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FM SALISBURY 251030Z FEB 80

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 804 OF 25 FEBRUARY 1980

AND TO FLASH DAR ES SALAAM LUSAKA MAPUTO GABORONE LUANDA  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK LAGOS NAIROBI EEC POSTS  
CANBERRA WELLINGTON OTTAWA SUVA AND CAPE TOWN.

RHODESIA: POSSIBLE FRONT LINE MEETING

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT, NYERERE HAS CALLED A FRONT LINE MEETING TO DISCUSS RHODESIA IN DAR ES SALAAM TOMORROW. THIS WILL PRESUMABLY BE ANOTHER OF HIS ATTEMPTS (FOLLOWING THE ACTION INSPIRED BY HIM IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND AT THE OAU) TO INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENTS HERE IN THE DIRECTION OF MUGABE.

2. IT MAY BE USEFUL FOR HM REPRESENTATIVES, AS THEY THINK NECESSARY, TO SPEAK TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE FRONT LINE STATES ON THE FOLLOWING LINES:

A. WE ARE NOW TWO DAYS OFF THE ELECTIONS. THE VERY SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAVE ARISEN IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD HAVE, TO A LARGE EXTENT, BEEN OVERCOME. WE ARE REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HOLDING THE ELECTIONS IN PEACEFUL CONDITIONS AND IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ARE AS FREE AND FAIR AS CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR:

B. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS PERIOD. THERE HAS BEEN SOME COMING TOGETHER OF THE PARTIES PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED IN THE CONFLICT. WE ARE MAKING A START WITH THE PROCESS OF BRINGING ZIPRA AND ZANLA INTO A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RHODESIAN FORCES, THEREBY WE HOPE CREATING A BASIS FOR COOPERATION AFTER THE ELECTIONS:

C. (FOR GABORONE, LUSAKA AND, AS NECESSARY, LUANDA ONLY) NKOMO IN PARTICULAR HAS PLAYED A STATESMANLIKE ROLE. HE HAS IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS CONSTANTLY REITERATED THAT THE WAR IS OVER, THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION AND TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE. THIS HAS ALSO BEEN THE LINE OF RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY MUZOREWA (AND WALLS):

D. (AS NECESSARY)

WE HAVE EXPERIENCED SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN THIS PERIOD IN A NUMBER OF AREAS, INCLUDING THE WITHHOLDING OF LARGE NUMBERS OF ZANLA PERSONNEL FROM THE ASSEMBLY PLACES: THE CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR IN A CONSIDERABLE PART OF THE ZANLA-DOMINATED AREAS: AND SYSTEMATIC POLITICAL INTIMIDATION (TO TAKE BUT ONE RECENT INCIDENT, THIRTEEN PARTY WORKERS RECENTLY SENT BY NKOMO INTO THE MTOKO TTL, WHICH IS INFESTED BY ZANLA, HAVE SIMPLY DISAPPEARED). IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE FOR NKOMO OR OTHER PARTIES TO CAMPAIGN IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY.

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E. NEVERTHELESS, THERE HAS BEEN A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION IN THE LAST TWO TO THREE WEEKS. THIS MEANS THAT WE EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO HOLD THE ELECTIONS IN REASONABLY FAIR AND SECURE CONDITIONS. OUR OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION IS THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS MUST FAITHFULLY REFLECT THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.

F. THE CHOICE OF THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE IS OUT OF OUR HANDS (AND THOSE OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS) AND IS UP TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY. THEY WILL EXPRESS THEIR CHOICE. WE MUST AWAIT THE RESULTS. WHATEVER GOVERNMENT EMERGES MUST COMMAND THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY. IT IS EMPHATICALLY NOT THE BUSINESS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO SEEK TO INTERVENE.

3. IF YOU ARE ASKED ABOUT MY STATEMENT, IN REPLY TO A PRESS ENQUIRY YESTERDAY, THAT I WOULD NOT NECESSARILY CALL ON THE LARGEST PARTY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, YOU SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT I SHALL SEE THE LEADERS OF ALL THE MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES THAT EMERGE FROM THE ELECTIONS, AND IT WILL BE UP TO THEM TO DECIDE HOW (IF A COALITION IS NECESSARY) THEY MEAN TO COALESCE IN ORDER TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. OUR OWN HOPE OF COURSE IS THAT THE MOST STABLE POSSIBLE COALITION WILL BE FORMED. THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE THAT THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT REFLECTS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY. IT IS ALSO THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE AGAINST THE RENEWAL OF THE WAR. BUT IT WILL NOT BE MY BUSINESS TO DICTATE TO THE POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE NEWLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY.

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PS/MR HURD  
PS/MR MARTEN  
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SIR D MAITLAND

SIR A ACLAND  
LORD N G LENNOX  
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ADDITIONAL DIST  
RHODESIA POLICY

[PASSED AS REQUESTED]

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