



10 DOWNING STREET

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Subject file  
Nigeria - Call by  
Mr Sule - Nov 79

From the Private Secretary

14 November 1979

Call by Mr. Sule

As you know, the special representative of the President of Nigeria, Mr. Sule, called on the Prime Minister this afternoon. The letter he bore, of which I enclose a copy, was, as in the case of Mr. Nguza, simply a letter of introduction. The Prime Minister handed over the signed copy of the draft enclosed with George Walden's letter to me of 13 November.

I do not think there is any need to record the conversation between Mr. Sule and the Prime Minister: it has in any case largely been overtaken by events. The Prime Minister told Mr. Sule where matters stood, Mr. Sule told the Prime Minister about the immense importance of a successful outcome to the Conference and of his determination to do everything he could to bring the parties together.

It may, however, be worth noting that Mr. Sule laid a great deal of stress on relations between Nigeria and Great Britain and upon the potential significance for them of a breakdown in the Rhodesia talks. He said that Britain was a country that the Nigerians held particularly dear. Moreover, the two countries had many mutual interests. It was essential that the outcome of the Lancaster House Conference should not tarnish Britain's reputation. There was a danger that failure of the Conference would affect Britain's relations with Nigeria. This would be against the wishes of the Nigerian Government but might be inevitable. Therefore the Conference must not fail. Mr. Sule made it clear that for Nigerian purposes, an agreement with one party to the Conference would constitute a failure. There must be no bilateral deal.

As I was taking Mr. Sule to the door, I told him of the critical point reached in the Conference and of the fact that developments this evening were likely to be crucial. Mr. Sule said that he hoped there was no question of HMG issuing an ultimatum. I said that HMG, of course, did not issue ultimata in negotiations of this kind. Mr. Sule said that he was glad to hear this. He then volunteered that he would try to see the Patriotic Front this evening to urge them to be reasonable.

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