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Prime Minister

PM/82/106

PRIME MINISTER

*Taken the
minutes
decisions
the longer term.
over
put*

① Agree that this should be
circulated tomorrow for
discussion at OD on Wednesday?

② do you wish to discuss with
the Foreign Secretary before OD?

Zimbabwe

A.J.C. 9/12

1. I attach, as requested in John Coles's letter of 16 November, a note on policy towards Zimbabwe.
2. Our bilateral relationship with Zimbabwe is not an easy one. Recent developments, in particular the maltreatment of detainees, have given rise to legitimate concern. We need to bring every effective pressure to bear to ensure that the Zimbabwean authorities are aware of our concerns, and aware that their still privileged relationship with us cannot be taken for granted.
3. The note covers certain specific issues on which decisions are required, in particular military sales. It also attempts to bring out the importance to us of continuing to encourage a prosperous and stable Zimbabwe in the wider strategic context of developments in Southern Africa generally. There are considerable UK interests in Zimbabwe which go beyond the purely bilateral issues of trade, UK belongers, etc, important as those are. What happens in Zimbabwe, and the policies we follow towards that country, will have a considerable effect on the chances for peaceful evolution in Southern Africa, on the degree to which Western influence there can be maintained and that of the Soviet Union excluded, and on our ability to promote our huge national interests in both black Africa and South Africa despite the continuing confrontation in the area. These are vitally important aspects that need to be very carefully weighed.
4. If you agree, the attached paper might be circulated to our colleagues in OD as a basis for discussion. But I would be glad to have a word first if you prefer.

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5. I am copying this minute to John Nott and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'FP', written in a cursive style.

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

9 December, 1982

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ZIMBABWE: GENERAL REVIEW OF RELATIONS

I. INTERNAL SITUATION

1. The present position contains both favourable and unfavourable trends:

(a) Security BMATT has successfully amalgamated three independent forces into a unified national army: its cohesion if uneasy, has held up. However, there have been a number of desertions by former ZIPRA elements loyal to Nkomo, who have fled to Matabeleland and engaged in banditry. In the rest of the country law and order remains good. Matabeleland will remain unsettled until there is a political reconciliation between Mugabe's ZANU, but the disorder need not spread. Mugabe continues to rely largely on security assistance from the West (North Korea has also provided some).

(b) Economic There was a burst of post-independence economic growth (over 10% p.a. in the first two years). The living standards of most, both black and white, rose. Growth has now slowed down, due partly to the world recession and partly to domestic policies. Zimbabwe still has a largely free enterprise economy and encourages private investment. Despite a chronic foreign exchange deficit, it permits remittance of post-tax company profits. Its economic infrastructure is still the strongest in black Africa. It has more skilled manpower and considerable natural resources. Its medium and long term economic potential is considerable, but in the short term the foreign exchange shortage could become more acute.

(c) Political Mugabe's position remains strong. Though some rapprochement has been detectable recently, tensions remain between ZANU and ZAPU, and these might deepen if Nkomo is brought to trial or ZANU radicals try to force the pace on a one-party state. But the latter so far seems unlikely and an open split has been avoided.


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The split within the Republican Front reflects a growing tendency in the white community, and more particularly among business leaders, to question Ian Smith's policy of non-cooperation. There has, on the other hand, been a steady outflow of whites (offset to some degree by new immigration, including former emigrants) but this has not yet become a flood: three-quarters of those resident at independence remain. Representatives of both the whites and ZAPU serve in Mugabe's Cabinet, as well as in the senior ranks of the army and public service. Zimbabwe greatly fears South African destabilisation: Zimbabwe's transit routes to the East and West have been impeded at times. Mugabe is deeply suspicious of the Soviet Union and its surrogates and has kept them at arms length. Vice President Bush told our Ambassador in Washington that he had concluded from his visit to Zimbabwe that it was right for Mugabe to continue to receive Western support.

