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to US PM

Extract from Record of Meeting between
PM and President of the U.N. General Assembly,
New York 18.12.79.

RHODESIA

Ambassador Salim offered his profound congratulations to the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on the successful conclusion of the Lancaster House conference. In the light of this achievement he regretted that the Prime Minister's visit had not been ^{at} a time when she could speak to the General Assembly. The Prime Minister warned against excessive jubilation, but said that the satisfactory conclusion of the conference was a firm move in the right direction. Mr. Salim said that the United Nations had followed the Lancaster House conference very closely. He had made it clear that they were ready to be helpful in any way. Lord Carrington confirmed that his help had been much appreciated. Mr. Salim mentioned the spontaneous applause in the General Assembly when the initialling of the ceasefire had been announced the previous day. This was a rare accolade.

The Prime Minister commented that the Rhodesian question seemed to be moving in a positive direction just as Iranian events had taken a negative course. Mr. Salim said that he knew from his personal experience the complexities of the

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Rhodesian problem. There was overwhelming mutual suspicion and a lack of homogeneity. The Governor now had a major responsibility. He had to create confidence in the settlement. Britain would have the support of the international community, and the confidence of the United Nations, in the transitional period. But an ultimate judgment would have to await the conclusion of the process. Lord Carrington commented that a great deal of luck would be an essential ingredient. The Prime Minister said that she was still concerned about events once the election had taken place. Mr. Salim said that there would always be concern but if a peaceful transition managed to create confidence, then there was hope for the future. Lord Carrington said that mutual suspicion could not disappear overnight at present; factions were jockeying for top positions. But, with the agreement established, none of them would have an external base from which to carry on a war after the elections. Mr. Salim felt that there was hope if conditions were created for fair elections, and if all that was humanly possible were done to ensure this. The Prime Minister commented that elections never looked fair to losers. The Reverend Sithole's attitude to the last election in Rhodesia illustrated this. He had been quite happy with the process until the results emerged.

Lord Carrington stressed that it would be very difficult to stamp out all intimidation. There would be problems on both sides, leading to incidents despite the ceasefire. The difficulties were undeniable. It was necessary to have a steady nerve, and to take all opportunities to reinforce the settlement arrangements. With the right will there was a chance of success. Mr. Salim said that a success in Rhodesia would matter to the whole of Southern Africa. The Prime Minister commented that Lord Carrington always took a less optimistic view than his colleagues. But for Rhodesia the time had been ripe. The surrounding states and the Commonwealth as a whole had had enough of the situation. Against this background, no-one was in a position to reject reasonable proposals. Mr. Salim agreed that all parties had had enough, and neither side in the battle had been winning. This had created conditions for a settlement. Lord Carrington foresaw the possibility that no overall majority would emerge from the election. This could be a helpful result, requiring a coalition

of some of the groups to form a Government.

SANCTIONS

Mr. Salim raised the question of sanctions, which he had previously discussed with Sir Anthony Parsons. Throughout the negotiations there had been tremendous goodwill in the United Nations. This had to be sustained. He therefore judged it extremely important that the Security Council should be asked to take a decision on sanctions, and should not merely be informed. There would be resentment of unilateral action. If the United Kingdom now asked the Security Council to lift sanctions, it would be very difficult for people to obstruct this. Even the USSR could hardly veto against overwhelming African opinion - even if they wished to take an extreme position, which he doubted. A veto in these circumstances would be a new departure for the Russians. Mr. Salim said that the General Assembly could be a helpful institution, but it had its extremist tendencies. He had worked to prevent the General Assembly discussing Rhodesia in a damaging way. Lord Carrington complimented Mr. Salim on his successful efforts.

Sir Anthony Parsons said that he would be writing to the President of the Security Council today. He hoped that the United Kingdom could produce a consensus by the end of the current week. Mr. Salim said that it would be helpful if the letter could be despatched before the General Assembly took up Rhodesia that afternoon. To be frank, there had been problems in holding back the Assembly. Sir Anthony Parsons said that, subject to developments in his absence that morning, a letter to the President would be despatched at 3 p.m. seeking consultations the next day, after the signing in London of the conference documents. Things would then be moving.

Mr. Salim said that the Rhodesian solution would be helpful for the Namibia problem. The Prime Minister suggested that Namibia should be left on one side until Rhodesia was finally settled. Mr. Salim said that action was already in hand in the United Nations. The pressure was on for results. It was ironic that previous analyses of Southern African problems had concluded

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that a Namibia solution was necessary to create movement on Rhodesia. Lord Carrington stressed the timing would have to be right. Namibia could go wrong if moves were now mistimed. Sir Anthony Parsons suggested that the elections and independence of Zimbabwe should be completed before Namibia was allowed to come to a head. This meant that current moves on Namibia should not be hurried. Lord Carrington commented that South Africa would want to have a chance to judge the results in Rhodesia before settling its view of Namibia. Mr. Salim said that the UN could continue its activity on Namibia, whilst privately recognising that South Africa could be expected to hold back on final decisions for the present. This was not an impossible way forward.

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