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Subject filed on
Jamaica: June 79: Visit
by Michael Manley.

RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRIME
MINISTER OF JAMAICA, MR. MICHAEL MANLEY, ON 29 OCTOBER AT
2200 HOURS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Present

The Prime Minister

Mr. Michael Manley

The Foreign and Commonwealth
Secretary

Mr. M. O'D. B. Alexander

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After some discussion of Premier Hua's visit, Mr. Manley asked about progress at Lancaster House. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary described recent developments. The counter-proposal for the pre-Independence arrangements put in by the Patriotic Front contradicted the philosophy which had underlain HMG's approach to the problem ever since Lusaka. At Lusaka HMG had been urged to assume responsibility for the problem. Their decision to accept that responsibility had been courageous. The Constitution which had been negotiated was a very reasonable one: in agreeing to it both Bishop Muzorewa and the Patriotic Front had moved a long way from their earlier positions. Britain's interim proposals would, in effect, give the Governor power to do what he liked. Acceptance of the proposals would, again, take both sides on to new ground. The Bishop would have to agree to an Executive Governor in Rhodesia. There had never been an Executive Governor in Rhodesia before. The Patriotic Front would have to accept that a British Governor would be fair and neutral.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary stressed that it had been extremely difficult to bring Bishop Muzorewa as far as he had come. After all, he had been elected by 64 per cent of the people of Rhodesia and had, as a result, a genuine democratic right to be where he was. He was now being asked to surrender power to a Governor. It was not easy for the

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Bishop and would not be easy for Mr. Manley in similar circumstances. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that Mr. Manley, President Kaunda, President Nyerere and others seemed to have difficulty in accepting that Britain was negotiating with two sides. The Lancaster House Conference was not a case of HMG versus the Patriotic Front. A group of people who were in charge of the country and had been elected to their office were also involved. The Bishop had in fact accepted the Constitution and the pre-Independence proposals. This was a considerable achievement. Mr. Manley agreed.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the task now was to persuade the Patriotic Front to accept the pre-Independence proposals. At present things were not going too well. But the appointment of a Governor was the only way to make people believe that the settlement was fair. No-one would accept as fair a situation in which Bishop Muzorewa was left in charge. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he accepted there was a sense in which the appointment of a Governor was unfair to both sides. But people would have to trust Britain. The Prime Minister said that the negotiations had made a great deal of progress. The gains must not now be allowed to slip away. Mr. Manley and President Kaunda had been right to say that agreement on a Constitution could be secured but it had been extremely difficult to get Bishop Muzorewa to accept the new Constitution and elections. The problem had to be resolved, and soon. The Conference had been going on for a long time and occasionally had looked like running into the sand. Bishop Muzorewa had been away from his country for a long time, certainly longer than the Prime Minister would have been prepared to absent herself. Moreover, the negotiations were taking up too much of the time of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and his staff. She therefore felt a considerable sense of urgency.

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Mr. Manley said that his only objective was to be helpful. He had no status in the matter other than that which stemmed from his participation in the Lusaka talks. He had just had a long session with the Patriotic Front. He had the impression that the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary were close to pulling off a fantastic achievement. He was speaking not just in narrow political terms but in terms of a benefit to the world as a whole. Precisely because achieving an agreement was so close, he wanted to ask whether HMG's position was still flexible or whether it was now hard and final. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he had pushed Bishop Muzorewa just about as far as was possible. Politics was the art of the possible. The Bishop had already agreed to give up control of his Government. If he conceded any more he would be regarded as a failure by his electorate. In an ideal situation, further concessions might be made to the position of the Patriotic Front, e.g. the offer of a longer interim period. But if this were agreed, the results would be (a) that the ceasefire would break down and (b) that the jockeying and intrigue among the various political parties would be so prolonged and intense that the election might never take place.

Mr. Manley said that he understood the difficulties of Bishop Muzorewa's position. But he did not think that it would be possible to organise a fair election in two months. The sheer logistical difficulties of getting the refugees back and preparing for the elections would be insurmountable. The interim period might not need to be as long as six months but there was what Mr. Manley described as a genuine feeling in many quarters that two months was too short. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary repeated that of course in an ideal world one might have an interim longer than two months, but it should be borne in mind that:

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(a) The two months would start from the onset of the ceasefire.

(b) Full registration would take far longer than six months. It had taken a year in Botswana. With anti-fraud devices and regional lists, a fair, if not ideal, election could be held.

(c) The refugees would have two full months in which to return. Failing this, they could vote where they were. Mr. Nkomo, after all, wanted ^{his army} to stay where it was.

The Prime Minister noted that President Machel favoured an interim period of two or three months. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that if the interim period was more than two or three months there would be no election.

