



Original in GTR. JFA

Rhodesia F20
CWO
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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

28 August 1979

Dear Nicholas.

Thank you very much for your letter of 15 August. I was sorry to read of your concern over the agreement reached at the recent Commonwealth Conference at Lusaka.

I know that you have followed the Rhodesian problem carefully for several years, and I hope that on further study of what was achieved in Lusaka you will, like Bishop Muzorewa, have come to a less critical view. For there has been no basic change in our position. The Government remain committed to bringing Rhodesia to legal independence as soon as possible. But as we said in our manifesto and have made clear all along, we must do all we can to ensure that Rhodesia gains wide acceptance in the international community. One theoretical possibility would have been to grant independence to Bishop Muzorewa as soon as we took office. We came to the conclusion that this would not be the best course either for Britain or for Rhodesia, and I am sure, looking back, that we were right. Such action would not have gained international acceptance for Rhodesia, since it was clear that all our friends and allies took a different view. Nor would it have stopped the war - indeed fighting might have intensified.

Now, as a result of the agreement reached at Lusaka, we are working in a different context. We have the unanimous support of the Commonwealth for the British Government's efforts to bring Rhodesia to legal independence. We also have the acceptance of all Commonwealth countries, including three of the Front Line States (without whose support the Patriotic Front would be virtually incapable of continuing the struggle), that it must be a major objective to bring about a cessation of hostilities and an end to sanctions.

/Of course

Of course I have no illusions about the difficulties which lie ahead. The Constitutional Conference which we have called for 10 September will not be easy. But we are determined that no one party shall have the right to operate a veto.

As you will understand, I have thought very deeply about the right way to carry through our responsibility to Rhodesia. There is always room for differing views about tactics. But you will, I am sure, accept that neither I nor my colleagues have any intention of departing from the objective on which we were all agreed before and during the election. We have started our effort to secure a stable and democratic future for Rhodesia, and do not intend to be deterred from it.

You know - I am very concerned when I receive a critical letter from you although I am the first person to understand why. Please - could you understand my reasons?

Yours ever

Nicholas Winterton, Esq., MP.

Margaret

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