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Rhodesia

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

B/F 13-6-79

6 June 1979

Dear Sir,

Lord Harlech's Mission to Southern Africa

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary brought Lord Harlech to call on the Prime Minister this morning, to discuss his mission to Southern Africa as the emissary of the Government. The following is a summary of the main points which arose during a short discussion.

The Prime Minister told Lord Harlech that President Giscard, judging from her talk with him on the previous day, was disposed to be helpful over Rhodesia. There was clearly the beginnings of a more realistic appraisal in Africa of the Rhodesian situation and we should do our best to build on this. Lord Harlech told the Prime Minister that his recent talk with the American envoy, Mr. Loewenstein, who had just returned from unofficial talks with Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda, showed that there was some sign of movement in the thinking of the Front Line Presidents and that some of them might be keen to get off the hook. If they could be persuaded to give a lead, many other African Heads of Government would be only too ready to follow.

The Prime Minister expressed some concern that if Bishop Muzorewa could not be persuaded to move quickly, Mr. Sithole might abandon the internal settlement which would make it much more difficult for the British Government to defend. She recalled that President Kaunda had told her that his whole attitude towards Rhodesia would change if Mr. Smith were to retire from the scene; looking at it from Mr. Smith's point of view, however, she could well understand that he would wish to hang on until recognition was certain. The Prime Minister went on to say that she thought it was essential to make a thorough assessment of the relationship between the guerrillas and their supporters and how these could be changed to the disadvantage of the former. We should look for any leverage which the U.K. could bring to bear on the Front Line Presidents

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- 2 -

to induce them to deny money or territory to the Patriotic Front forces. Lord Carrington said that one future possibility might be a fresh test of acceptability of an amended constitution: if this were to be internationally supervised, or at least internationally recognised, the ground would be cut from under the feet of Nkomo and Mugabe, who would be reluctant to take part in an election themselves since their relatively meagre popular support would thereby be exposed. Lord Carrington told the Prime Minister that the Soviet Union were evidently trying to persuade the Front Line Presidents to form a Rhodesian Government in exile but Lord Harlech thought that the Russians could be encouraged not to make trouble, on the grounds that this would endanger the ratification of the SALT 2 Treaty. Lord Carrington said that if the United States were to lift sanctions within the next few weeks, the U.K. would be in a very difficult position at Lusaka.

The Prime Minister agreed that Lord Harlech would have to see Nkomo and Mugabe, since they were essential factors in bringing about a ceasefire, distasteful though she found the prospect. (The Prime Minister asked whether Mugabe was still receiving aid from the Chinese: I should be grateful for advice on this.)

There was some discussion of what would happen to Nkomo and Mugabe, and to their guerrilla forces, if the new Government in Salisbury were to win recognition: how would Presidents Kaunda and Machel get rid of them? Lord Harlech said that it might prove necessary to send a minimal Commonwealth force to give President Kaunda some assistance in clearing the guerrillas out of Zambia.

The Prime Minister said that it was essential to make President Kaunda do something about the ground-to-air missiles in guerrilla hands in advance of the C.H.G.M. in Lusaka. If the missiles could once be taken away from the guerrillas, it might prove possible to ensure that they did not receive any more. The Queen's visit to Zambia, and the Conference in Lusaka, were strong cards which should be used to put pressure on President Kaunda.

B. G. CARTLEDGE

J. S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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