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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

17 January 1980

Dear Mr. Raphael.

Thank you for your letter of 12 January, expressing concern at developments in Rhodesia.

As you generously acknowledge, the ceasefire process has been remarkably successful. However, the Governor has had to use the Rhodesian forces in specific cases to deal with breaches of ceasefire when the efforts of the Patriotic Front's own commanders and of the police have been unable to do so. Fortunately, despite continuing and serious breaches of the ceasefire agreement, almost all of which have been caused by ZANLA forces, it has been possible to avoid more than a few isolated incidents. In the one case to which you refer, the group concerned failed to accept the orders of their own commanders and were in breach of the ceasefire. The Patriotic Front military commanders accept that incidents caused by dissident elements have to be dealt with. A number of complaints against the auxiliaries are being investigated and, where necessary, will be dealt with appropriately. But I believe that the greatest threat to the stability of the ceasefire comes from continuing breaches of it by ZANLA forces. There has been large scale infiltration by ZANLA into Rhodesia since the ceasefire came into effect and a proportion of ZANLA's forces have remained outside the assembly process. It is essential that action be taken to correct this, and I hope that you will use your influence to this end.

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I know that Richard Luce is replying to your letter to Peter Carrington regarding the South African contingent at Beitbridge. The assurance which we gave was that there would be no external involvement in Rhodesia under the Governor. We do not accept that the presence of a small South African contingent on the border to guard Beitbridge, whose strategic and economic importance is clear, constitutes external involvement. The fact is that Rhodesia depends on South Africa for most of its communications and supplies. The bridge is vital to this. It is also half South Africa's property. In the circumstances the Governor sees the presence of a small South African contingent as necessary to defend it. He will keep the need under review. There is a team of the Monitoring Force in the immediate vicinity and their presence will give adequate assurance that the South African contingent restricts itself to defence of the bridge.

I have written in greater detail to President Nyerere on some of the issues of concern to you, and enclose a copy of my letter.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Raymond White

His Excellency Mr. Shridath S. Ramphal, Kt., C.M.G., Q.C.