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PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T 31/80

State House  
Lusaka, Republic of Zambia

15th February, 1980.

Dear Margaret,

On Thursday, February 7, 1980, your Acting High Commissioner delivered to me your message regarding the situation in Zimbabwe. First, I am glad that you wrote at the time you did as this gives me the opportunity to express my own concern about the problems which arose in the Anglo-Zambian relations. Naturally, we also want cordiality restored in our bilateral relations and co-operation. In this connection, I look forward to receiving your new High Commissioner with whom I hope my Government can work very closely and in an atmosphere of creative friendship.

While the relations between Governments were somewhat strained, the friendship between our two peoples remain very warm as evidenced by the mutual co-operation among Britons and Zambians here and in your country.

However, the most important determinant of our future relations remains the situation in Rhodesia. As you know, I followed the Lancaster House negotiations very closely and with keen interest. I told you of my misgivings. In this case, I particularly refer you to my letter of November, 1979 which preceded my visit to your country. I told you of what I believe to be your stupendous achievements in bringing the talks to where they were at the time. I knew of the great possibilities for success which existed but I also told you of my misgivings and the dangers that were evident. I indicated to you what I feared were conditions which would lead to unfair elections. A lot of what I said to you in our discussions and in my correspondence remains true today as it was when I communicated to you last year.

Let me assure you of my commitment to free and fair elections in Zimbabwe. You will recall that I told you we wanted peace before, during and after elections. That remains the position today. In this context, I told your Acting High Commissioner in a brief response to your message that I am against intimidation from any quarter - and I mean from any quarter regardless of who is involved.

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The Right Honourable Mrs. Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,  
No. 10 Downing Street,  
LONDON.



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I must hasten to state that what is happening in Rhodesia today was forecast by us in my correspondence to you and in the many discussions between our two Governments at various levels. The Lancaster House Agreement is basically a workable document but the spirit is not conducive for its implementation. This is the source of many problems we face today.

On the 10th of January, 1980, Frontline Leaders met in Beira. As President Nyerere informed you in his letter dated January 12, we reviewed the situation in Rhodesia. We expressed our deep concern at the turn of events and at the violations of the Lancaster House Agreement. I need not repeat the catalogue of violations by the British authorities in Rhodesia. It needed international pressure to get the South African forces from the Rhodesian side of Beit Bridge. But to date, not all South African forces have left the Rhodesian soil. We know that some of the South African troops who were, for example, in the Chiredzi area, South East of Rhodesia, have been moved to a number of locations near the Zambian border. According to our information, some of the locations include the Victoria Falls, Binga, Bumi, Makuti, Mana Pools, and Kanyemba. There were some South African forces at Melsetter. Some of these have been deployed along the Mozambique border. We also know that South Africans are training a group of Zambian dissidents in one area of Rhodesia. All this is a violation of the Lancaster House Agreement. All South African troops must be withdrawn from Rhodesia.

The Muzorewa Auxiliaries known by different names must be confined to Bases as provided under the Lancaster House Agreement. These remain at large despite protestations from the Patriotic Front and Frontline countries. To date, the Muzorewa Auxiliaries, like Rhodesian forces are free to move around in what were operational areas of the Patriotic Front where they could not venture before the ceasefire.

They are largely responsible for intimidation which is growing to alarming proportions. It is unfair to blame ZANLA and ZIPRA alone. So far the only action the Governor has taken is an appeal to them to "behave". He has not directed that they be confined to Base.

The Rhodesian forces must be confined to their Bases as provided under the Lancaster House Agreement. They were not withdrawn, instead they were deployed in what were operational areas of the Patriotic Front from which the Patriotic Front forces withdrew in good faith and in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement. They are a State unto themselves. This is a violation of the Agreement.

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You will recall that your Government had estimated the number of Patriotic Front forces to be around 16,000. Assembly Points were set up to accommodate that number. The Patriotic Front indicated that they had a larger number than that. In response, it was agreed that the Governor would create new Assembly Points as more Patriotic Front forces emerged in excess of the British estimated figure. The Patriotic Front underlined that they would need a longer period in which to bring the ceasefire into effect than was proposed by the British. Soon after 4th January, 1980 the Patriotic Front forces, still streaming to Assembly Points after receiving their marching orders, the Rhodesian forces were directed to act against them. This was grossly unfair and it was correct for the Patriotic Front to condemn such actions including killings in cold blood.

We are also informed that it is intended to call up the Territorials. This is another act of deliberate provocation by the Rhodesian authorities. The Territorials are anti-Patriotic Front like the Rhodesian troops and the Police. Why call them when intimidation by the Rhodesian troops is rife? This call up must be stopped.

