

**SUBJECT**



**PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T135/79T**

*State House  
Lusaka, Republic of Zambia*

*for  
Mum  
12/11*

7th November, 1979.

*My Dear Margaret,*

Clearly the Conference is reaching a most delicate moment and I thought I should write to urge you not only to give but to be seen to give the parties adequate time to negotiate to reach reasonable compromises on points where differences still exist. This process is crucial whatever will be the final outcome of the talks and regardless of the seemingly long time the Conference has already taken and notwithstanding any important deadlines and pressures that you might have. Please, allow me, Margaret, to say what I know you know already that the situation is grave and it is far better to be late by one day but achieve a workable solution than to be too early by weeks but solve nothing.

As far as Zambia is concerned, my candid view is that we are in full agreement with your proposal for the constitution and will stand by you on this. But I have three really serious problems on your proposal for the pre-independence arrangements.

I am concerned that what you achieve for the people of Rhodesia on Independence Day is not destroyed by what you do for them in the interim period. You have done enough already to deserve an arrangement that can hold outright in Rhodesia. I know you can reach it and I am praying daily for you.

- (a) I know you can get a constitution for Rhodesia and you have already got it;
- (b) I know you can put together the interim arrangements and you are busy doing so now;

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The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister of United Kingdom of Great  
Britain and Northern Ireland,  
10 Downing Street,  
LONDON.



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- (c) I know you can get the ceasefire and you are fighting to get this shortly;
- (d) I know you can organise the power transfer election;
- (e) I know you are committed and determined to be fair in all the handling and management of these matters and I trust you.

But, please Margaret, be fair to yourself and give yourself for the transition

- (a) the time in which to undo and do these great things for Rhodesia;
- (b) the mechanism to contain honourably the inevitable public violence while you undo and do these great things for Rhodesia.

These two are my basic serious concerns and real worry in your proposal for the pre-independence arrangements. In my view it is in these two important regards that you are being so unfair to yourself and to your own great efforts. I have to be open and honest to you because I am convinced that you mean well, you are committed and honest in what you are doing to effect the vital change in Rhodesia.

It is, Margaret, not a logical position to take to assume that you can effect the necessary change in no time at all. And equally, it is not a logical position to take to assume that in effecting the necessary change in the present political situation in Rhodesia there will be no occurrence of public violence at all, no matter what promises you may get from anybody.

Everything you are engaging in at the moment is in fact to reduce and finally eliminate violence and war in Rhodesia but it would be naive and dangerous to your own cause and effort to proceed on a firm assumption that violence - not war - will be reduced in the twinkle of an eye to absolute zero in the transition. The practical thing is to prepare to cope with violence effectively even if it costs a little more time and money. In the end this will prove many times less costly than chaos.

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You need a ceasefire and you need an election in order to transfer power. I agree with you and support you to the fullest. But in terms of Party violence in elections in the situation in Rhodesia, ceasefire and election are conflicting processes. The people who will lay down their arms will not go to the barracks but will rush to their different leaders to organise their rival political parties. Therefore instead of these people meeting with guns on the battle field, they will meet one another in the political arena fighting with political programmes all over the country.

The Rhodesian policeman, like his close brother the soldier in Rhodesia, cannot be immune from this political process which will pervade the entire population. In fact in terms of the need to stand and fight, the Rhodesian policeman is indistinguishable from the Rhodesian soldier and both have received identical indoctrination. And there will be no time to re-orientate or debrief them sufficiently.

The police officer in charge of the station in the township and countryside and the constable out on beat will be in an impossible situation trying to decide impartially which one among political rivals sparked the trouble. For 15 years this same policeman has arrested as a matter of routine and duty members of some of the rival political parties and has been commended and perhaps decorated for this. And some of the most active political groups have been banned for many years.

In these circumstances while it may appear very practical it will not fail to detract on the Governor's position and impartiality if he relied entirely, except for a few British police advisors, on the existing one-sided police force for maintaining public order and managing the inevitable election factional strife and violence. The Governor here does need an additional mechanism for monitoring public order especially the turbulent election campaigns during which inevitably violence will erupt.

There is certainly a case here for an effective Commonwealth police auxilliary force which will not merely observe elections but police the election jointly with policemen from the existing regular establishment on the basis of either one for one or some formula giving adequate numbers. The Governor's Commonwealth

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auxilliary force for public order can be drawn from the seasoned police forces of the Commonwealth - white, African and other areas.

