



Robert G. S. G. M. F. K. S.

Confidential

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Dar Es Salaam

29 July 1979

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FOR THE PRIME MINISTER:

CHOGM DISCUSSIONS IN DAR ES SALAAM

I had two very useful discussions in Dar Es Salaam on 29 July with President Nyerere and with his Foreign Minister, Mr Ben Mkapa. I indicated to them both how important you saw the role of President Nyerere in setting the tone for the discussions on Rhodesia in CHOGM. I outlined to them the basis for the Australian position which was familiar to them, and left with Nyerere your most recent letter. I was encouraged by the moderation and clarity of his views, and I believe that he is genuinely determined to assist in finding an acceptable outcome at CHOGM and beyond. I told him that, while we saw no central role for ourselves, you are prepared to assist in what way you can. We agreed that the main interest will focus on the British attitude and we both agreed that the present trend of British thinking gave grounds for optimism.

Nyerere was aware that the British are unlikely to be laying down at Lusaka the full detail of their proposed constitutional changes and procedures post-CHOGM. In general terms he hoped there would be no differences of view at Lusaka; that the constitution needed to be changed, and that further elections would need to be held. These were the essential minimal requirements. Nyerere specifically said that in his presentation on the Friday in opening discussion of the Rhodesia issue, he would assume that the British meant well and he said "I will not raise my voice".

Tanzania had no particular problem with the reservation of Parliamentary seats for the white minority: what it could not accept was the reservation of power in the entrenched provisions of the present constitution. British preparedness to see the constitution changed to make it truly democratic, and to envisage the holding of free and fair elections under the new constitution, would be an acceptable basis for progress at CHOGM.

Nyerere said that he hoped that the British would come with actual proposals for constitutional change. However, if they did not do so he would still be content, provided they agreed that the problem was reservation of powers and they agreed to draft a constitution removing the problem.

Asked how he saw developments post-CHOGM, Nyerere said that his assessment was that the British would prepare a democratic constitution and that it would make known the terms of this constitution, inter alia, to himself as Chairman of the Front Line States. It would most probably then call constitutional talks as the legal authority to which it would invite representatives of Rhodesia, including the present Muzorewa "Government": as well as the Patriotic Front. Nyerere said that if the constitution, in fact, met the two basic prerequisites of being democratic and providing for fair elections, "I will play my role with the Patriotic Front. I will tell them to go and talk with the British". If they did not they would run the risk of being left out of the settlement. He jokingly said that in these circumstances he was not sure that he could "deliver" the Patriotic Front, but he would certainly try. He made it clear that in such circumstances the Front Line States would have no interest in further underwriting the war which was, after all, damaging to their own economies. He said he did not envisage any direct participation for the Front Line States in any constitutional conference. Provided the British "whispered" their intentions to him he would be satisfied and would assist.

In connection with a cease-fire by the Patriotic Front Nyerere said that if there was agreement on a constitution and all party talks, he would tell the Patriotic Front to end the war before going to the talks. The Patriotic Front might not agree, but they would, nonetheless, need to attend the talks. It should be possible to organise a cease-fire before, or shortly after, the talks started.

Nyerere acknowledged that even if there were agreement on the acceptability of a new constitution, serious practical problems would still remain to be solved. He did not comment on our question as to how the opposing military forces could either be fused or neutralised, although he had in mind that a settlement would involve the departure from Tanzania of Patriotic Front forces. Nyerere did not have any firm ideas as to how new elections could be easily conducted, taking as a starting point the fact that the existing Muzorewa/Smith regime had effective control in Salisbury. At this stage he has developed no firm ideas as to what form of supervision might be desirable, although it was clear from my discussion with Mkapa that the Tanzanians would see impartial international supervisors or even observers of the elections as acceptable. The Patriotic Front might well require more than this.

In commenting on these difficult practical issues, Nyerere remarked that saving face all round ought not be impossible, and if there was a common determination, the mechanics to solve them should not be beyond reach.

Nyerere commented that at Lusaka Commonwealth countries "would not be asking the British anything contrary to their beliefs". He was encouraged that Mrs Thatcher had strongly implied in Parliament last week that she was looking for a solution to the problem this year. He had, himself, exchanged letters with her recently and was aware of her qualities of determination. In response to a question as to whether he thought it was absolutely certain that Britain would not renew the sanctions in November, he replied that if circumstances should warrant a temporary extension while the package was being put into effect, he believed that Mrs Thatcher could put them through, notwithstanding her claim in Australia that this would not be possible. She was, after all, the British Prime Minister with a very large majority and, he assumed, effective whips.

Nyerere responded favourably to my message to him from you that the two of you meet early during the conference, and also to our suggestion that CHOGM be held in Australia in 1981.

My talk with Mkapa covered much the same ground, and was generally consistent with the President's thinking.

(Andrew Peacock)