(d) Lancaster House Agreement There is evidence of maltreatment and in some cases torture of detainees. Judicial redress is available (eg in the case of Mr Stuttaford), but this is nevertheless a blot on the Zimbabwean implementation of the Agreement. In other respects, the Agreement has been substantially observed. Mugabe aims at a one-party state, but not immediately and within the restrictions laid down in the Constitution. Meanwhile, despite some harassment of opposition leaders, the multi-party system works. Acquisition of majority shareholdings and of land for re-distribution has been through purchase on a fair price basis. Mugabe is honouring the pension obligations in the Constitution. The media is subject to state control, but extremist influence has now mostly disappeared: mainly Western sources are used in international affairs. The security apparatus has been responsible for excesses against both blacks and whites. But the law courts maintain a high level of integrity (black judges, as well as white, have consistently up-held the rights of white detainees). Zimbabwe's human rights record compares well with its neighbours, including South Africa.

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II. UK INTERESTS

2. These are considerable:

(a) Strategic Our interests in Zimbabwe itself are not overwhelming.

Chromium? The country's geographical position is no longer a key one nor is Zimbabwe a principal supplier of any strategically important minerals. (Her chromium reserves though substantial are not a realistic substitute for South African supplies). But there are very significant wider strategic interests, namely a South African dimension, and the need to limit Soviet and/or communist influence in the area, which are covered in detail in (c) below.

(b) Economic Zimbabwe could well become UK's third most important export market in Africa (after Nigeria and South Africa). UK exports are nearly £100m p.a. and steadily growing each year: the visible trade balance is in surplus. We have secured £200m of public sector contracts since independence and have another £200m in reasonable prospect. UK investment in Zimbabwe is probably worth £800m. We have committed £113m of developmental and £11m of military aid since independence.

(c) Political The following specific points are relevant:

(i) British influence The Zimbabwean settlement was considered a major UK success. So long as Zimbabwe prospers we can encash the consequent goodwill - not least in Black Africa where we may have to head off pressures for retaliation against the UK if the Namibia negotiations abort or we veto calls for sanctions against South Africa. If Zimbabwe goes sour on us we lose this leverage. And the 'kith and kin' lobby in the UK could prove particularly strident. Zimbabwe is a member of the Security Council for the next two years and we shall want to make use of our close relations over issues of importance to us.

(ii) Resettlement A deterioration in relations could lead to an exodus of a large proportion of the 160,000 whites. Many would probably choose South Africa, but we could still be faced with a considerable problem (40,000 mono-Britons and a considerably larger number of UK passport holders).

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(iii) South African dimension A stable and prosperous Zimbabwe could do something to persuade South African white opinion that black enfranchisement need not lead to arbitrary and corrupt government. Conversely an impoverished, authoritarian and radically aligned Zimbabwe could make white opinion even more obdurate. A major exodus to South Africa could have a particularly damaging effect. Tensions would soar in the Republic and any Namibian settlement could be undone. A coalition of radical black states might then become locked in confrontation with the Republic. The UK could be forced to choose between black and white Africa with the severe economic and political penalties this choice would entail. If Western access to South Africa's minerals were put in question the West, including the UK, would face a strategic threat affecting key aspects of our defence capability. If it were our relations with Black Africa that suffered, the strategic loss might be less traumatic (though still severe) but our trading loss would be considerably greater.

(iv) Limiting Soviet and Communist Influence If we refuse military sales and aid, Mugabe will turn elsewhere, possibly to the Soviet Union, despite his reluctance to do so. If the security situation got bad enough, he might feel obliged to follow the example of Angola and Mozambique and accept large-scale military help from the Soviet Union and Cuba. Other Front Line states would also draw the lesson that Western help cannot be relied upon and be more ready to look to the Soviet Union. The US Government attach particular weight to this danger. The worst case outcome would be a virtual Soviet world monopoly of certain strategic minerals and Soviet domination of the key sea lanes round the Cape.

