

IMMEDIATE

2016

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DMF G 263/13

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OO CAPE TOWN

OO SALISBURY

OO FCO

Sir D. Hartland

Mr Day

Mrs. Aspin

Hd of Rhodesia D

Hd of S. Af D

Hd/PVS D

No 10 Downing St

RC

X 10

Read in full.

GRS887

SECRET

FM ROME 181900Z FEB 69

TO IMMEDIATE CAPE TOWN

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1 OF 18 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE SALISBURY, FCO.

FOLLOWING FROM SECRETARY OF STATE.

YOUR TELNO. 121; RHODESIA: POLITICAL SITUATION

1. IT IS REASSURING THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE COME TO REALISE THAT NKOMO IS THE KEY TO THE POST-ELECTION SITUATION AND THAT HE MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY GOVERNMENT IF THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS IS TO WIN SUFFICIENT INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD FOR THEM AND PRESUMABLY FOLLOWS THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH WALLS AND FLOWER. IT IS USEFUL TOO, THAT THEY ARE READY TO BRING PRESSURE ON MUZOREWA TO ACCEPT A COALITION WITH NKOMO SEMICOLON FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION - WE DO NOT WANT TO PUSH THE SOUTH AFRICANS TOO FAST - THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO MEAN NKOMO AS PRIME MINISTER AND MUZAREWA AS PRESIDENT.

2. AS YOU KNOW, AT PRESENT WE INTEND TO DELAY SENDING ANY EMISSARY FOR THE WIDER TALKS SUGGESTED BY P W BOTHA UNTIL AFTER RHODESIA REACHES INDEPENDENCE, TO AVOID CHARGES OF COLLUSION. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT SIR A DUFF WILL BE ABLE TO VISIT CAPE TOWN AGAIN BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, TO KEEP THE SOUTH AFRICANS ABBREAST OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS. IN THE MEANTIME, I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD PURSUE, WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED, THE DIALOGUE WITH PIK BOTHA, WITHOUT GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT WE

Letter coming on this point.

DIALOGUE WITH PIK BOTHA, WITHOUT GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE ESTABLISHING FORMAL CONSULTATIONS.

3. IN YOUR NEXT SESSION WITH HIM, YOU SHOULD TAKE THE LINE THAT WE AGREE WITH HIS BASIC ANALYSIS THAT THE OUTCOME MOST LIKELY TO ACHIEVE STABILITY IN RHODESIA AND AN ADEQUATE MEASURE OF INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION IS A COALITION BETWEEN MUZOREWA, NKOMO AND THE WHITES. THE COOPERATION SHOWN BY NKOMO AUGURS WELL FOR THIS, IF THE ELECTORAL ARITHMETIC WORKS. YOU SHOULD INFORM BOTHA OF NKOMO'S AGREEMENT TO PUT 750 ZIPRA PERSONNEL UNDER TRAINING WITH THE RHODESIA FORCES, UNDER MONITORING FORCE SUPERVISION, THIS WEEK, AND OF HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT MUGABE AND ZANLA'S ACTIVITIES.

4. HOW TO REACH THIS OUTCOME WILL INEVITABLY BE A VERY DELICATE MATTER. WE CANNOT OURSELVES OPENLY PROMOTE IT WITHOUT INCURRING CHARGES OF INTERFERENCE. NOR WILL IT HELP IF IAN SMITH AND THE RHODESIA FRONT TRUMPET THE NEED FOR SUCH A COALITION. IT HAS TO BE RECOGNISED THAT NKOMO WILL COME UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM OTHER AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO RESTORE HIS TIES WITH MUGABE SEMICOLON AND THAT MUGABE HIMSELF WILL BE ANXIOUS TO HAVE NKOMO WITH HIM, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT HIS PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT WITHOUT HIM ARE SLIM. IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO AVOID INCIDENTS OR STATEMENTS - NOT LEAST BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT - WHICH HAVE THE EFFECT OF DRIVING NKOMO AND MUGABE BACK TOGETHER.

5. NONTHELESS, WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD WORK DISCREETLY ON MUZOREWA TO ACCEPT SUCH A COALITION. THEY SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE QUESTION OF THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP IN SUCH A GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO CAUSE. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE NKOMO TOWARDS THIS OUTCOME, AND ENCOURAGE CERTAIN AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, E.G. THE ZAMBIANS AND THE KENYANS TO WORK ON BOTH HIM AND MUZOREWA.

6. BUT WHILE THIS LOOKS THE BEST OUTCOME NOW, NOONE CAN GUARANTEE THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS WILL ALLOW IT. WE MAY HAVE TO COME TO TERMS WITH A DIFFERENT SOLUTION, E.G. A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY IN WHICH ALL THE PARTIES ARE REPRESENTED. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO WORK SINGLE-MINDEDLY FOR ONE SOLUTION AND NEGLECT OTHER POSSIBILITIES. IT IS NOT OUR ASSESSMENT THAT SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD NECESSARILY SPELL CIVIL WAR AND CHAOS, PROVIDED NKOMO HAS A SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN IT. WE THOROUGHLY AGREE WITH BOTHA'S JUDGEMENT ON THE NEED TO KEEP CALM AND HOPE THAT HE WILL CONVINCING THE WHITES OF THIS SEMICOLON PARTICULARLY

SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD NECESSARILY SPELL CIVIL WAR AND CHAOS, PROVIDED NKOMO HAS A SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN IT. WE THOROUGHLY AGREE WITH BOTHA'S JUDGEMENT ON THE NEED TO KEEP CALM AND HOPE THAT HE WILL CONVINCE THE WHITES OF THIS SEMICOLON PARTICULARLY IN THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTIONS. IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO AVOID ANY HASTY AND ILL-JUDGED REACTIONS BY THE WHITES BASED ON MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT. WILD TALK ABOUT THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF CERTAIN OUTCOMES TO THE ELECTIONS COULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF MAKING THEM MORE LIKELY.

7. YOU SHOULD END BY TELLING BOTHA THAT I REMAIN REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT WE SHALL GET THROUGH TO THE ELECTIONS. I HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT MUGABE WILL BE VERY RELUCTANT TO PULL OUT, AND THAT THE PROSPECTS OF A STABLE GOVERNMENT THEREAFTER ARE QUITE GOOD. I SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN HIS ASSESSMENT AND IN WHAT HE IS HEARING FROM THE WHITES IN RHODESIA. I HOPE THAT HE WILL KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH YOU ON THESE ISSUES OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

8. FCO PSE PASS ADVANCE COPIES TO:-

(ADVANCED AS REQUESTED)

PS

PS/LPS

PS/PUS

SIR D MAITLAND

MR DAY

MR ASPIN

RHODESIA DEPT. (HEAD)

SOUTH AFRICAN DEPT. (HEAD)

PUSD (HEAD)

NO. 10

ARCULUS

IMMEDIATE

COPIES SENT TO  
No. 10 DOWNING STREET