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Top copy on: Zambia
Visit of Kaunda,
Nov 79.



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cc CO

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 November 1979

Dear George

PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S VISIT

As you know, President Kaunda has had a tête-à-tête meeting with the Prime Minister, followed by a working dinner here this evening. I shall not be doing a formal record of the discussions since no-one sat in on the tête-à-tête and since the Prime Minister decided against having a note taken during the meal.

In fact, there was little detailed discussion during either part of the talks with President Kaunda. President Kaunda said that he had come to listen. Apart from efforts to create a favourable atmosphere, the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary both concentrated on getting across to President Kaunda and his colleagues that the Lancaster House Conference had arrived at the moment of decision. They said that much progress had been made at the Conference and that agreement was now within reach. The Conference could not be allowed to drag on much longer: further delay would only result in Bishop Muzorewa's delegation being lost. HMG had made proposals which seemed to it to lie between the positions of the two parties. It might be that the proposals would seem unfair to both sides but this was inevitable in the circumstances. Bishop Muzorewa's delegation had accepted the proposals. We now awaited the verdict of the Patriotic Front. We hoped that they would say 'yes' and that they would do so soon. We very much hoped that President Kaunda would bring his influence to bear on the Patriotic Front to reach an early and favourable decision.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary stressed that he recognised that it would not be easy for Mr. Nkomo to reach such a decision. In order for him to do so it would be necessary for him to trust the United Kingdom. HMG had throughout the Conference attempted to be fair and were determined to be equally fair during any interim period. At one stage President Kaunda said, in response to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, that it was because he trusted HMG that he had come to London to try to help to secure an agreement.

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It was striking throughout the evening's discussions how little attention was focussed by President Kaunda and his delegation on the problems we had been led to expect them to raise, e.g. the length of the interim period and the question of a Commonwealth force. Instead, they seemed to be principally preoccupied with the question of the status of Bishop Muzorewa and of the Patriotic Front leaders during the interim period and the election campaign. They were concerned about the advantage Bishop Muzorewa would derive from appearing to be Prime Minister, even if he were not in fact carrying out the duties of the office. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary promised that all the political leaders participating in the election would enjoy equal status. He said that they would, for instance, certainly have the use of government aircraft. One of the Governor's principal functions would be to ensure that all the participants in an election were treated similarly.

There was some discussion of the kind of result from an election which would be most likely to lead to stability in the early stages of Independence. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that it might be no bad thing if the result was that no-one won a majority. The resulting need for accommodation between the various parties might make a reconciliation between the warring factions easier. President Kaunda dissented strongly from this view. He considered that the best, and indeed the only, hope for the country was that an outright victor would emerge. A coalition government would be extremely weak. Only a government with a clear majority would be able to give the direction required. There was general agreement in this context that Mr. Nkomo was the most charismatic figure among the various political leaders at present on the scene.

In the course of discussion on subjects other than Rhodesia, President Kaunda expressed considerable concern about the developing situation in Zaire. He thought President Mobutu's situation was not strong and that the insurgents who had previously tried to overthrow his regime from outside were now infiltrating into the country. President Kaunda expected that when the next upheaval came it would be very serious. He evidently regarded with a good deal of dismay the prospect of being bordered to both north and south by unstable regimes. He spoke favourably, however, of President Santos of Angola. He expected President Santos to continue President Neto's policy.

At the end of the discussion it was agreed that President Kaunda and his party would call again at 1030 tomorrow. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that an answer from the Patriotic Front might be forthcoming in the course of the day. She said that the decision for the Patriotic Front would not get any easier by being delayed.

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. I am sending a copy of this letter to Martin Vile in the Cabinet Office.

Yours ever

Richard Alexander

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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