

Rhodesia (Sit<sup>h</sup>)

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Subject copy filed on  
Singapore (May 79) 'Visit of  
Lee Kuan Yew'



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 June 1979

Dear Sir,

The Prime Minister's Discussion with the  
Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew,  
at 10 Downing Street on 20 June 1979

The Prime Minister's tête-à-tête discussion with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew this morning, which I have recorded in separate letters, was followed by a working lunch at which the other senior members of Mr. Lee's party, as well as the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Trade, Mr. Peter Blaker and our High Commissioner in Singapore, were present. During lunch, there was a discussion of the Rhodesia problem and, in particular, of its likely impact on the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting at Lusaka. The following is a summary of the main points that arose.

The Prime Minister told Mr. Lee that there could be no question of renewing United Kingdom sanctions against Rhodesia in November; it would simply not be possible to secure Parliamentary approval for this. It was clear that the discussions on Rhodesia at Lusaka would be very difficult. Mr. Lee suggested that the Prime Minister might study the "Shanghai Communique" as a classic example of how two irreconcilable views could be expressed and endorsed within a single document. Mr. Lee said that in his view it was essential that Bishop Muzorewa should invite the leaders of the Patriotic Front to meet him in Salisbury, in order to involve them in the democratic process of creating the new Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. If the Bishop could be persuaded to take this initiative, it was quite possible that Joshua Nkomo would be tempted to accept.

The Prime Minister stressed that the April elections had created a new situation, which offered the prospect of a settlement which could bring immense benefit, not only to Rhodesia, but to Zambia and the other countries of the region. Bishop Muzorewa was now genuinely in charge in Salisbury: but he was so far concentrating on his external relations and had not moved fast enough in promoting internal change. The Prime Minister said that she recognised that some amendments to the Constitution might be needed: but the white

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Members of Parliament could operate a blocking mechanism and if any attempt were made to bypass it they might leave the country, thereby precipitating economic collapse. It was essential to give Bishop Muzorewa support, in order to encourage Sithole to cleave to him: if the Bishop seemed to be faltering, Sithole would split away and fulfil the most pessimistic forecasts of the whites. Mr. Lee repeated that Bishop Muzorewa should make it clear that he was ready to discuss the Constitution with the Patriotic Front, in return for an undertaking on their part to suspend terrorist activity.

Mr. Hennings suggested that a possible amendment to the Constitution might be an arrangement whereby the eight white Members of Parliament who were at present nominated by the other twenty members of the white caucus should, instead, be nominated by Parliament as a whole.

Mr. Lee made it clear that he, and some other Heads of Government who thought like him, were seeking some good reason for changing the position into which, as he put it, they had been corralled by Andrew Young and Dr. David Owen. If they were to turn through 180°, there had to be some development that would give them an excuse to do so. If the Patriotic Front were encouraged to believe they could win on their own, they would be unreceptive to any proposals which might be put to them: if they were uncertain of their prospects of winning unaided, however, the Patriotic Front might split through a change of position on the part of Nkomo. This, said Mr. Lee, would give Heads of Government like himself a good reason for changing their own stance. The Patriotic Front knew very well that no Commonwealth Government wanted a Marxist Rhodesia.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Martin Vile in the Cabinet Office.

*Yours ever,  
Bryan Cardew.*

Stephen Wall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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