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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Rhodesia: Call on the Prime Minister by the Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, MP

Mr. Julian Amery came to see the Prime Minister in her room at the House at 2200 on 24 July to discuss the debate on Southern Africa which had been arranged for the following day.

Mr. Amery told the Prime Minister that Bishop Muzorewa had been very bitter, in his talks with him, about the lack of recognition in the UK for what had been achieved in Rhodesia. It was essential that the Government should be very cautious in tampering with the existing constitution there. Zimbabwe/Rhodesia had already been accorded the quintessence of recognition, by virtue of the fact that the Prime Minister had received the Bishop at No. 10 and had sent a Government representative to Salisbury. Mr. Amery urged the Prime Minister to stress the Government's desire to work with the Salisbury regime. The UK had strong cards in its hand, namely the capacity to provide economic aid, diplomatic support and if necessary military supplies to Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. He was aware that the F.C.O., and some Ministers, feared a new Vietnam in Rhodesia and direct confrontation with the Soviet Union in Southern Africa. These fears were, however, belied by the failure of the Patriotic Front even to disrupt the April elections in Rhodesia, by the failure of SWAPO to sabotage the internal arrangements in Namibia and by the failure of Mozambique, Angola and Zambia to stand up to Rhodesian raids across their frontiers. If Bishop Muzorewa's regime was seen to be established and successful, the effect on Marxist Angola would be catastrophic. This explained Angola's opposition to the Bishop, and Mozambique's opposition to him was similarly motivated.

Mr. Amery told the Prime Minister that if the UK could halt the tide of Soviet imperialism in Southern Africa that tide would recede. He thought the Government had committed a great blunder in failing to recognise Bishop Muzorewa's regime as soon as it was established. There would have been explosions of

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indignation in the US and in Africa: but positions had now hardened and the task would be more difficult. It was essential that the Prime Minister should give nothing away at Lusaka, where the Africans would do their best to tie her down. It would be a difficult meeting and there would be riots in the streets. Mr. Amery said that he hoped that the Prime Minister would not go for the classical, colonial prescription so far as Zimbabwe/Rhodesia's constitution was concerned. Rhodesia had always been quite unlike our other colonies. Equally it would be wrong to put Bishop Muzorewa on the same scale as Nkomo, or even Sithole and Chikerema.

The Prime Minister asked what Mr. Sithole was doing now. Mr. Amery replied that he was acting democratically: he would probably return to the Government after the court had ruled on the April elections.

Mr. Amery went on to say that the choice before the Government was either to niggle at the Bishop's regime or to applaud, support and assist it. The South Africa treasure house was crucial to the OECD countries and had to be defended against the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister said that the first task was to get through the Lusaka meeting. It had to be faced that if we wanted the Africans and other Commonwealth Members to acquiesce in the Muzorewa regime it was no use hitting out at them too much. It was in any case wrong that the Bishop should have to rely on the whites as much as the constitution at present obliged him to do. Mr. Amery said that Bishop Muzorewa could not survive without the support of the armed forces, the civil service and white dominated sectors of the economy. He recognised, however, that the UK's commercial interests would be very hard hit when the Bishop achieved recognition, especially in Nigeria.

Am.

26 July 1979

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