOUR TELNO 150 AND MY TELNO 206 : AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT.

1. MFA DELIVERED TODAY (4TH NOVEMBER) REPLY FROM PRESIDENT STEVENS TO PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER OF 2ND NOVEMBER TEXT OF WHICH WAS DELIVERED YESTERDAY.
2. TEXT OF STEVEN'S REPLY DATED 4TH NOVEMBER IS AS FOLLOWS :

THANK YOU FOR YOUR REPLY TO MY LETTER OF 22ND OCTOBER, 1982,
REGARDING LANDING RIGHTS FOR SIERRA LEONE AIRLINES.

I WISH TO REITERATE MY GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO GRANT THE RIGHT OF FREE TRANSFER AT THE OFFICIAL RATE OF EXCHANGE OF THE EXCESS PROFITS OF ALL AIRLINES, INCLUDING BRITISH CALEDONIAN AIRWAYS. THE ONLY HOLD-UP HAS BEEN DUE TO THE LACK OF ADEQUATE FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO MEET ALL GOVERNMENT EXTERNAL COMMITMENTS. LET ME ASSURE YOU, MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER, THAT, AS IN THE PAST, THE CENTRAL BANK OF SIERRA LEONE WILL TRANSFER SUCH PROFITS WITHOUT ANY DELAY AS SOON AS THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE BECOMES AVAILABLE. COMMITMENT TO TRANSFER BRITISH CALEDONIAN PROFITS BY ANY STATED FORMULA AT THIS STAGE IS JUST NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY IN EARNING FOREIGN EXCHANGE.

IT WOULD BE IN PLACE TO POINT OUT THAT THE GRANTING OF LANDING RIGHTS TO EACH OTHER'S DESIGNATED AIRLINE UNDER THE AGREEMENT SHOULD NOT BE CONTINGENT ON THE TRANSFER OF EXCESS PROFITS. THIS HAS BEEN CLEARLY POINTED OUT IN MY LETTER OF 22ND OCTOBER, 1982.

MY GOVERNMENT IS MOST ANXIOUS NOT TO ALLOW THIS MATTER TO AFFECT THE GOOD RELATIONS THAT HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES FOR WELL OVER A CENTURY AND A HALF.

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I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR FAVOURABLE REACTION ON THE MATTER.

PLEASE ACCEPT, MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER, THE ASSURANCES
OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION AND ESTEEM. ENDS.

3. THE LETTER MAKES NO REFERENCE TO SLG'S DECISION (ANNOUNCED
PUBLICLY HERE TODAY) TO S DEND BCAL=S LANDING RIGHTS IN S.L.
W.E.F. FROM 23.59 6 NOV AND CONTAINS NO NEW PROPOSALS.

4. PM'S REPLY WILL NO DOUBT REFLECT OUTCOME OF MR ONSLOW'S
MEETING IN LONDON WITH CONTEH TODAY.

F C O PSE PASS DOT.

O'LEARY

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