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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 January 1980

Dear Mr. Paisley,

Your letter of 6 November, in which you enclosed a letter from the Reverend Arthur Lewis, unfortunately reached me only on 18 December.

Mr. Lewis's letter was written while the Lancaster House talks were in progress. I hope that now they are concluded and agreement signed, he may be less unhappy about the Government's approach. All the parties to the Conference have accepted an Independence Constitution which provides for genuine majority rule at the same time as safeguarding minority interests, and arrangements for the pre-independence period which will provide the conditions for free and fair elections in which all can compete on an equal basis; and have signed a ceasefire agreement. With Lord Soames' arrival as Governor, Rhodesia was restored to legality, and the international community is now following our lead in lifting sanctions. No one should pretend that the months ahead will be free of problems; it is bound to take time to repair the bitterness and suffering of recent years. But the framework agreed at Lancaster House provides the basis on which the peace and stability of the future Zimbabwe can be built.

To turn to some of Mr. Lewis's specific points, I do not accept that the Lancaster House agreements favour any of the parties. All the parties have undoubtedly made sacrifices and concessions. They have done so in good faith in order to end the war and to enable Rhodesia to take up its rightful place in the international community. The British Government's stated willingness to help, with other governments and international bodies, with a land development programme undertaken by the new independent

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government, does not pre-suppose a plan for nationalisation. Indeed, the Declaration of Rights in the Independence Constitution includes protection against compulsory acquisition of property, though there is a derogation allowing under-utilised land to be acquired for agricultural settlement, subject to the prompt payment of adequate compensation; and, if the acquisition is contested, a court order must be obtained. Lastly, Mr. Lewis will be aware that the Independence Constitution was accepted by the Zimbabwe Rhodesia Parliament, voting 90 in favour to none against, before the arrival of the Governor.

I hope that you will pass my comments on to Mr. Lewis.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Johnston
