

CONFIDENTIAL MINISTER'S



PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T168/79T

Handwritten signature

SUBJECT

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 December 1979

Dear Mr. President

I am sorry to have to raise Rhodesia with you when the very worrying situation in Iran is taking up so much of your time. I look forward to discussing both subjects with you on Monday. But there is one important point on Rhodesia on which I hope we can make progress before then.

We have now to bring the Lancaster House Conference to a conclusion. The Patriotic Front are still trying to spin out the talking and to avoid coming to a decision (and meanwhile are infiltrating more of their forces into Rhodesia). But we have completed the negotiations. We cannot hold up the implementation of a settlement much longer.

Our experiences at Lancaster House have shown that the Patriotic Front will not make up their minds unless and until they are brought up clearly against the need to do so.

Peter Carrington has therefore called a final session of the Conference for tomorrow. There is a fair chance that the Patriotic Front will initial the agreement then if it is made absolutely clear to them that they will get no support for staying out.

We have done everything we can to create the conditions for the Patriotic Front to participate in elections under the Governor's authority. We have presented detailed ceasefire proposals that Cy Vance was good enough to describe to Peter

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Carrington in Brussels as eminently fair. I am very concerned about the dangers of further delay in reaching agreement. This could result in a breakdown of the settlement as a whole.

The support of the United States, and the action you have taken with the parties and African governments have been a major factor in helping us to get this far. I hope that now you can help us to bring home to the Patriotic Front the need to agree to a ceasefire and participate in the elections. This might be done by a statement that the United States will not continue sanctions against Rhodesia under a British Governor. That would be the most effective approach, but in any case it would be very helpful if Kingman Brewster could speak in this sense directly to the Patriotic Front today. Action on these lines could help us to clinch the final agreement. I fear that if it is delayed, your decision would not have the same effect on the negotiations.

I hate troubling you at a time when you have such appalling troubles of your own. But I believe that action by you on the lines I have suggested would greatly increase the chances of a successful outcome. If you would like to discuss this I am available here all this evening.

With warm regards,

Margaret Thatcher

The President of the United States of America.

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