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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

3 July 1979

Dear George,

Prime Minister's Visit to Canberra: Rhodesia

I attach the record of the meeting the Prime Minister had on Saturday 30 June with Mr. Fraser. As you will see, most of the discussion was about Rhodesia and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Lusaka. Mr. Fraser floated the idea that the British Government should launch at Lusaka what he called a "process" which would explain to those taking part how we proposed to build on what had already been achieved in Rhodesia by bringing forward further constitutional changes in the direction of greater Africanisation and which would make clear how we intended to involve all the parties to the problem, including the Front-line States and the Patriotic Front leaders, in the consideration of these changes. You will see from the record that the Prime Minister explained why we had reservations about this approach, particularly since Mr. Fraser seemed to think that we should seek formal endorsement for it at Lusaka.

The following day at a dinner given by the High Commissioner Parkinson, the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, (who had not himself been present at the meeting on Saturday) gave John Hunt the attached piece of paper which he said set out the essentials of what the Australians believed the Prime Minister and Mr. Fraser had agreed. In fact this was no more than a summary of the line Mr. Fraser had pursued the previous day, and John Hunt and I explained to Parkinson and to Yeend, the Secretary of the Australian Cabinet, why we could not accept their piece of paper as an agreed resume of the Prime Ministers' talk. We left it at that, and John Hunt and I do not feel that there is any need to take the Australian attempt to get an agreed piece of paper any further. But it is probable that the Australians will want to have further consultations with us during the run-up to Lusaka. If they do, we expect them to approach us through Freeth here in London. The Prime Minister is content for further consultations to take place.

There is a further aspect about the Australian activity on Rhodesia and Lusaka which does not come out of the record. Donald Tebbit believes that Mr. Fraser is seeking a role for himself as an intermediary between Britain and the black African states who is going to find a way forward in Rhodesia which will

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forestall an explosion at Lusaka which might wreck the Commonwealth. Mr. Fraser said nothing explicit about this possible role for himself at his meeting with the Prime Minister, but it seemed to us that his general approach to the issues he raised and a subsequent remark by Yeend to John Hunt lent support to Donald Tebbit's view. This is something which you will want to bear in mind if the Australians seek further consultations with us in the next couple of weeks.

I am copying this letter to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Steve.

George Walden, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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