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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T29/80

14TH FEBRUARY, 1980

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

IN MY LAST LETTER TO YOU I EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE PRESENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS ON ZIMBABWE SOIL AND THE THREAT TO THE ORDERLY TRANSFER OF POWER THIS MAY CONSTITUTE.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVE HERE IN LAGOS IS CONSTANTLY BRIEFING US ON THE DAY-TO-DAY DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND IN ZIMBABWE. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF YOUR GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN OVER THE FAILURE OF THE O.A.U. TO GIVE CREDIT SO FAR TO THE ROLE AND DIFFICULT NATURE OF LORD SOAMES' DUTIES. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN ASKED TO ASSIST IN PERSUADING THE REST OF AFRICA OF THE NEED TO AVOID FOCUSING WORLD ATTENTION AGAIN ON ZIMBABWE. I HAVE ALWAYS ASSURED YOU OF OUR READINESS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU IN ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY TRANSFER OF POWER IN ZIMBABWE. OUR READINESS HAS HOWEVER ALWAYS DEPENDED ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO WORK IN TURN FOR GENUINE, FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE.

REPORTS OF EVENTS IN THE PAST WEEK FROM SALISBURY ARE BEGINNING TO CAST A DARK SHADOW OVER OUR CONFIDENCE IN THIS MATTER. I HAVE BEEN MOST RELIABLY INFORMED OF THE PRESENCE OF OVER 3,000 SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN RHODESIAN DEFENCE FORCE ON WHICH YOUR GOVERNOR, LORD SOAMES, DEPENDS FOR PROVIDING THE SECURITY AND ORDERLINESS ESSENTIAL FOR THE ELECTIONS. I HAVE ALSO BEEN ADVISED THAT IN SPITE OF STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, THE SO-CALLED AUXILIARY FORCES ARE INDEED NO MORE THAN OFFICIALLY DEPLOYED BULLY-BOYS FOR ONE OF THE PARTIES IN THE ELECTIONS. THE RELIANCE OF LORD SOAMES' ADMINISTRATION ON A COMBINATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN INFILTRATED SECURITY FORCES, UNCONTROLLABLE AUXILIARY FORCE SUPPORTED BY A WELL-ARMED



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RHODESIAN POLICE WHICH THE PREVIOUS ILLEGAL REGIMES EMPLOYED TO SUPPRESS THEIR OPPONENTS IS BECOMING A SORE POINT WHICH MUST BE GIVEN EARLY ATTENTION IF IT IS NOT TO MAR ALL THE EFFORTS YOU HAVE PUT INTO PREPARING THE WAY FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION OF THE ZIMBABWE CONFLICT. I CONTINUE TO WONDER HOW THIS SECURITY FORCE, ITS AUXILIARY AND THE RHODESIAN POLICE CAN IN THE COURSE OF ONE MONTH CHANGE FROM THE OPPRESSIVE ROLE THEY PLAYED DURING THE PERIOD OF REBELLION TO A RESPONSIBLE AND IMPARTIAL LAW AND ORDER AGENCY IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. THIS TO MY MIND IS LIKE ASKING A LEOPARD TO CHANGE ITS SPOTS OVERNIGHT.

THE INCREASINGLY GALLING REPORTS OF ABUSES, VIOLATIONS AND ARBITRARINESS ATTRIBUTED TO THESE FORCES LEAVE ME WITH NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO APPEAL TO YOU TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER AN EARLY POSSIBILITY OF REVIEWING YOUR DECISION ON THE USE OF BRITISH TROOPS AND/OR INCREASING THE SIZE OF COMMONWEALTH TROOPS AND INVOLVING THEM IN SECURITY DUTIES ON THE GROUND IN ZIMBABWE. I MUST LET YOU KNOW AT THIS STAGE THAT THE CONTINUED DEPLOYMENT AND REPORTED PARTIALITY OF THE AFOREMENTIONED SECURITY FORCES WHICH SERVED THE REBEL GOVERNMENTS OF IAN SMITH AND BISHOP MUZOREWA IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNACCEPTABLE TO MY GOVERNMENT AND, IF I MAY SAY SO, TO MOST OF AFRICA.

FINALLY, THE ATTACKS ON MR. ROBERT MUGABE WHICH ARE BECOMING A DAILY OCCURRENCE AND THE CONTINUED THREATS TO HIS LIFE CANNOT CONTINUE TO BE TREATED LIGHTLY. I AM CONVINCED THAT ANY INCIDENT INVOLVING INJURY TO OR DEATH OF MR. MUGABE WILL HAVE A DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON THE PROCESS OF PEACEFUL TRANSITION. THIS I AM SURE WE CAN ILL AFFORD. THE CIRCUMSTANCES

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SURROUNDING THE ARREST OF MR. GARFIELD TODD, A FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF THE COLONY OF RHODESIA, AND THE HUMILIATION HE SUFFERED IN THE HANDS OF LORD SOAMES' SPECIAL BRANCH AND OTHER SECURITY AGENCIES, ARE A CLEAR INDICATION THAT ALL IS NOT WELL IN ZIMBABWE. THE LEAST WE CAN DO IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IS TO MAKE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE PHYSICAL REMOVAL OF ANY OF THE PARTY LEADERS CAN ONLY BRING CHAOS TO ZIMBABWE.

PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT WE SHALL ALWAYS REMAIN READY TO JOIN FORCES WITH YOU IN ENSURING ANY ACTION THAT WILL LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE THROUGH FREE AND FAIR ELECTION.

YOURS VERY SINCERELY,

SIGNED (ALHAJI SHEHU SHAGARI)
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.

HER EXCELLENCY, THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE MRS. MARGARET THATCHER,
PRIME MINISTER,
10 DOWNING STREET,
LONDON.