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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 July 1979

RHODESIA, MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER

Thank you for your letter of 6 July, with which you enclosed a draft of a message which the Prime Minister might send to President Carter about Rhodesia, in advance of the President's meeting with Bishop Muzorewa in Washington on 10 July.

The Prime Minister was content with the draft message and with its annex, subject to the addition of one sentence to paragraph 5 of the latter, namely:

"We, too, accept the need to retain the confidence of the white community".

The message and its annex were duly despatched to the White House over the hot line on the morning of 7 July and I enclose, for the record, copies of the final texts.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

B. G. CARTLEDGE

J. S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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PM: Has seen
Message sent
A.B.J.

PRIME MINISTER

Rhodesia : Reply to President Carter

P.A.
B.M.
9/5

In response to President Carter's telephone call to you I attach a draft message approved by Lord Carrington which you may wish to send to President Carter, with an account of the Foreign Office's impressions of Lord Harlech's consultations in Africa. President Carter is expected to see Bishop Muzorewa in Washington on 10 July. If you are content with this message and annex, could you please inform Debbie Sansford who will then give the Duty Clerk the all-clear to send them over the hot line immediately.

B.G.C.

6 July 1979

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FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR PRESIDENT CARTER, WHITE HOUSE,
FROM PRIME MINISTER THATCHER

SECRET

7 JULY 1979

MESSAGE BEGINS:

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for telephoning me about the discussions which you will be having with Bishop Muzorewa in Washington. I undertook to let you have our impressions of David Harlech's consultations in Africa and with Bishop Muzorewa. These follow this message.

In your talks with Bishop Muzorewa, it would help us if you would impress on him the need to work closely with us to enable us to fulfil our constitutional responsibility. I think it is important that Bishop Muzorewa should be made to feel that we do realise the full extent of the progress which has been made. It is our concern to bring Rhodesia to independence in conditions which offer the prospect of a more secure and stable future. To that end we must work to secure the widest possible international acceptance. But we need his trust and understanding and help if we are to be successful.

Peter Carrington and I will be holding talks with Bishop Muzorewa in London on 13 July. It would be very helpful to us to have an account of your discussions with him. We shall wish to keep in the closest touch with you as we see the way ahead.

With best wishes,

Margaret Thatcher

MESSAGE ENDS

ANNEXLord Harlech's consultations

1. The British Government's objective is to build on the progress which has been achieved in Rhodesia to bring the territory to legal independence with the widest possible international recognition.
2. We have not yet completed the political consultations which we hope will help to indicate how best we can achieve this objective. The discussions which Lord Harlech has had with African leaders so far have suggested that:
 - a. There is a disposition in Africa to accept that the elections in Rhodesia have created a new reality and that the new Government has considerable popular support. Few dispute the need for special measures to reassure the white minority in Rhodesia or the principle of some special representation for whites in Parliament;
 - b. There is a general conviction that an internationally acceptable solution will have to stem from Britain as the legal authority;
 - c. Such a solution would need to include certain changes in the constitutional arrangements (in particular in relation to the blocking power of the whites in Parliament and indications that there has been a genuine transfer of power over the public service and the defence forces); and,
 - d. There should be a final attempt to achieve a wider agreement which could bring an end to the war. (If the Patriotic Front fail to respond to a genuine attempt to involve them that would create a new situation.)

3. When Lord Harlech met Bishop Muzorewa in Salisbury on 3 and 4 July, he put these points to him and stressed that there was no question of allowing others to impose a veto on progress. The British Government were determined to take the opportunity presented by the changes which have taken place in Rhodesia to work for an early solution. But it would be essential to carry our friends and partners with us. It would be important to the future prospects of stability and prosperity for Rhodesia that we should seek also to carry as much African opinion as possible with us. By these means we should be aiming to achieve a de-escalation of the war; and this was in our view the most effective way in which we could help. The Bishop's real need was for international acceptance: this was the way to bring an end to the war.

4. Bishop Muzorewa resented the unfairness, as he sees it, of others in Africa and elsewhere passing unfavourable judgement on a settlement which the parties in Rhodesia have worked out themselves. But he is appreciative of our willingness, which Lord Harlech emphasised, to work with him for a solution.

5. Lord Harlech's impression was that other members of the Bishop's Government (including Mr. Mundawarara and Mr. David Smith) accept that some changes in the Constitution may need to be made. They will not, however, be prepared to contemplate changes which would have the effect of undermining the confidence of the white community. *We too accept the need to retain the confidence of the white community.*

6. Lord Harlech also saw Mr. Ian Smith, who no longer appeared to be playing a prominent role in the Government. There was an expectation in Salisbury that he would leave the Government by the time sanctions were lifted or independence granted.