

MR. SANDERS

cc BGC
H James



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10 DOWNING STREET

9th August 1979

p. 4.

Dear Tubian,

You came to see me on the 24th of last month to talk about Rhodesia, and I wanted to let you know about developments since then, particularly at the Conference in Lusaka, from which Peter Carrington and I returned yesterday.

You will remember that, in our Manifesto, we said that our Government would have a duty to "do its utmost to ensure that the new independent State gains international recognition".

With that objective in mind, we held discussions earlier in the summer, with the United States Government and with our partners in the Community; we also sent David Harlech and Richard Luce to Africa, where, between them, they saw the leaders of twelve African states; soundings were also taken by our High Commissions and Embassies.

These extensive consultations showed that if we were to confer legality on the present Rhodesian Government, with its existing Constitution, we would, almost certainly, have been the only country that would have recognised the new independent State. That would not have fulfilled the objective set out in our Manifesto.

But there has been another equally serious objection. To confer legal independence on the Bishop's government, but then to find that no other countries would join us in recognising that government would have been of little, if any, real benefit to Rhodesia. It would have done nothing to stop the war. The killing and the destruction would have gone on. The white exodus would have continued. The economic prospects for Rhodesia would have remained bleak. For all our consultations had shown that neither the United States nor any European country - let alone any African country (with the possible exception of the Republic) would have gone along with us.

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That is why I said in the House on the 25th of last month that the Government had decided to try another way of achieving our objective of international recognition for an independent Rhodesia.

It is a way that we believe will be better for Rhodesia in the long run, because if our plan is successful, we will be able to bring other countries with us in accepting Rhodesia as a member of the international community. Once that acceptance has been achieved, there will be a better possibility of ending the war. Without that acceptance the war will go on.

As you know, I listened to your speech in the House on 25th July and have since read it in Hansard. You quoted Alec Home. No doubt you will have seen his article in the Sunday Express on 22nd July when he wrote:- "It would help Rhodesia in the future if she could obtain the maximum recognition internationally. This could involve changes in the Constitution as it at present stands." You also expressed the hope that I should emerge from Lusaka without having my hands tied in advance. I enclose the text of the nine points in the communique about Rhodesia. You will see that the Conference accepted that it was the responsibility of the British Government to grant legal independence to Rhodesia; that it was for the British Government to call the Constitutional Conference (as to which there are no pre-conditions); and that the elections to be held under the new Constitution should be supervised by the British Government, although with Commonwealth observers.

It will also be for the British Government alone to put forward those proposals on the Constitutional arrangements to achieve a proper basis for legal independence to which I referred in the House during the Rhodesia debate last month.

We were and we are determined that this is Britain's responsibility. There is no question at all of our hands having been tied in Lusaka. It is, however, a most significant achievement to have secured the support

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of every member of the Commonwealth for the British plan.

I know how deep is your concern - and I hope that you realise how deep is mine - for the wellbeing of Rhodesia. You would have preferred unilateral recognition by the British Government. I understand and respect that point of view. But I believe that it is the better course to try to secure international recognition, in the way that I have described and by making some changes to the present Constitution.

I believe that the better chance of securing international recognition for Rhodesia, of ending the war and of restoring peace and prosperity, lies in the Conference that we have proposed and to which invitations will be sent out very shortly.

I am under no illusion as to the difficulties which the Conference will have to face. But there is now the possibility - I put it no higher than that - that under a changed constitution, Rhodesia will gain international recognition, that the war will be stopped - or at any rate will de-escalate; that the white exodus will diminish; and that peace and progress may be restored.

I understand that you are seeing Ian Gow next week and I have asked him to report your views fully to me. If you would like to come to see me when I get back from Scotland, do please let Ian know.

Yours ever

Rogers

The Rt Hon Julian Amery MP