Before the Governor hands over power to the elected new administration there must be a reasonably neutral public police force upon which he can rely to lock up and guard the armouries throughout the country to ensure that there is no easy run on the guns by any section of the population after the announcement of the election results or when the going is not as good for anyone as was expected during the election campaign. This is a distinct possibility because there are deep divisions and far too many guns and ammunitions surrounding the whole process of the transition. Mere trust by all in the Governor and the responsibility of the British Government are not enough.

A little time spent in sorting out this aspect of the transition could mean the difference between final success and final wrecking of the entire effort of the Conference and the precipitation of a situation many times more complex and dangerous than the one we now face.

I would certainly appeal to you, Margaret, to consider most seriously the strengthening of the hand of the Governor in the neutral maintenance of public order. Otherwise I can see unmistakable threats from all sides.

This brings me to my second concern of time. I accept your proposal that two months of electioneering is ample. But I do not accept what appears to be your proposal that the two months of electioneering should be the limits of the transition. Until now I was under the mistaken impression that once ceasefire has been agreed and the Governor moves into Rhodesia, you were going to give him a minimum of two to three months for him

- (a) to settle in;
- (b) to ensure for himself on the spot that everything about the ceasefire can hold;
- (c) to debrief the services and create an actual atmosphere of a return to legality among the population and
- (d) for him to know the trouble spots and where they are in the country in order to understand and appreciate the volume of advice he will be getting from everywhere and to pass correct judgement and

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- (e) he and his senior officials will have certainly to visit a number of places;
- (f) he will have to acquaint himself with the problem and the process he has come to sort out. He cannot blindly plunge into the election.

Now I am being given the impression that you think all this can be done in a fortnight. It is crazy! The above points don't even include:

- (a) the movements of tens of thousands of Rhodesian refugees from neighbouring countries into Rhodesia to vote. It would be the poorest of strategy to have these vote where they are outside Rhodesia.
- (b) Thousands of these will be carrying arms and will have to disarm some where inside Rhodesia.
- (c) As much as possible weapons throughout the country will have to be secured otherwise the ceasefire will be meaningless.
- (d) Leaders of the Liberation Movement will have to sell the agreement and ceasefire to their commanders and field armies in the most inaccessible areas of the country and travel outside Rhodesia.
- (e) All units of the Rhodesian army will have to be debriefed.
- (f) So will the services and determination made which prisoners will be released, when and where.
- (g) These and other physical preparations of the population for election cannot be carried out instantly or in a matter of hours in the prevailing situation.

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On top of this you will have to add registration of voting adults even if there may be no delimitation of constituencies and the election is based on Party lists. If you do not register those eligible to vote you will find

- (a) thousands of people below voting age casting votes. How does one distinguish a person who is 17, 16 and even 15 from one who is 18 years old?
- (b) thousands of people from adjacent territories will pour into Rhodesia to vote. Don't forget there will be thousands of people returning home from neighbouring territories and it will be necessary to screen these.
- (c) from our experience you will find it difficult to stop thousands of people repeating voting many times in the same station and in different localities. Remember you are not dealing with Britain but with a country in a developing social and political situation. What is more there is a war on!

In my view, five to six months allowing three to four of these months for preparation is about the barest workable and worthwhile minimum for the entire process of the power transfer arrangement. Anything less than that is certain to create more problems than it is designed to solve.

I sincerely think, Margaret, you do have a chance to solve this problem of Rhodesia once and for all provided you do not allow anyone to stampede you into spoiling your own solution. As I see it this danger is real.

Please allow yourself to effect an arrangement that will bring peace to Rhodesia

- (a) during the period building up to the power transfer election;
- (b) during the transfer election itself;  
and
- (c) after the election and handover of power.

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The Governor you send to Rhodesia should be able to depart Rhodesia in peace and dignity because the final arrangement is able to hold. He should not be forced out of Rhodesia again.

Thirdly and finally, I consider equally important that political groups competing in the election should have equality of political status. This will not be the case if candidates of some parties will carry Government or official titles such as Prime Minister, Minister and so on, be housed, transported and paid salaries out of public funds. And certainly the personal safety of all candidates especially the leaders of Parties must be guaranteed. And the safety of leaders must be one of the responsibilities the Governor will hand over to the elected new administration.

I have written in this manner because I believe sincerely in what you are doing and I am ready to help in whatever way I can to see you through. I wanted you to see clearly why I think the way I do.

I wish you God's blessings and pray for you daily.

*A always,*

*Kenneth*

Kenneth D. Kaunda  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA