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FM SALISBURY 301550Z MAR 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 203 OF 30 MARCH

INFO PRIORITY HONG KONG (FOR PS TO SOSFA).

ROUTINE LUSAKA, MAPUTO, GABORONE, PRETORIA AND WASHINGTON.

SAVING DAR ES SALAAM, LAGOS, NAIROBI, ADDIS ABABA.

LORD SOAMES' VISIT TO ZIMBABWE.

1. DRIVING TO THE AIRPORT FOR HIS DEPARTURE, THE LORD PRESIDENT AND I CONFESSED THAT, IN THE PRECEDING WEEKS, BOTH HAD FELT SOME ANXIETY LEST HIS RETURN TO ZIMBABWE AS LEADER OF OUR DELEGATION TO A LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL ZIMCORD CONFERENCE SHOULD SERVE TO DIMINISH RATHER THAN INCREASE THE ADVANTAGES WHICH BRITAIN ENJOYS HERE FROM HIS GOVERNORSHIP. THE EVENT HAS PROVED SUCH ANXIETY ENTIRELY UNFOUNDED.

2. THE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL BEYOND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE ZIMBABWEANS (AND INDEED OURS). ALTHOUGH THE NEW PLEDGES OF ZIMBABWE DOLLARS 900 MILLION WHICH THEY ATTRIBUTE TO THE CONFERENCE MUST BE TAKEN WITH A LITTLE PINCH OF SALT, AS REPORTED IN MY TELNO MDEV 119, THE OUTCOME IS REMARKABLE BY ANY STANDARD. BOTH ZIMBABWEANS AND DELEGATES HAVE SAID THAT LORD SOAMES' PRESENCE CONTRIBUTED LARGELY TO THIS: THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WAS COMING, AND OUR BILATERAL LOBBYING, URGED GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE THE CONFERENCE SERIOUSLY, AND THE TONE OF HIS OPENING SPEECHES, AS WELL AS HIS CORRIDOR LOBBYING, ENCOURAGED DELEGATES TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN BRIEFS IN AS POSITIVE AND DETAILED A WAY AS POSSIBLE.

3. THE PRESENCE OF LORD AND LADY SOAMES HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY WELCOMED. BOTH HAVE RECEIVED GOOD PRESS COVERAGE. LADY SOAMES IS CONTINUING HER PROGRAMME INTO THIS WEEK, WITH VISITS TO INSTITUTIONS IN BULAWAYO AND FORT VICTORIA.

4. FOLLOWING THE INITIAL TALK WITH MUGABE (MY TELNO 186) THE SOAMES DINED ALONE WITH THE MUGABES ON 25 MARCH. THIS GAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A FRANK AND WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION WHICH LORD SOAMES IS REPORTING TO YOU BY LETTER. MUGABE SAID THAT HE WAS CONTENT WITH THE BRITISH AID CONTRIBUTION (PACE HIS PUBLIC REMARKS, MY TELNO 202) AND REPEATED HIS SATISFACTION AT THE STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. WE HAVE REPORTED THE DISCUSSIONS WITH CHIDZERO (MY TELNO MDEV 122), WHO IS DELIGHTED WITH OUR ROLE. LORD SOAMES ALSO HAD USEFUL AND GENERALLY CONSTRUCTIVE MEETINGS WITH NKOMO, THE MINISTERS OF FINANCE, LANDS AND EDUCATION, THE LEADERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATIONS AND IAN SMITH. WE SHALL BE REPORTING THE MAIN POINTS SEPARATELY. NKOMO WAS AT PAINS

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TO TAKE A POSITIVE LINE: THERE WAS TROUBLE WITH THE YOUNG MEN, MISTAKES HAD BEEN MADE, BUT THEY COULD BE OVERCOME: AMALGAMATION OF FORCES WAS ESSENTIAL, THOUGH IT TOO WOULD LEAD TO PROBLEMS. SMITH WAS GLOOMY ABOUT THE RATE OF WHITE DEPARTURES. SEVERAL OTHERS HAD REPORTED UNEASE AMONG WHITES OVER MINISTERIAL CRITICISM OF THE COLONIAL PAST. IN HIS TALKS WITH MUGABE AND OTHER MINISTERS LORD SOAMES URGED THAT THERE BE LESS RHETORIC ABOUT THE COLONIAL PAST AND THE POINT WAS GENERALLY TAKEN. MUGABE AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO PRIVATE SCHOOLING AND MEDICINE PROVIDED THEY WERE NON-RACIAL.

5. IN SHORT, THE VISIT HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL AND HAS SERVED FURTHER TO CEMENT BILATERAL RELATIONS.

FCO PASS SAVING DAR ES SALAAM, LAGOS, NAIROBI, ADDIS ABABA.

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REQUESTED

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ODA
CABINET OFFICE

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

COPIES SENT TO
No. 70 DOWNING STREET

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