Let me turn specifically to intimidation. I have no doubt that there is an element of truth in some of the stories of intimidation by the Patriotic Front forces but it is a fact that the Rhodesian troops and the Muzorewa-Smith Auxiliaries are responsible for widespread acts of intimidation particularly in areas which had been occupied by the Patriotic Front forces and from which these forces withdrew to Assembly Points in good faith. Commonwealth observers have drawn the Governor's attention to this phenomenon. While you receive information regarding the activities of the Patriotic Front, we also receive information from the representatives of the millions of the blacks who are being intimidated. We are also in contact with Commonwealth Observers. I know that the stories they tell would be horrifying to a mother like you.

In many ways, some of the actions of Governor Soames are based on wrong information and advice by the Rhodesian Intelligence which naturally supports the Rhodesian authorities as against the British authorities. And this is a major source of all the problems in Zimbabwe. During the Lancaster House negotiations, the Patriotic Front supported by us tried to impress upon the British Government on the need to have one authority and one Government. This was rejected. Today, the Governor on paper appears to have a lot of power. But in the day to day running of the country, he has no executive powers at all on the ground. Power in the practice of everyday life is in the hands of the system Ian Smith used to sustain the rebellion. In effect, there is not one authority in Rhodesia.



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There are two. There is British authority and the Rhodesian authority. And clearly, the Rhodesian is the most powerful than Lord Soames' authority in running that country. This is an indisputable fact which resulted in conflicts and violations of the Lancaster House Agreement which we have the misfortune of experiencing. The Governor has virtually no control on General Walls. I urge you to correct this situation. It is dangerous.

Another danger to free and fair elections arises from powers assumed by the Governor to ban individuals and Parties from election campaigns and now even to disenfranchise whole electoral Districts. I can assure you that these powers are a recipe for your failure. No fair minded Observer can reach a conclusion that elections are free and fair if voters are disenfranchised, Parties banned from campaigning while Rhodesian forces and auxiliaries are left to intimidate voters at will when they should be confined to Base. Enough conditions exist for declaring the elections as not free and fair. The Governor should not add more.

Much has been achieved but much more could have been achieved if Rhodesians were not engaging in flagrant violations of the Lancaster House Agreement, without risk of being banned from elections as the Patriotic Front often are.

We did forecast election violations and that is why we advocated a United Nations Peace-Keeping Force or alternatively a Commonwealth Peace-Keeping Force. This was in order to prevent the use of racist troops from South Africa and the deployment of Rhodesian troops who naturally consider the Patriotic Front and their supporters enemies.

Margaret, I want to assure you that I know that the situation in Rhodesia is dangerous. I know that unless your Government is careful the situation will deteriorate in the next ten days and all what you tried to achieve will turn into failure and we will be back to square one. In the context of East-West relations, which are of great concern to you, this will certainly be a threat to international peace and security. But for us, we can only say that we told you. We tendered advice that we thought was the best for a peaceful, stable, prosperous and non-racial Zimbabwe. We stand by that today. We also pledged that we will accept the outcome of a free and fair election regardless of who is the victor. We stand by that pledge today. Against the background of this pledge, I sincerely hope that the Governor will be as impartial as we have shown ourselves to be. The British Government must also ensure that the Rhodesian authorities and South Africa accept the outcome.

You stated in your message that the elections cannot be fought in New York or Addis Ababa, that they have to be won with votes freely cast at polling stations in Rhodesia itself. We accept this. But let me tell you at the same time that the Rhodesian authorities have not shown themselves prepared to accept this commitment.



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Ever since Zimbabwean refugees started returning to Rhodesia we have received horrifying tales of inhuman treatment of refugees by Rhodesian authorities. So horrifying are the stories of harrassment and killings that at one stage, we almost decided to cancel the programme of returning refugees to a slaughter house. Refugees are not being sent to Rhodesia to become detainees or prisoners. There is no propoganda about this nor about violations of the Lancaster House Agreement. This is true and we hope that our frank advice will not be ignored as before. If you ignore our advice, you do so at your peril. If I did not know what was happening on the ground in Zimbabwe, I would not have recorded my feelings as frankly as I have.

Finally, let me tell you that you are on the threshold of success but between the mosel and the teeth there are still great dangers. Unless you and Governor Soames, backed by a genuine commitment to impartial free and fair elections, can eliminate the increasing dangers, we are heading for disaster in Rhodesia. We want peace and a stable and prosperous Zimbabwe. In this context, we will support any realistic measures to achieve the desired goal.

Please let us stay in close touch. Peace in Zimbabwe is too close for us to turn away from it.

With God's blessings.

*As always,*

*Kenneth*

Kenneth D. Kaunda  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA