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The Gambia High Commission,  
60 Ennismore Gardens,  
London SW7 1NH

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T143A/79T

14th November 1979

TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA TO THE BRITISH  
PRIME MINISTER

Dear Prime Minister,

I had the pleasure last Friday morning of receiving your High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr. Eric Norman Smith, when he delivered to me your message on the progress of the Rhodesia Conference.

Indeed, I have been following the deliberations of the Conference over the past nine weeks with keen interest and I wish to congratulate you and your Government for the effective and constructive manner in which the discussions have been conducted thus far. I have been particularly encouraged by the considerable amount of good will and spirit of compromise which have been displayed by all the parties participating in the Conference. It is thus my ardent wish and prayer that, at this crucial stage in the talks, everything possible should continue to be done to ensure that the Conference is brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It is for this reason that I am inclined to believe, with regard to the present contention over the preindependence interim arrangements, that all the parties would require an equal opportunity and adequate time to contest the elections. Thus, in my view and from my own experience, a period of two months does not seem sufficient time for the necessary preparation to be made by the parties within and outside Phodesia for fresh national elections; in addition some time will be needed for the effective realisation of a cease-fire.

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Therefore, while undertaking to appeal to the Leaders of the Patriotic Front to continue to co-operate with you in the spirit of the Lusaka declaration, especially on the issue of ultimate constitutional responsibility until Independence, I would also like to seize this opportunity to appeal to you and your Government, in view of the substantial progress that has been made so far, to consider extending the period of two months which it is proposed to allow the parties concerned to prepare for the elections. Mutual accommodation on this matter which is more of a practical administrative measure rather than one of principle would constitute a dynamic and constructive compromise.

We have come a long way since the Lusaka declaration which came about through the acceptance by all of us of the need for co-operation to bring this long standing Rhodesian problem to a speedy and positive conclusion. Indeed, the tenacity of purpose with which your Government has set about grappling with this extremely difficult and delicate matter since our meeting in Lusaka is highly commendable, and I feel that we must continue in the same spirit to endeavour to find amicable solutions to issues which might arise at this stage. I therefore hope and pray that in the next few days the Conference will come to a fruitful and definitive conclusion.

DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA.