

SUBJECT



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Zimbabwe

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. TIII B/80

15 May 1980

Dear Mr. President,

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I was very glad to receive your message of 21 April following your return from the Salisbury independence celebrations. May I say, on behalf of myself and the British Government, how much we welcome your kind words on the successful outcome of the settlement process in Zimbabwe. I am sorry that I myself could not be present to meet you in Salisbury at the culmination of all our joint efforts. Lord Carrington told me how much he valued his meeting with you.

The achievement of independence in Zimbabwe in conditions of peace and stability - which only a few months ago seemed such a forlorn hope - has cast a ray of light on a troubled international scene. The road from Lusaka to Lancaster House, and from there to the elections, was at times very difficult. The British Government owes much to the important contribution which you and many of our other Commonwealth friends made to the positive outcome. Together we have brought an unhappy chapter to a happy ending. The creation of a democratic multi-racial society in Zimbabwe will reflect the principles on which the Commonwealth association itself is based. We can all, I think, be proud of what has been achieved.

I personally have never felt doubts that the Zimbabwe issue would be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of our two countries, for we have always been pursuing the same goal, even if at times there were some differences between us over the best means of achieving it.

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Zimbabwean independence has removed what has for too long been an impediment to the development of close relations between Nigeria and Britain. My colleagues and I now look forward to working with your Government in a spirit of friendly co-operation to strengthen our relations to the mutual benefit of both our countries. We have great admiration and respect for Nigeria's achievements since independence, most recently the carefully implemented return to democratic civilian rule last year which was an example to the world. We look forward to continuing to play our part in your dynamic economic development and to contribute through trade and investment to your plans to make a better future for all the people of Nigeria. As you will know, Mr. John Nott, the Secretary of State for Trade, had hoped to visit Nigeria this week to discuss this aspect of our relations: I much regret that he had to postpone the visit because of problems at the airport.

I very much hope that we shall have the opportunity to meet personally before too long and I greatly look forward to that occasion.

(SGD) MARGARET THATCHER

President Alhaji Shehu Shagari

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