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CABINET  
DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE  
RHODESIA

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Memorandum by the Secretary of State  
for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

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The Objective

1. Our objective is clear - to bring Rhodesia back to legality and to do our utmost to ensure that Rhodesia gains widespread international recognition. The question at issue is how best to achieve this.

The Rhodesian Elections

2. Lord Boyd's report is expected to be made available to the Government on 16 May. The question of publication will then fall to be considered. Lord Boyd is thought likely to conclude that the election in Rhodesia was fairly conducted and that it was as free as was possible in the circumstances.

3. Once the new government in Rhodesia is formed, it will be open to the Government at any time to introduce the legislation necessary to repeal the Southern Rhodesia Act 1965, recognise Rhodesia's legal independence and lift sanctions. To do so at once would be widely popular in the Party and in the country. I do not however recommend it, for two reasons:

- (a) we can be more helpful to Rhodesia by playing our hand rather differently;

(b) to recognise immediately would risk considerable damage to our interests, both economic and political throughout the world.

I think we should work to return Rhodesia to legality in such a way and in such a timescale that the country is launched into independence with the best start that may be attainable, while at the same time limiting damage to our own interests.

4. So far as 3(a) is concerned, immediate recognition would not bring the war to an end, nor achieve international acceptance. On the contrary, few if any of our allies and partners would follow suit; and it would be likely to harden attitudes throughout Africa, the Commonwealth and the Third World rather than giving them a lead. We need urgent consultation with friendly countries to help us form a judgment on this. The American attitude will be of particular importance. The President is required by the "Case/Javits" amendment to determine, once the new government is installed in Rhodesia, whether it was "chosen by free elections in which all political and population groups have been allowed to participate freely". Our first step will be to talk to the Americans. I shall be discussing Rhodesia with Mr Vance on 21-22 May.

5. We shall do better for the Rhodesian government if we can persuade other governments to accept that a real change has taken place on which a secure, stable and democratic country can be built. The Rhodesian government can help in this process by conducting themselves in such a way as to attract international approval and to undermine the support given to the Patriotic Front. We should encourage them in this.

6. As regards paragraph 3(b), if we proceed to immediate recognition some African countries, led by Nigeria (our biggest market outside Europe and the USA) would take action against our economic interests and break off diplomatic relations. British communities and interests in other African

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countries would be at risk. (See Annex A for a summary of likely international repercussions.) A number of African countries and possibly some others might leave the Commonwealth or seek to expel Britain from it. If the action were taken before 1 August, the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) which is due to begin in Lusaka on that date in the presence of HM The Queen would probably collapse.

#### Sanctions

7. In view of the change of circumstances inside Rhodesia, one cannot envisage asking Parliament in November to renew Section 2 of the 1965 Act. Section 2 will then lapse automatically and so will the sanctions which depend on it; others will not, and we shall have to take executive and legislative action to remove the remaining anomalies. But the removal of our domestic sanctions legislation would put us in breach of our obligations under mandatory Security Council resolutions if we had not by then secured a return to legality. To announce forthwith that we intended to allow Section 2 of the Act to lapse would lay us open to much the same consequences as an announcement that we were going to recognise the Rhodesian government. Our objective should be to ensure that sanctions are lifted, not only by us but by other members of the international community.

#### The Next Steps

8. Our first objective must be to establish a relationship with the Rhodesian government which will enable us to initiate the process I suggest at the end of paragraph 3. We should then seek to obtain the support of influential members of the international community; and begin the process of trying to turn the minds of the African leaders most directly concerned into more constructive channels.

9. In the first place, we ought to establish a regular means of communication with Bishop Muzorewa and his colleagues. I have already made arrangements for a senior official to visit Salisbury to discuss *inter alia*

- 3 -  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

how we can arrange this. Secondly, we should launch consultations with Mr Vance on 21 May. Thirdly, I believe we should take early steps to appoint a senior figure whose terms of reference would be to advise the Government on the steps to be taken to bring Rhodesia to a state of legality and to international recognition, and who would be prepared to devote his full attention to this task. In carrying out this task he would aim to be in constant touch not only with the new government in Rhodesia but with other Rhodesian leaders and with other influential leaders in Commonwealth Africa and elsewhere, and to provide the Government with authoritative advice. I envisage that this adviser might be either a Cabinet Minister, a senior and respected political figure, or a distinguished former official with good political experience.

10. Finally, we should put a senior official into Salisbury to act as a channel of communication with Bishop Muzorewa and to keep us closely informed of developments. We should do this in such a manner as to forestall objections that we were already recognising the new government (by presenting the official's presence as being part of a consultative mission - as indeed would be the case).

#### The Debate on the Queen's Speech

11. If my colleagues endorse this approach, we should be able to take a positive line in the debate on The Queen's speech in the Commons next week. This could be, in outline, that we fully appreciate what has been achieved in Rhodesia and welcome the progress which has been made there. Fundamental changes have taken place, leading to the emergence of an African majority in government and parliament. We are already in touch with Bishop Muzorewa [a senior FCO official is in Salisbury for this purpose this week]. We are awaiting (or - assuming we have already received it - are studying) Lord Boyd's report and hope to make its conclusions public in due course. We wish to build on what has taken place in Rhodesia to achieve our basic

- 4 -

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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objective - a return to legality - and to do our utmost to give her the best possible chance of securing wide international recognition. But this involves consultation with our allies and the Commonwealth Governments concerned. We are giving high priority to making contact with Bishop Muzorewa and with them at a level which recognises the importance of the changes in Rhodesia, and which will help HMG to discharge the special responsibility for the territory which the UN Security Council has so often reaffirmed.

