

FROM CABINET OFFICE LONDON
TO WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

BT
CONFIDENTIAL

OPS
PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T62/80

DEAR MR PRESIDENT

RHODESIA, OR ZIMBABWE AS IT WILL BE, IS ON THE VERGE OF INDEPENDENCE. IT SCARCELY SEEMED POSSIBLE LAST SUMMER THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LAUNCH THE NEW STATE UNDER SUCH FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS AND WITH SUCH WIDE INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE. YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT HAS PLAYED A VITAL PART IN HELPING US GET THERE.

THE FIRST STEPS TAKEN BY MR. MUGABE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING. HE HAS APPOINTED A BROADLY-BASED GOVERNMENT AND HAS HAD THE WISDOM TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATION OF THE WHITE COMMUNITY. HE HAS CALLED FOR RECONCILIATION AND CLEARLY INTENDS TO PURSUE MODERATE POLICIES. HE HAS APPLIED FOR ZIMBABWE TO JOIN THE COMMONWEALTH AND I BELIEVE HE INTENDS TO BE GENUINELY NON-ALIGNED. CERTAINLY HIS LINKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION ARE TENUOUS. IF HE STICKS TO THIS COURSE WE SHALL HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ELIMINATED A MAJOR SOURCE OF INSTABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE PROSPECTS OF SETTLING PEACEFULLY THE OTHER PROBLEMS OF THE AREA WILL HAVE IMPROVED.

THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT MUGABE'S ABILITY TO HOLD TO THIS COURSE WILL BE CRUCIALLY AFFECTED BY THE READINESS OF THE WEST TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC HELP. ALTHOUGH ZIMBABWE IS POTENTIALLY A WEALTHY COUNTRY, THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OF RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE WAR ARE DAUNTING. THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CONVINCe ITS SUPPORTERS THAT MODERATE POLICIES PAY. IN PARTICULAR THEY WILL ATTACH THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. CY VANCE WAS VERY HELPFUL IN INDICATING DURING THE LANCASTER HOUSE CONFERENCE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVED THAT A MULTI-DONOR EFFORT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO ASSIST IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF A WIDER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT FOR AFRICA AS A WHOLE AND THAT THE US WOULD BE PREPARED TO CO-OPERATE IN SUCH AN EFFORT. THIS PLAYED A CRUCIAL PART IN PERSUADING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO ACCEPT THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION.

IT IS VITAL THAT WE AND THE WEST AS A WHOLE SHOULD BUILD ON WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AT LANCASTER HOUSE AND SUBSEQUENTLY AND CONSOLIDATE THE GAINS FOR OUR OVERALL POSITION IN AFRICA FROM THE SETTLEMENT. WHAT IS REQUIRED IS AN EARLY COMMITMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT, WHICH WILL CREATE THE CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE TO CARRY THEM THROUGH THE CRUCIAL EARLY STAGES OF INDEPENDENCE. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT ALL WHO ARE CONCERNED IN THIS MATTER WILL RECOGNISE THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF BACKING UP SUCCESS AND ENSURING THAT MR. MUGABE IS NOT DRIVEN TO FEEL THAT HE MUST TURN TO OTHER QUARTERS FOR HELP. I KNOW THAT YOU, LIKE US, FACE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS. BUT WE SHARE A REALLY MAJOR POLITICAL INTEREST IN CONVERTING A DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS INTO A DURABLE ACHIEVEMENT: AND THIS NEEDS PROMPT AND CONVINCING ACTION. I VERY MUCH HOPE THEREFORE THAT YOU CAN MAKE THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE AMERICAN SUPPORT TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT, AND AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDE IMMEDIATE AND SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE. WE HAVE ANNOUNCED AN INITIAL CONTRIBUTION OF POUNDS STERLING 7 MILLION WITH MORE TO COME AND ARE APPROACHING OTHER WESTERN GOVERNMENTS AND JAPAN FOR HELP. THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY HERE WHICH WE MUST NOT LET SLIP.

+ collected
Pm.

YOURS SINCERELY,

23 March 80

MARGARET