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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 November 1979

Dear Michael,

F.S. V. 16/41

Call by Bishop Muzorewa on the Prime Minister

Bishop Muzorewa asked to call on the Prime Minister this afternoon in the expectation that he will be returning to Salisbury tomorrow or on Saturday. Muzorewa will be seeing Lord Carrington at 4pm. Lord Carrington intends to discuss with him the exact timing of his return to Salisbury. In terms of the Constitutional Conference, there would be advantages in the Bishop staying until the ceasefire negotiations have come to a conclusion. The Front Line Presidents may react adversely to his early departure. He will also not be able to present his supporters with a settlement and a date for the return to legality if he goes to Salisbury this weekend. However, Muzorewa and his advisers are very anxious about the effect which his continued absence from Rhodesia may be having on the Bishop's political following in Rhodesia. We therefore think it likely that the Bishop will decide to return to Salisbury in the next day or two, and do not think that we should press him strongly to stay here against his wishes. We would suggest that the Bishop might explain his decision to return on the lines of the enclosed draft.

I enclose copies of Lord Carrington's exchange in the Conference this morning with Robert Mugabe, on the basis of which agreement was reached on the pre-independence arrangements, and of the paper circulated at Lancaster House yesterday based on proposals put by the Prime Minister to President Kaunda last weekend.

The Salisbury delegation are concerned that the understanding reached this morning with the Patriotic Front and a possible slight slippage in the period allowed to bring the ceasefire into effect represent a move by HMG towards the Patriotic Front. We are assuring Bishop Muzorewa that this is not the case.

The Prime Minister can assure the Bishop that we have not departed in any way from the proposals for the pre-independence period that we tabled and which were accepted by him. We have refused to accord equality of status to the forces of the Patriotic Front, for which they were pressing strongly. We have held firm to our proposal for a two month election period after the date on which the ceasefire comes into effect. The Patriotic Front have accepted our

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proposals; we have not accepted theirs. We shall now proceed with the utmost urgency to conclude discussions on the ceasefire. We have no interest whatever in delay.

The Prime Minister might take this opportunity to thank Bishop Muzorewa for the courageous stand that he and his delegation have taken throughout the Conference, without which we could not possibly have achieved so much.

Yours ever

Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary