

PRIME MINISTER

C.C. M. Alexander
Doris Healy
Fes. News Dept

Return of Lord Soames

You are to welcome Lord Soames back to the UK on the South Side of Heathrow at 10 a.m. on Saturday. There will be very considerable press/radio/TV interest in this and I would be grateful for your advice on how you want to play it.

The story is primarily a photo-caption and I understand that Lord Soames is not anxious to give in depth interviews immediately on his return.

Nor should we overplay the conquering hero. However, Rhodesia is a major success. You described it as 'the British miracle' in Die Welt. Therefore, I think that you should say a few words of welcome on the tarmac and give Lord Soames an opportunity to respond. This will give the media both sight and sound and should prove highly satisfactory to all concerned.

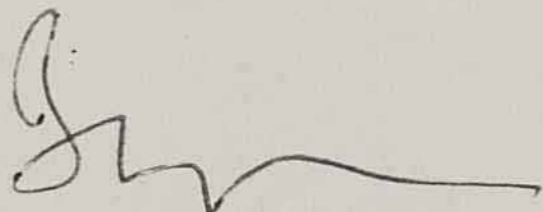
Are you therefore content for us to arrange for a photo barrier and microphone facility so that everyone can get a good shot and record the words of welcome and response?

Yes

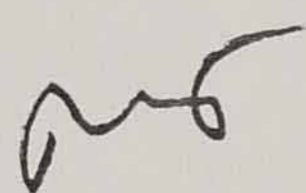
If Lord Soames wishes to do short news interviews, then he will no doubt make his views known over the next few days. However, I do not think you should get involved in interviews; a photo/microphone facility will better serve your interests and will not overshadow Lord Soames.

Agree?

Yes



B. INGHAM



15 April, 1980