

S E C R E T

D E D I P

SECRET

FROM SALISBURY 151710Z JAN 80

TO F L A S H FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 189 OF 15 JANUARY 1980

INFO F L A S H ISLAMABAD (PERSONAL FOR SECRETARY OF STATE)  
IMMEDIATE CAPE TOWN (PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR).

YOUR TELEGRAM NUMBER 136: SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES.

AS YOU KNOW, NOT ONLY DO I SHARE YOUR ANXIETIES, BUT I HATE THE WHOLE STORY. IT LIES HEAVY UPON US HERE, AND I FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR PARLIAMENTARY DIFFICULTIES. BUT, MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO TACKLE IT HEAD-ON, I MUST TELL YOU OF MY ANXIETIES OF GOING FOR IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF BEITBRIDGE DETACHMENT AND OF THE THREE COMPANIES. (I TAKE IT YOU ARE NOT CONCERNED, AS I AM NOT, ABOUT THE OTHER SOUTH AFRICANS IN THE RHODESIAN FORCES COMPRISING TWO "FIRE FORCES", AND SOME OTHER HELICOPTERS AND FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT).

2. WALLS IS NOT INTERESTED IN WORLD OPINION. HE WANTS A SOUTH AFRICAN PRESENCE FOR HIS OWN OBVIOUS REASONS AND IS CONVINCED IN HIS OWN MIND (WHATEVER THE TRUTH MAY BE) THAT HE HAD YOUR PERSONAL CONCURRENCE. IF WE INSISTED ON THEIR REMOVAL, I CANNOT BE SURE HOW FAR HIS ANGER WOULD TAKE HIM. BUT DUFF, WHO KNOWS HIM WELL, CONSIDERS IT A REAL DANGER THAT HE WOULD MAKE IT A BREAKING POINT AND REFUSE ALL FURTHER COOPERATION WITH ME. IF THE RHODESIAN FORCES GOT OUT OF CONTROL WE COULD BE HEADING FAST FOR A SITUATION IN WHICH THE WHOLE AGREEMENT WOULD BREAK DOWN, IT WOULD BE SEEN TO BE THE FAULT OF THE RHODESIANS, AND IT WOULD THEN BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO CONTINUE WITH MY MISSION. RENWICK WILL TELL YOU THAT WALLS AND HIS MATES ARE EVIDENTLY CONVINCED THAT MUGABE STANDS ALL-TOO-GOOD A CHANCE OF WINNING THE ELECTION, WHICH LEADS THEM TO QUESTION THE WISDOM OF LETTING THE OPERATION CONTINUE UNLESS THEY CAN PERSUADE ME (WHICH IS MOST DOUBTFUL ON PRESENT FORM) THAT MUGABE'S BEHAVIOUR WARRANTS MY PROSCRIBING HIM. IF HE WERE TO DECIDE TO BREAK ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUE, HE WOULD DOUBTLESS CALL A PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH HE WOULD STATE THAT HE HAD ONLY BEEN PERSUADED, AND HAD PERSUADED THE SALISBURY DELEGATION, TO ACCEPT THE LANCASTER HOUSE

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AGREEMENT ON THE STRENGTH OF ASSURANCES HE HAD BEEN GIVEN IN LONDON THAT

(A) THE RHODESIAN FORCES WOULD NOT BE PUT AT A DISADVANTAGE, BUT WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PATROL AND REGAIN SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY:

(B) SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE WOULD NOT BE PROHIBITED (ON THE CONTRARY) PROVIDED THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE CONCEALED AS RHODESIANS:

(C) IT WAS A POLICY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO DO WHATEVER COULD BE DONE TO ENSURE A MUZOREWA VICTORY AT THE ELECTION.

3. WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE?

4. ON BEITBRIDGE MY IMPRESSION IS THAT YOU AGREE WE CAN CLAIM THEIR PRESENCE DOES NOT AFFRONT LANCASTER HOUSE SINCE IN NO WAY CAN IT BE TERMED "INTERVENTION". SO I SUGGEST WE SHOULD TALK IT OUT: THOUGH MAKING IT CLEAR (WITH SOUTH AFRICAN AGREEMENT) THAT THE DETACHMENT WILL WITHDRAW, AT MY REQUEST, EITHER JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION (ONCE THE CALL-UP IS COMPLETE): OR, FAILING AGREEMENT ON THAT, IMMEDIATELY AFTER IF THE INCOMING PRIME MINISTER WISHES IT.

5. THE THREE COMPANIES. AS I SEE IT THIS IS MUCH MORE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS POLITICALLY. MY INSTINCT THEREFORE IS TO HAVE A HOPEFULLY UNEMOTIONAL HEART-TO-HEART WITH WALLS AND TO PERSUADE HIM THAT, GIVEN THE MUCH-IMPROVED SECURITY SITUATION (AND GIVEN ALSO OUR ATTITUDE OVER BEITBRIDGE AND THE FIRE-FORCE) HE DOES NOT NEED TO HOLD ONTO THEM. I WOULD TRY AGAIN TO MAKE HIM SEE AND UNDERSTAND THE HIDEOUS RISKS OF THEIR REMAINING. BUT SUBJECT TO WHAT YOU MAY SAY I WOULD HAVE A FALL-BACK POSITION IN EXTREMIS THAT THEY MUST EACH BE INTEGRATED INTO A RHODESIAN BATTALION. I DON'T SEE FURTHER DILUTION AS PRACTICABLE BUT FOR THEM TO REMAIN AS THEY ARE IS SIMPLY UNACCEPTABLE.

FCO PSE PASS TO ALL

SOAMES

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

F I L E S

HEAD/RHODESIA D  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR LUCE  
PS/PUS  
MR DAY  
MR C D POWELL