12. I invite my colleagues to endorse the action outlined in paragraphs 9 and 10 above and the line suggested for the debate next week in paragraph 11.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

11 May 1979

Annexes

- A Recognition: The International Repercussions
- B The Six Principles

CONFIDENTIAL

- 5 -

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX A

RHODESIA: RECOGNITION: THE INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS

1. This paper examines briefly the possible consequences of an early decision by HMG to recognise a government in Rhodesia and/or lift sanctions against Rhodesia. The severity of the international reaction would depend to some extent on whether or not we were acting in company with the United States and France. But the brunt would probably fall on Britain in any case in view of our status as the colonial power in Rhodesia.

2. There is a strong likelihood that Nigeria, conscious of its status as the richest and most populous state in black Africa, would play a leading role on organising the African response to moves of this kind by HMG. The Federal Military Government issued a statement on the Rhodesian elections on 2 May, threatening reprisals against any government which recognised the outcome.

Political Retaliation

3. There would be moves by African members, led by Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia, to try to expel us from the Commonwealth, and threats of withdrawal from the Commonwealth by these and some other African and Asian members.

4. There would be expulsions of British Heads of Missions, and quite possibly a total breach of diplomatic relations by many African and possibly some other Third World countries. There would be a strong probability of demonstrations and attacks on official British buildings. In some places the local authorities would be unwilling or unable to contain such demonstrations.

5. There would also be some risk to United Kingdom citizens and their families. There are substantial British communities in Zambia (at least

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26,000) and Nigeria (15,000) who would be particularly at risk. It might be necessary to consider evacuating communities which were particularly endangered especially in Zambia.

6. There would be serious conflict at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lusaka. It would almost certainly be necessary to advise The Queen not to attend, if she had not already been so advised by the Zambian Government. There might be a boycott of the meeting by several African, Asian and Caribbean governments.

7. Britain's standing at the UN would be affected. Even if, by recognising the Rhodesian government before lifting sanctions, we had satisfied ourselves that we were acting legally and in accordance with the terms of mandatory UN resolutions, we should find that this interpretation of international law was challenged. There would be repeated moves in the Security Council to condemn our actions or declare them illegal. This would result in an intensification of existing pressure on our Permanent Member status.

8. Per contra the Soviet Union and its allies would receive a substantial diplomatic boost of which they would make the most for propaganda purposes throughout Africa. They would seize this as a pretext for offering increased military support to the Front Line States - and it would probably be acceptable. A big step would be taken towards the consolidation of Soviet influence in Southern Africa.

#### Economic Retaliation

9. The incidence and severity of this would vary greatly. But there would certainly be moves by African countries, and possibly some other Third World states, to enforce a trade boycott against us and/or confiscate British assets. Action could include nationalisation of remaining British shareholdings in major companies, discrimination against

- 2 -

CONFIDENTIAL

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British imports, or denial of key raw materials (see the attached table for a breakdown of British economic interests in Africa). Whatever the precise outcome, important commercial interests would be at risk. The economic consequences could be particularly serious in Nigeria where visible exports worth £1144.4 m net, invisible receipts worth £108.8 m, and direct investment with a bulk value of £508 m would be at stake. By comparison, British exports to Rhodesia in 1965 at 1978 prices totalled £123.4 m. The book value of British assets in Rhodesia is estimated at £113.6 m (1974).

#### The Longer Term

10. There will be a risk of increased Soviet and other Communist involvement in the war in Rhodesia on the side of the Patriotic Front. This might take the form of:-

- (a) increased quantities of arms and equipment already being supplied;
- (b) provision of different kinds of weapons, eg air defence systems for host countries, possibly requiring Soviet or surrogate technicians to operate them;
- (c) direct involvement of Soviet or surrogate personnel, perhaps initially as "advisers" or as technicians operating the equipment at (a).

11. The risks of destabilisation would be high in Zambia and Botswana, whose own defence forces are inexperienced, outnumbered by the guerrillas, and humiliated by Rhodesian incursions which they are incapable of resisting effectively.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

**CONFIDENTIAL**

TABLE

BRITISH INTERESTS IN AFRICA

1. United Kingdom economic interests in Africa (1978 figures)

	£ million of		
	Total		which
	<u>South Africa</u>	<u>Other Africa</u>	<u>Nigeria</u>
Visible exports	669.3	3464.4	1133.4
Net invisible receipts	426	708	108.8 (1977)
Direct investment*	1347	1296.1	508.1* (1977)
(book value)			
(market value)	4500		
Portfolio investment	650	negligible	
ECGD commitment <sup>(1)</sup>	763	2653	753.0
Gross banking claims	1250	2586	NA
UK aid debt	Nil	195.5	39.6
Key supplies	Uranium (from Namibia)	Coffee	
		Cocoa	
	Platinum	Bauxite	
	Chromium	Copper	* excludes oil,
	Vanadium	Cobalt	banking and
	Manganese	Manganese	insurance
	Gold	Phosphate rock	
	Diamonds	Tin	
	Antimony		

(1) Part of the ECGD commitment, representing ECGD guarantees of bank lending, duplicates amounts in the gross banking claim figures.

2. British communities in Black Africa: There are substantial British communities, as well as very important economic interests, in Zambia (26,000), Nigeria (15,000) and Kenya (11,000). These are based on registrations by patrial UK citizens; the total British community is probably a good deal larger in each case.

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THE SIX PRINCIPLES

1. The principle and intention of majority rule, already enshrined in the 1961 constitution, would have to be maintained and guaranteed.
2. There would have to be guarantees against retrogressive amendment of the constitution.
3. There would have to be immediate improvement in the political status of the African population.
4. There would have to be progress towards ending racial discrimination.
5. The British Government would need to be satisfied that any basis for independence was acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.
6. It would be necessary to ensure that, regardless of race, there was no oppression of majority by minority or of minority by majority.

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