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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

20 December 1979

Dear Michael,

Rhodesia: The Prime Minister's Meeting with
Mr Nkomo and Mr Mugabe: Friday 21 December: 11.15

The Prime Minister will wish to congratulate Mr Nkomo and Mr Mugabe on the successful conclusion of the Conference. It has been our purpose to achieve a solution which will not just bring Rhodesia to legal independence, but will offer it the prospect of a more secure and peaceful future. It has therefore been our objective to ensure that the Patriotic Front should be given the opportunity to participate in new elections held under our authority. We are very glad that they have agreed to do so. The negotiations have not been easy for anyone. We have all had to take difficult decisions. Britain is assuming a heavy responsibility. We are determined to discharge it to the best of our ability. In doing so, it will be essential to have the co-operation of the Patriotic Front leaders. It is important that everyone should realise, as Lord Carrington will be saying at the signature ceremony, that the agreements which have been entered into are binding. The successful accomplishment of the first phase of the ceasefire (the disengagement of the Rhodesian forces and the assembly of the Patriotic Front forces) will be crucial to the preservation of an effective ceasefire.

If Mr Mugabe mentions the time-scale for the ceasefire the Prime Minister could make it clear that the ceasefire agreement allows seven days for preparation and seven days to assemble the Patriotic Front forces. If the greater part of their forces are assembled within that time it will of course be necessary, through the mechanism of the ceasefire commission, for their commanders to make contact with any isolated groups which are "outstanding". A much more difficult situation would arise if their forces did not assemble and remained in the field with their arms.

If the Patriotic Front leaders talk about additional assembly places, the Prime Minister will wish to say that they are being allocated a further assembly place in the west central area. Further assembly places would be considered only if the existing capacity in the designated assembly places was exhausted. We do not think this contingency is likely to arise.

/The Prime

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The Prime Minister could conclude by congratulating Mr Nkomo and Mr Mugabe on their decision to participate in the elections. This will give new hope to the people of Rhodesia and to those of the neighbouring countries who have suffered on their behalf. We are very glad that the sad history of the last fourteen years has ended and that Rhodesia is now set on the road to legal independence.

yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

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