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FM SALISBURY 211830Z FEB 80

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 762 OF 21 FEBRUARY 1980

1. DUFF HAS BEEN THINKING OVER THINGS SINCE YOU AND I TALKED ON THE TELEPHONE THIS MORNING AND HAS PUT THE POSITION TO ME AS FOLLOWS.

(A) WALLS AND HIS COLLEAGUES, RELYING ON THE LANCASTER HOUSE "FORMULA" (PARAGRAPH 2 OF FCO TELEGRAM NO 97 TO LUSAKA), EXPECT US TO WORK TOWARDS AN ELECTION WHICH, WITHIN THE LIMIT OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE, IS MORE OR LESS FREE AND FAIR. MOREOVER, AFTER A FURTHER BOUT OF HARSH SPEAKING BETWEEN WALLS ON THE ONE HAND, AND ACLAND AND RENWICK ON THE OTHER, LAST WEEK, WALLS IS CURRENTLY BEING REASONABLE AND COOPERATIVE. HIS LINE IS THAT WE MUST WORK TOGETHER RATHER THAN AGAINST EACH OTHER.

(B) THE WHITES BELIEVE THAT IF MUGABE GETS TOO FAR AHEAD IN THE ELECTION, THE RESULT, IF THEY DID NOTHING TO CORRECT IT, WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR THEM. THEY ENVISAGE MUZOREWA QUITTING IN DISGUST AND/OR HIS FOLLOWERS AND OTHER BLACK MEMBERS JOINING MUGABE. THE RESULT WOULD BE IN EFFECT A "MUGABE GOVERNMENT". IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY WOULD HAVE EITHER TO LEAVE THEMSELVES - OR TO TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT IT.

(C) TO PREVENT SUCH AN OUTCOME, WALLS WOULD BE CAPABLE OF DRASTIC ACTION, IF HE FELT HE HAD BEEN ABANDONED BY US. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT (ESPECIALLY IF, AS IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE, ZANLA ELEMENTS HAD BEGUN TO DRIFT AWAY FROM THE ASSEMBLY AREAS) TO CONTRIVE A RESUMPTION OF THE FIGHTING IN CIRCUMSTANCES FOR WHICH THE RHODESIANS MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY BE BLAMED. HE MIGHT CALCULATE THAT IF HE DID THIS JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED, THIS WOULD FORCE TOGETHER THE SORT OF COALITION HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE (WHITES, NKOMO AND MUZOREWA) AGAINST MUGABE, BEFORE NKOMO AND MUGABE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET TOGETHER TO FORM THEIR OWN COALITION. HE MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO OBTAIN NKOMO'S PRIOR AGREEMENT TO SUCH AN ENTERPRISE.

(D) IF WE DID TAKE SOME COMPARATIVELY MINOR ACTION AGAINST MUGABE JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION (E.G. BY ANNOUNCING THE ABRIGATION OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTION IN ONE OR TWO AREAS) WALLS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT TAKE ANY PRE-EMPTIVE ACTION: AND WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO FEEL THAT, AFTER THE ELECTION, WHATEVER THE RESULT (UNLESS IT WERE A COMPLETE MUGABE LANDSLIDE, ABOUT WHICH HE COULD PROBABLY DO NOTHING) WE WOULD BE WORKING WITH HIM AND OTHERS TOWARDS AN ANTI-MUGABE COALITION. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD BE EASIER TO HOLD NOT ONLY THE WHITES BUT, THROUGH THE WHITES, THE BISHOP AND HIS PARTY, TOGETHER.

