



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

cc Master Set  
Toward  
Pit Trips Everywhere  
(Hag 1979)  
April

16 November 1979

Call by Bishop Muzorewa

Your letter to me of 15 November enclosed briefing for the above meeting and a draft line which, you suggested, the Bishop might take in explaining his decision to return home.

In the event the conversation when the Bishop called yesterday afternoon was confined to generalities. The question of explaining his decision to return was not touched on. The Bishop expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister and to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary for making good on the commitment they had given him in July. He paid tribute to their determination and sincerity. Although the ceasefire had still to be worked out, the most important things had already been accomplished. He would therefore be leaving for Salisbury the following day. This would enable him to arrive on Sunday which should ensure that he was greeted by a considerable number of his supporters.

The Prime Minister paid tribute to the determination which the Bishop had shown in pursuit of a settlement. The length of time he had spent in London and the sacrifices he had made for the sake of a settlement were remarkable. She did not believe the conference could fail now provided momentum was maintained.

There was a brief discussion about the timing of the election. Bishop Muzorewa said that the Patriotic Front were taking every opportunity to infiltrate their men into Rhodesia while the negotiations continued. He believed that six or seven thousand guerrillas, mostly Zipra, had entered Rhodesia since the negotiations had begun. It was therefore important to press ahead and hold the election as early as possible. The weather provided an additional reason for speed. The rainy season officially started on 15 November and lasted to mid March. The heaviest rains fell in January: from mid January onwards the roads would be impassable and the rivers overflowing. Finally the schools would reopen in the third week of January and it was essential to have the school teachers to help with running the

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election. All this pointed to holding the elections no later than mid January. Dr. Mundawarara who was accompanying Bishop Muzorewa underlined the importance of the mid January deadline. The Prime Minister agreed with this analysis.

The discussion ended with expressions of mutual goodwill. Bishop Muzorewa said that he hoped one day to welcome the Prime Minister in an independent Zimbabwe. The Prime Minister said she looked forward to making such a visit.

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