

SUBJECT

T84/79T

① F.C.D.

THE STATE HOUSE,
DAR ES SALAAM,
TANZANIA.

PRIME MINISTER'S *Reply sent*

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T84/79T ② *fg*

24th August, 1979.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

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Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Thank you for your letter and its enclosures. I was very glad to receive these documents when I returned to Dar es Salaam on Tuesday, 21st August.

First let me say that your Outline Proposals for a Rhodesian Constitution seem to me to be fully in line with the Lusaka Agreement.

There are however three points I would like to make now that I have considered the documents you sent to me. The first is on a detail in your Outline. I notice that you envisage the White Members of the Rhodesian Parliament being elected only by White citizens. I understand that idea, and I am sure it is what Ian Smith would like. But I think it would be a mistake from the point of view of the Minority Community itself, especially in the long run. The original Tanganyikan practice was that candidates for the European seats had to be Europeans, nominated by European citizens from that constituency, but the whole multi-racial electorate took part in the choice between those Europeans who had been nominated. This system had two important advantages. First, it meant that the European candidates had to consider the interests and ideas of the African voters as well as the European voters, and in particular avoid provocative racial statements. Secondly, the African voters were forced to consider European candidates as potential political allies, rather than as people automatically hostile to themselves. The system thus broke down racial stereotypes and assisted the political integration of the two communities. I believe it is an important result of having started with this system that we in Tanzania now have several Non-Africans who were originally elected to the Reserved Seats but who now get elected to Parliament on their own merits in competition with African candidates in their constituency.

Let me now turn to more basic points, which seem to me to be crucial to the success of this new initiative on Rhodesia.

I believe it is vital that Britain should not go to the Constitutional Conference as a 'neutral', arbitrating between contending groups. Britain, under the leadership of Lord Carrington as Chairman, should attend and act at the Conference as the de-colonising power it is. It should show itself anxious to get as much agreement as possible from all those involved, and willing to compromise on details, but as determined to transfer power to people elected under a constitution which Britain can defend as a democratic document and which the Commonwealth and the rest of the world will recognise as such. If Britain attends the Conference as an arbitrator only, the Rhodesians will argue interminably and soon start trying to make the other party - or Britain itself - appear as the one responsible for that break-up of the Conference which they themselves desire. I cannot stress too strongly the importance which I believe this matter to have for the success of the Conference.

My second point follows on from that. In Lusaka we stated that free and fair elections would be "properly supervised under British Government authority, and with Commonwealth observers". The worry which remains in my mind - and I believe you would rather that I was completely frank with you on these important matters - is whether your Government will be able - politically and in other ways - to get itself into the position where it really does have sufficient authority and power on the ground to carry out this function to the full. I noticed that you reserved the right to make the interim arrangements, and I am not questioning that; how you get authority and exercise it is - I fully accept - your affair. But the actual existence of your authority in Rhodesia is crucial to the implementation of a democratic constitution there and to our ability to help in getting these arrangements accepted by the Patriotic Front and Africa. I can argue for Britain's authority and impartiality between the Parties fighting the election. I cannot argue for authority wielded in practice by those who are now running Rhodesia - any more than you could do if it were wielded by the Patriotic Front.

I do realise that in raising this point I am discussing the 'interim' before the constitution is settled, whereas your strategy is to deal with one step at a time. But I do so because getting agreement on the constitution - which will

itself greatly ease the interim arrangements - will be affected by the emphasis and importance Britain gives to satisfying everyone that it really intends to exercise authority during the elections and the run-up to them. It is really a chicken and egg situation.

I suppose that both my major points amount to the same thing: that Britain has to play the leading role in this agreed process of de-colonising Rhodesia on a democratic basis. I do not believe that is an easy thing for a British Government to do in the political and economic circumstances of the 1970s - I have already seen reports that newspaper editors etc. are calling upon your Government to be 'neutrals' at the Conference! And I do recognise the special difficulty of Britain assuming authority in Rhodesia, where it has never exercised it on the ground. But I am convinced that the obvious existence of British authority during the interim, and at the Conference, is the only way to success.

This letter comes to you with my very warm personal greetings. I hope it will be possible for us to meet in the not too distant future.

Yours sincerely,

Julius K. Nyerere