Mr. Manley repeated that if the interim was compressed too much the negotiations would collapse. The Patriotic Front were not being intransigent. There was a negotiating element in their present posture. He would be willing to speak strongly to them about the need for speed in the interim and about the need for them to get on with the negotiations. The Prime Minister said this would be very helpful.

Mr. Manley said that it would greatly assist matters if there could be agreement that the Commonwealth Group of Observers could enter Rhodesia as early as possible. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said he was prepared to be flexible on this but that Mr. Ramphal's recent statement had caused a great deal of difficulty. Bishop Muzorewa had regarded it as very unfair and he himself had been much put out. He offered to send Mr. Manley the text of the statement.

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Reverting to the length of the interim period, the Prime Minister repeated that one could not have a Governor with full executive and legislative powers in Rhodesia for very long. If things went wrong as a result of a prolonged interim, the Governor might, for instance, be driven to ask for troops from Britain. This could not be allowed to happen.

Mr. Manley asked about the military position. There were two armies in Rhodesia, neither of which had been defeated. Would it be possible to get a settlement without acknowledging that the two armies had equal status and a similar role in the interim? The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the idea would be to separate the two armies and bring them under the authority of the Governor. A monitoring unit would be established, including the commanders of the armies. It would report to the Governor's military adviser who would be British. The monitoring unit would be responsible for identifying and dealing with breaches of the ceasefire. Mr. Manley asked whether this meant that Britain would recognise that both armies were military realities, were in the country, and had equal status. Britain would not be saying that Bishop Muzorewa's army was the only force they recognised? The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary repeated that the intention would be to separate the armies and recognise the presence of both. Mr. Manley repeated that this was a critical issue. Britain did not, as he now understood it, envisage "Smith's army" charging up and down the country in jeeps with the Patriotic Front backed up in one corner. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the negotiations had not got that far. The ceasefire and separation were clearly essential. If they could be achieved, then General Walls and General Tongogara would have to get together under the chairmanship of a British General and talk about the modalities. Both armies would have to come under the Governor's authority. If problems arose,

/the Governor

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the Governor would be responsible for the necessary decisions. Whether the thing would work would depend on the will of both sides to observe a ceasefire.

Mr. Manley asked whether Britain had a rooted objection to a Commonwealth force. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary replied in the affirmative. A Commonwealth force would be like a UN force and would be unable to do anything. There would be no problem about the monitors being drawn from Commonwealth countries. Mr. Manley said that he was much encouraged by what was being said about the position of the two armies. It had been widely believed that "Smith's army" would be the only one recognised by the Governor. But as he now understood it the Governor would acknowledge two armies, there would be a monitoring commission and the Governor might call on elements of one or other of the armies to assist him. There would be no problem about such an arrangement. (Indeed, Mr. Manley described what the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary had been saying as "terrific".) The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he did not want to deceive Mr. Manley. On the one hand, there would be a formed army, on the other hand a guerrilla army. The difference between them would have to be taken into account. But the principle would be that both were under the command of the Governor. There would be occasions when the Governor would wish to use an element of one or the other or both. But the fact was that while General Walls could control his forces it was much more doubtful whether the Patriotic Front commanders could do so. This was not for reasons of ill-will but because the Patriotic Front's forces were guerrillas. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary stressed that what he had been saying had been the subject of negotiation with no-one. Mr. Manley said that none the less he was feeling much more hopeful.

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Mr. Manley asked whether Britain would have any objection to the establishment of an advisory group under the authority of the Governor to which he could refer and from which he could receive advice. The council would be under the chairmanship of the Governor and might have four representatives of the Patriotic Front and four of the Salisbury regime. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that an advisory council discussing administrative matters would only cause trouble. These would be the responsibility of the Governor. On the other hand, there would be an Electoral Council to supervise the fairness of the elections. The Prime Minister said that the difficulties that would be encountered by anything like an advisory council underlined the need for brevity in the interim. The administration of the country would be on a razor's edge. One could not sit there for long.

Mr. Manley said that what he had heard on the military position and on the Electoral Council seemed to him unlikely to give rise to problems. He liked the way the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary had formulated the position on the two armies. The length of the interim period, however, was likely to prove crucial. The Prime Minister said that two months seemed to her a long time. The Governor would not be able to control the situation for much longer than that. Nor would HMG be prepared to put in troops. As the Viscount incident had shown, there were considerable doubts as to whether the Patriotic Front had adequate control of their forces. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the issues in the election were already well known: the short period would not prevent any of the participants making their position clear. Mr. Manley repeated that agreement was very close. Six months was no doubt too long, but two months was too short. A compromise on this point might make the difference between triumph and tragedy. The Prime Minister said that if HMG were to show too much flexibility, the negotiations would collapse. The Patriotic Front and the Front Line States should not try to push Britain too far. However, she noted what Mr. Manley had said and undertook to consider the position.

The discussion ended at 2300 hours.
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