(E) APART FROM THE EFFECT ON WALLS, AND WHETHER OR NOT HE WERE TO TAKE PRE-EMPTIVE ACTION JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED, THERE IS A DISTINCT DANGER OF THE BISHOP'S MORALE COLLAPSING IF THE ELECTION GOES BADLY AGAINST HIM. IF WE HAD NOT STIFFENED HIM, BY TAKING SOME ACTION AGAINST MUGABE BEFOREHAND, AND IF HE QUIT SAYING THAT THE WHOLE THING WAS UN-FREE AND UNFAIR, WE SHOULD BE LEFT IN A VERY DIFFICULT POLITICAL POSITION. 2. TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, THE WHITES, EVEN THOUGH THEY ACCEPT THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING VERY DRASTIC, ARE HOPING THAT WE WILL DO JUST ENOUGH

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(A) TO DEPRIVE MUGABE OF A FEW SEATS THAT MIGHT WELL BE CRUCIAL IN THE POLITICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE AFTER THE ELECTION - EVEN THOUGH THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE VERY CRUCIAL IN TERMS OF LOGICAL COALITION-FORMING:

(B) TO KEEP UP THE MORALE OF THEMSELVES AND THE BISHOP AND TO GIVE THEM CONFIDENCE THAT WE ARE STILL WORKING TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL PRODUCE A MODERATE GOVERNMENT: AND INDEED TO RETAIN OUR INFLUENCE WITH NKOMO, SO AS TO HELP TOWARDS THE NECESSARY COALITION-MAKING.

3. TO REAIN NKOMO'S CONFIDENCE IS NO LESS IMPORTANT. HE IS EXPECTING US TO TAKE SOME ACTION VIS-A-VIS MUGABE. IF WE DISAPPOINT MUZOREWA, WALLS AND NKOMO, WE RISK THE MILITARY RE-STARTING A WAR, IN THE HOPE OF FORCING A NKOMO/MUGABE SPLIT AND THEREBY GIVING THEMSELVES A CHANCE (HOWEVER MIS-JUDGED) TO GET ON TOP OF THE WAR.

(B) AT A MINIMUM, WE LOSE THEIR COOPERATION OVER BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY MATTERS.

4. THE MILITARY COOPERATION ASPECT IS IMPORTANT. IF WE ARE NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY ACTION AGAINST MUGABE AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE SHALL HAVE TO LET THE RHODESIANS KNOW THIS PRETTY SOON. WE SHALL THEN PROBABLY LOSE THE CHANCE TO OBTAIN SENSIBLE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE ASSEMBLY AREAS (SEE MY TELEGRAM NO 749): AND THEIR COOPERATION OVER THE SAFETY OF THE MONITORING FORCE.

5. FINALLY, DUFF POINTS OUT THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE COULD AVOID THE DILEMMA (INTERNATION REPERCUSSIONS ON THE ONE HAND, INTERNAL COLLAPSE ON THE OTHER) IF WE COULD PERSUADE THE RHODESIANS TO GET SO FAR AHEAD WITH THE BUSINESS OF COALITION-FORMING THAT ACTION AGAINST MUGABE BECAME UNNECESSARY, SINCE THE PARTIES CONCERNED WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY CONFIDENT OF THE POST-ELECTION SITUATION TO FACE IT WITH EQUANIMITY.

6. THOUGH I DON'T GO ALONG WITH ALL OF THIS, I CERTAINLY AGREE THAT IN ORDER TO LESSEN THE RISK OF TROUBLE WITH WALLS WE SHOULD PRESS EVEN MORE STRONGLY ON THE COALITION IDEA, AND IN AN EFFORT TO CARRY THEM WITH US TO BELIEVE THAT ACTION AGAINST MUGABE (SO VERY UNDESIRABLE IN INTERNATIONAL TERMS) WAS UNNECESSARY. WE WILL DO THIS BY ALL THE MEANS OPEN TO US. BUT I BELIEVE, AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE LANCASTER HOUSE CONNECTION, THAT A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM YOU TO WALLS WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL. WOULD YOU CONSIDER SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF MIFT. TO BE OF ANY USE IT SHOULD REACH HIM IF POSSIBLE TOMORROW FRIDAY, OR AT LATEST ON SATURDAY.

SOAMES:

FILES
RHOD.D

OADS

DEF.D

UND

PUSD

NEWS.D

OLD

PS

PS/LPS

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

SIR D. MAITLAND

SIR A. ACLAND

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MR ASPIN

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No. 10 DOWNING STREET

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