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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 August 1979

Dear Sir,

RHODESIA AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Sir Anthony Parsons called on the Prime Minister this morning for a short discussion before leaving to take up his new appointment as UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

The Prime Minister said that she was concerned about the possibility that unhelpful statements on Rhodesia might emerge from the forthcoming conference of the Non-Aligned in Havana next month. She said that everything possible should be done to ensure that the Commonwealth participants in the Non-Aligned conference stuck to their commitment to the Rhodesia section of the Lusaka communique. In particular, the Prime Minister would like the maximum advantage to be taken of such leverage as our aid programmes towards those Commonwealth countries may give us in keeping them in line. As you know, the Prime Minister has already asked that the new £10 million grant aid to Zambia for agricultural development should be kept up our sleeve for the time being: she would like the same tactic to be adopted so far as any other impending aid agreements with Non-Aligned Commonwealth members are concerned.

Sir Anthony Parsons told the Prime Minister of his views on how the issue of sanctions against Rhodesia should be handled in the Security Council if a constitutional conference were to produce proposals acceptable to all the parties, except the Patriotic Front, and to "reasonable Governments" in general. Sir Anthony Parsons said that his recommendation would be that the UK should address a letter to the Secretary General of the UN, or to the President of the Security Council, stressing the UK's status as the power responsible for ending the state of rebellion in Rhodesia and setting out the steps by which the UK had brought or proposed to bring Rhodesia to legal independence. Depending on the stage reached at the time of sending the letter (and in particular on whether elections had been held or were still in the stage of preparation), it would set out the grounds for the UK's view that the rebellion in Rhodesia was at an end: and would go on to state flatly that, in this situation, the UN resolutions on mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia had fallen away. The letter would not call for any reply. The onus would then be on the UK's adversaries in the UN Council (Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and possibly China) to launch a counter-attack against the UK's statement of the position.

Sir Anthony Parsons said that when the counter-attack had been launched, it would be open to the UK to veto a resolution reaffirming sanctions. Much the better course, however, would be to bring about a situation in which such a resolution failed to attract a requisite number of votes in the Council. The UK could, if the

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proposed constitutional arrangements were reasonable and defensible, count on the abstentions of the five Western members of the Council. Two more would be needed: these should be available from among Kuwait, Bolivia (to whom a new offer of UK aid was in the pipeline) Gabon, Jamaica, Bangladesh or Zambia itself. Sir Anthony Parsons said that, on this basis, there should be a fair chance of ensuring that the Security Council was unable to demonstrate its capacity to reaffirm the resolutions on sanctions.

On the question of the form of a Rhodesia settlement, Sir Anthony Parsons expressed the view that transitional periods should be kept to an absolute minimum (eg 24 hours if practicable). The Prime Minister agreed and said, with reference to the FCO paper on the preparation of new elections in Rhodesia which she had read on her way back from Lusaka, that the period of 3 months envisaged in the paper for the preparation of elections was much too long and that some means would have to be found of completing all the preparations within one month.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Byron Cook

J.S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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