

CONFIDENTIAL

MasterSet
cc: Master Set
Zambia, May '79, Zambia (UK) Relation

NOTE OF A TALK BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. MARK CHONA AT
10 DOWNING STREET AT 0900 ON THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

Present:

Prime Minister

Mr. Mark Chona

Mr. Michael Alexander

H.E. Miss L.P. Chibesakunda

* * * * *

Mr. Chona said that he had come to deliver a personal message to the Prime Minister from President Kaunda. President Kaunda had been much encouraged by the speech that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary had just delivered to the General Assembly. The passage on the Middle East had given President Kaunda renewed confidence in the co-operation between the United Kingdom and Zambia. Lord Carrington's references to the Palestinian problem had shown that the Conservative Party were facing up to the realities of the problem. This gave grounds for hoping that they would do the same on Zimbabwe.

Mr. Chona said that President Kaunda was greatly encouraged by the progress that had so far been made at the Constitutional Conference. Problems remained but none had come so close as the Prime Minister to achieving a solution. There was a combination of forces in favour of a peaceful outcome. The Patriotic Front recognised this and would never, in President Kaunda's view, walk out of the Conference whatever anyone else might do. President Kaunda was sure that agreement on the constitution was now within reach. He hoped that the Prime Minister would now be prepared to face the problems of the transitional period.

There was now a consensus that a transitional period was necessary. There were of course different interpretations of this: Bishop Muzorewa thought that his regime should remain in charge while the Patriotic Front were seeking a new arrangement. President Kaunda was also aware of the differing views about the length of the transitional period. In his view the requirement was that the period should be long enough to allow for the creation of an environment in which a genuinely democratic process could take place. It must be long enough to allow for the registration of voters, the

/ delimitation

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

delimitation of constituencies and the organised return of refugees i.e. women, children and unarmed men. But the transitional period should not be so long as to risk the creation of new complications before an election was held.

President Kaunda considered that in the transitional period Britain's constitutional responsibility should be established in a way that would be unquestioned and that would permit Britain's responsibilities to be discharged without risk of failure. Success was within reach and must not be thrown away. In Angola, the Portuguese had failed to put in place machinery for the administration of the peace process. The Portuguese had turned their back on the country and left the various parties to fight it out. This must not be allowed to happen in Zimbabwe. President Kaunda accepted that both General Walls and the guerilla leaders were sincere, but he did not think too much reliance should be placed on their good will. Britain's reluctance to accept the concept of an international force in Zimbabwe was understandable, but President Kaunda wondered whether the Prime Minister should not re-examine the concept to establish whether such a force could not help Britain discharge her responsibility for separating the forces. (Mr. Chona stressed at this point that President Kaunda's confidence in the Prime Minister was complete. But he considered that Britain would need all the backing she could get in the transitional period.)

According to President Kaunda, the Patriotic Front accepted that the armies involved in the Zimbabwe conflict would not be disbanded before independence. The creation of a unified army would be a matter for the elected government of Zimbabwe. The regular forces of the Salisbury regime would remain in being as would the main forces of the guerillas outside Zimbabwe in Mozambique and Zambia. The only forces, in the view of the Patriotic Front, which would be disbanded would be the Selous Scouts and some of the auxiliary forces which had been established recently in Zimbabwe. (Mr. Chona seemed to suggest at one point that some of the guerilla forces within Zimbabwe would also be disarmed.) These units were a threat to the electoral process. There were good precedents e.g. when Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania had become independent, for keeping trained guerillas outside the country at the time of the first election.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ The Patriotic Front

The Patriotic Front were keen to avoid a huge undisciplined influx of their people into Zimbabwe during the transitional period. They wished to see a programme for the return of the guerillas and their integration into the regular forces worked out after an elected government had taken power. They did not see the continuance in being part of the regular army, controlled by General Walls, during the transitional period, as a problem.

Mr. Chona said that President Kaunda was confident, provided Britain did not turn her back on Zimbabwe and provided there was some form of machinery to supervise the separation of forces, that the transitional period could be managed. Given that the registration of voters and the delimitation of constituencies was carried out in a way acceptable to the parties involved, the results of the election would be accepted. The most difficult problem was that related to the psychology of the white population in Zimbabwe. If they could be brought to accept that a victory for the Patriotic Front in a fair election would be a challenge for them rather than a disaster most of the other problems would disappear. Mr. Nkomo and Mr. Mugabe both wanted the whites to stay. They had both, after all, received much support from white governments such as those in Scandinavia and the Soviet Union. They recognised that the Rhodesia Front did not speak for all the whites. It was for this reason that they had been prepared to accept entrenched seats. (In this connection Mr. Chona asked whether something could be done to discourage the Daily Telegraph and other newspapers from publishing editorials such as that which had appeared in the Daily Telegraph that morning. The Prime Minister said that there was nothing that she could do.)

Mr. Chona asked whether there was any message he could send back to President Kaunda about the Prime Minister's view on the course of the Constitutional Conference. The Prime Minister said that the Conference was going steadily forward. Bearing in mind the Lusaka agreement, she was inclined to think that progress was a little slow but the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary did not altogether agree. Mr. Chona said that he thought the present rate of progress was about right. The bargaining between the parties had gone better than anyone could have expected. He said that President Kaunda was anxious about

/ what would

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

what would happen if Bishop Muzorewa were to walk out. The Prime Minister said that she did not think that, provided progress continued to be made anyone, would walk out. Mr. Chona agreed.

The discussion ended at 0940.

AmB

27 September 1979

CONFIDENTIAL