



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

I think this reflects your
 discussion with the Foreign &
 Commonwealth Secretary 10 days ago. 7 September 1979
 Agree general line, subject to developments?

Dear Michael,

Am: 7/9

Yes ok

Rhodesia: Constitutional Conference

You asked for Lord Carrington's advice on the Prime Minister's role in relation to the Constitutional Conference.

We understand that the Prime Minister will attend, for a short time, the reception for delegates at 18.00 on 10 September. Lord Carrington very much welcomes this. It will demonstrate her close interest in the Conference and give the participants the opportunity to meet her.

Apart from this, Lord Carrington thinks that it would be best for the Prime Minister to hold herself in reserve during the first week. Both sides are likely to appeal to her and to seek bilateral meetings. To agree to such meetings would risk running the Conference in effect at two levels. In Lord Carrington's view, it would be a mistake to agree to any bilateral meetings until it has become clear what the crucial points to be resolved are.

The Prime Minister's meeting with President Nyerere on the evening of 14 September will, however, be of particular importance as an opportunity to explain to him the proposals we shall probably by then have tabled and to persuade him to use his influence with the Patriotic Front leaders to negotiate seriously on them. We shall be submitting full briefing for this meeting in the light of progress at the Conference.

At a later stage, probably during the second week, there may well be a strong case for the Prime Minister to see the delegations separately (or possibly to give separate lunches for them). It might indeed be that a critical stage was reached during that week at which it would be advisable for the Prime Minister to intervene directly in order to emphasise that the British Government were, at the highest level, making every effort to reach an agreed solution.

Lord Carrington will not be able to make firm recommendations on these points until he has tested the temperature of the Conference next week. He would aim to let the Prime Minister have his further thoughts and firm recommendations about bilateral meetings and lunches towards the end of the week.

Yours ever
 Roderic Lyne

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(R M J Lyne)
 Private Secretary