

PRIME MINISTER

RHODESIA - STEPHEN HASTINGS

1. Herewith letter and enclosure dated 10th August from Stephen Hastings, together with carbon copy of my reply.
2. I visited Rhodesia for ten days with Stephen Hastings two years ago. He is a good man, with a strong personal loyalty to you.

23rd August, 1979

Ian Gow

From: Stephen Hastings MC MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th August, 1979

Dear Ian,

I do not want to add to your general apprehension but I thought you should see a copy of the letter I have sent to the Chief Whip. Clearly I and others will be making our own representations to the Prime Minister in due course when the Rhodesian proposals are finalised and if they turn out to be along the lines indicated in the press I should feel at least a little happier if you are aware of the way my mind is working.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Fleming".

signed in Stephen Hastings' absence

Ian Gow Esq., M.P.

From: Stephen Hastings MC MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th August, 1979

My dear Michael,

I hate to mar the holidays with a note of dissent, but I cannot forbear to write to you about what has apparently occurred in Lusaka. Of course we must await the British proposals to Rhodesia before forming any final opinion, but if words mean anything we already have a general idea of what is afoot and it fills me with dismay and foreboding.

I have bent myself backwards to look on the bright side and I think one can certainly identify two advantages. There has been no further mention of sanctions and there is no further reference to the Americans. The first one can welcome by inference, the second is an undoubted blessing. Also it would appear that the Prime Minister has managed to keep her options open, at least to some extent, on the Constitution.

But the commitment to yet another Constitutional Conference and the intention to hold further elections are incomprehensible. They do not relate to reality, but simply to a process of bargaining within the Commonwealth which has no relevance to the problem of Rhodesia, or indeed to anything else.

It is said that this manoeuvring will put an end to the war. Of course it will not. Was Mozambique a party to it? Was Angola? Were the Cubans present; or the East Germans; or the Soviet Union above all? In terms of real power and probability the Commonwealth can no more stop the Patriotic Front than its own leaders Mugabe and Nkomo can. The only force which will do so is a strong Rhodesian Army operating as necessary from an independent and free trading country, and for that every able bodied European Rhodesian is needed. Yet it appears the British Government is set on removing the entrenched clauses upon which the confidence of the Defence Forces rests.

Then the elections. These are to be based on an electoral roll. we are told. How long will that take? Six months, a year, nobody could possibly inform you. Who has the time to carry it out in beleaguered Rhodesia? And who is going to hold the ring for these elections in six months or a year? The Rhodesian Army presumably, since no Commonwealth force is proposed. But is it not realised what a prodigious effort was required to arrange and protect the last elections and how is it expected that the Rhodesians will be able to do it again in six months or longer, with no guarantee as to the outcome? Indeed what will be left of the Rhodesian Army by then?

It is wildly unrealistic and the Foreign Office must know it is, which disturbs me the more, since one can only guess at their real motive in recommending such a course. The more I do so the more sinister it appears.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The integrity of the Rhodesian settlement rests upon the interdependence of the races, black upon white; white upon black. I saw this two years ago when I was out there and did my best at the time to explain it both to our leaders and in print. Matters have turned out more or less exactly as I foresaw them then after long talks to Peter Walls and to the African leaders. This is how the Constitution evolved so slowly and painfully, yet now we see the British Government apparently set upon removing the very matrix which holds it together.

Finally, I consider that the course upon which we appear to be set results from the long standing and rigid inability of the advisers to identify what is really the only critical strategic objective, not only for ourselves but for the free world. That is a viable developing and independent Rhodesia with all that implies for her neighbours and for the West. Against this we place the patched up appearance of agreement among a collection of States whose interests and backgrounds are utterly disparate and whose collective loyalty to the free world is in serious doubt. The first does not and never did depend upon the second.

I apologise for writing at such length but the implications of what I see as an incipient disaster are grave indeed for us all and I would be doing less than my duty if I did not try to point it out - albeit somewhat wearily and with a heavy heart.

In conclusion I must tell you that if matters turn out as we are led to anticipate they may then I for one shall resist these proposals by every means open to me.

Please make any use of this letter you may think fit and I hope you have a very good holiday in spite of our troubles. The Government has acted with such admirable decision and courage in other departments it would be a tragedy if the Foreign Office should destroy both impetus and confidence by this retreat.

The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling M.P.

23rd August, 1979

Rhodesia

Many thanks for your letter of 10th August, with which you enclosed a copy of a letter of the same date, which you had sent to the Chief Whip.

I take your letter very seriously, not least because we visited Rhodesia together two years ago.

May I please correct one point of fact? There is mention, in the Communiqué, of sanctions. The last paragraph dealing with Rhodesia records that the Heads of Government "accepted that it must be a major objective to bring about a cessation of hostilities and an end to sanctions as part of the process of implementation of a lasting settlement".

As you know, I voted against sanctions in 1977 and in 1978. Prior to the General Election, I had thought that the right course would have been for the Government to have recognised the Bishop's Government, and to have granted legal independence on the basis of the present Rhodesian Constitution.

However, it became clear that if we were to recognise the present Government in Salisbury, we would have carried no other Government with us, with the possible exception of the Republic. That would have meant that the war would have gone on; the white exodus would have continued; there would have been no prospect for the revival of the Rhodesian economy.

You will remember the commitment in our Manifesto where we said that the next Government would "do its utmost to ensure that the new independent state gains international recognition". Next month's Constitutional Conference is fully in accord with that commitment, and is, I believe, in the best interests of Rhodesia.

When you are back in London could you please give me a ring, as I would like, very much, to have a chat? The number is 930 4433.

Stephen Hastings, Esq. M.C., M.P.
House of Commons,
Westminster, London SW1

b.c.c. The Right Honourable Michael Jopling, M.P.