

GPO 600

IDENTIAL

KBY 071800Z

FM LUSAKA 071530Z AUG 79

TO IMMEDIATE LAGOS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 006 OF 7 AUGUST

INFO IMMEDIATE FCO

YOUR TELNO 007: NIGERIA/RHODESIA/BP

1. PLEASE SEEK A MEETING WITH GENERAL OBASANJO TO DELIVER TO HIM THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER:

BEGINS:

"DEAR GENERAL OBASANJO,

I WAS SORRY NOT TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO MEET YOU HERE IN LUSAKA BUT I KNOW WHAT AN IMPORTANT PERIOD THIS IS FOR NIGERIA AS YOU REACH THE LAST STAGE IN YOUR ELECTIONS.

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE RESULT OF OUR DISCUSSIONS HERE IN LUSAKA, IN WHICH GENERAL ADEFOPE WAS CLOSELY INVOLVED. I BELIEVE THE STATEMENT WE WORKED OUT TOGETHER REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS CREATING CONDITIONS FOR A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT AND AN END TO THE FIGHTING. IT ALSO ESTABLISHES, WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH, A FRAMEWORK IN WHICH WE CAN WORK FOR THE ADOPTION OF A DEMOCRATIC INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION FOR RHODESIA.

WHEN WE CAME INTO OFFICE WE SAID THAT WE WOULD SEEK TO BRING RHODESIA TO LEGAL INDEPENDENCE ON THE BASIS OF THE WIDEST POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE ASKED LORD HARLECH TO GO TO AFRICA TO TALK TO ALL THOSE PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED. WE TOOK VERY CAREFUL ACCOUNT OF ALL THAT WAS SAID TO US, INCLUDING YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT'S VIEW ABOUT THE NEED FOR A CONSTITUTION, WITHOUT THE DEFECTS OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION, WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE RHODESIAN PEOPLE, AND UNDER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY WOULD BE FORMED.

I AM CONTENT WITH THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE TOGETHER IN LUSAKA AND HOPE THAT YOU ARE TOO. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE SEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AT WORK IN THIS WAY AND I FIND IT A VERY ENCOURAGING EXPERIENCE.

THE STATEMENT REFLECTS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN BRITAIN AS THE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR GRANTING LEGAL INDEPENDENCE TO ZIMBABWE ON THE BASIS OF MAJORITY RULE. I SHALL BE DISCUSSING THE NEXT STEPS WITH MY COLLEAGUES IN THE BRITISH CABINET ON MY RETURN TO LONDON. BUT YOU WILL SEE THAT WE ENVISAGE A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE TO WHICH ALL THE PARTIES WOULD BE INVITED. MANY SERIOUS ISSUES REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED, AND I HOPE WE CAN DRAW ON YOUR EXPERIENCE AND ADVICE, AND COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT, AS WE GET INTO MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I AM ASKING OUR HIGH COMMISSIONER TO DELIVER THIS MESSAGE TO YOU PERSONALLY SO THAT I CAN KNOW HOW YOU SEE THINGS IN THE LIGHT OF THE AGREEMENT WE HAVE REACHED HERE.

I AM ALSO ASKING OUR HIGH COMMISSIONER TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE NATIONALISATION OF BP'S ASSETS IN NIGERIA. I DO BELIEVE THAT THE ACTION YOU TOOK WAS BASED ON A MISUNDERSTANDING OF OUR POSITION. THE NEW BRITISH GOVERNMENT WANTS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND TO WORK WITH YOU IN THE SPIRIT OF TRUST WHICH HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN OUR DISCUSSIONS HERE DURING THE LAST WEEK.

YOURS SINCERELY,

Nigeria July 79

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T60/79T

OPS

6/21
7/12