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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

I also attach the statement made by Lord Carrington on the land question.

L.S., Rhnd 12/4

11 October 1979

Dear Michael,

Rhnd 11/4

Mufaned to Blackford 11/10/79.

Rhodesian Constitutional Conference

At this afternoon's session of the Conference, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary asked the Patriotic Front whether they were now in a position to accept the Constitution, subject to agreement on the interim arrangements. In a prepared statement (copy enclosed) Nkomo replied that the Patriotic Front reserved their position on major issues and wanted to keep open the possibility of reverting to them.

Lord Carrington then saw Nkomo and Mugabe privately, but they declined to lift their reservations. When the Conference resumed, Lord Carrington therefore said that the British Government could not accept the Patriotic Front's reply as a sufficient basis to allow discussion to move on to the next item: and that he had no alternative but to adjourn the session. When the Conference met again, it would be to discuss the interim arrangements. The Patriotic Front should let him know before then whether they could accept the Constitution.

Although Lord Carrington set no date for the next meeting, he made it clear that it would be in the near future (we have in mind Monday)

There were clear signs of strain between ZAPU and ZANU at today's session. Nkomo appears to be looking for a way out, while Mugabe seems determined not to accept the points in the Constitution covering land and pensions, as well as maintaining general reservations about the Army, Police and Public Service.

There is a possibility that ZAPU will look for a way out of the dilemma. But, if we have to face a breakdown of the Conference, we will, in Lord Carrington's view, have a fully defensible position, and we would lose the support of Bishop Muzorewa and his delegation if we give way on this issue.

*Yours ever
Roderic Lyne*

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(R M J Lyne)

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