III. UK OBJECTIVES

3. We can best promote our interests by ensuring, so far as we can, that Zimbabwe remains a stable prosperous Western-orientated state. That would not mean that our views would always coincide. Past events (a legacy of discrimination, neglected education for the blacks, 25,000 dead in the war) and the regional context cannot help but be major influences. But we should continue to be frank with the Zimbabweans

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on issues on which we differ, and in particular in areas such as maltreatment of detainees where standards fall beneath those required by the Lancaster Agreement.

IV. UK POLICIES

4. Zimbabwe bears the primary responsibility for its own future. There is a limit to how far we can or should seek to influence events. Over-involvement is only likely to weaken the incentive to find local solutions to local problems. And it will almost certainly leave us economically and militarily over-exposed whilst failing to resolve problems (a colonial legacy, tribal consciousness and economic recession) which only the Zimbabweans themselves can find lasting solutions to.

5. But for the UK to cut loose altogether would lose us influence, money and, more importantly than either, the best model we yet have of how to manage peaceful change in Southern Africa. We would be leaving the field open to the Cubans and Soviets.

6. The need is for a sensitive long-term policy which nudges the country in the direction we should prefer, while keeping our exposure to the minimum required.

a) Security

i) BMATT is vital to white morale and to the cohesion of the army. Its training function should continue (with funding from UKMTAS), though probably at a lower level from the middle of next year when the current instructor training will be completed. If asked, we should not rule out a limited resumption of brigade level training: this could be presented as an extension of work under way since independence, but would be made more controversial if excesses on the part of the security forces continued.

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ii) Similar principles apply to help for the Air Force, though assistance, including the sale of Hunter and Hawk jets, should be mainly on a commercial basis.

iii) SAS training for the Presidential Guard would be controversial but would considerably enhance Mugabe's personal safety. Mugabe remains a key figure, not least for the whites. There is no successor of comparable stature in prospect. We should bear in mind that the East Germans have specialised in security assistance elsewhere in Africa, and North Korea already has a toehold in Zimbabwe. But, it seems desirable to defer making a firm commitment until the trial of the Air Force detainees is over.

iv) Operational assistance would be a much more substantial matter. This would risk ever greater involvement in repression and a tribal war. We must avoid this.

v) We should leave to the commercial sector the provision of any significant number of new personnel for the armed forces (IMS and Air Work are at present negotiating loan contracts).

b) Economic

i) UK aid will not suffice to turn Zimbabwe's economy round. We should rather aim for optimum targetting of critical areas such as agriculture, manpower, training, energy and communications. Aid can bolster UK trade. (Recent disbursements include engines for 22 railway locomotives, 275 Ford tractors, 120 BL Landrovers and 2 Pye Outside Broadcast Units. ATP of £9 million has been crucial in winning major public sector contracts). The City makes an important contribution to the private sector in Zimbabwe, and we should encourage it to continue to do so.

ii) The exposure of the young to UK further education may help foster unity and tolerance: we should consider Zimbabwe a priority recipient for any selective assistance with overseas student fees that may be agreed.

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iii) Though some land re-distribution is politically essential for Mugabe, we should try to stave off pressures for any precipitate programme (there is already evidence of a growing realism). We should emphasise the need to maintain the flourishing commercial farming sector. Our existing assistance programme should help us to exert a restraining influence, and subject to the two factors mentioned above, we should be prepared to consider providing more funds in due course.

c) Political

i) We should make clear that we maintain our support for a multi-racial Zimbabwe

ii) We should consider further ways of influencing opinion leaders. These might include:

- a) more inward visits by senior Zimbabwean Ministers and officials, so that they can be exposed to our concerns;
- b) an early outward visit by an all-party parliamentary delegation;
- c) more exchanges in areas relevant to human rights, eg. judiciary, police;
- d) greater use of prominent UK non-official visitors eg. from the City to put our views across in Harare;
- e) consider with the High Commission whether any change is desirable in their local profile (eg about contact with the opposition parties);
- f) encouragement for the promotion of a UK-Zimbabwe businessman's group in London to promote British interests in Zimbabwe.



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(1)	Area	390,000 km ²				
	Population	7.6 million				
			<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
(2)	Visible Trade Balance		182.2	139.2	65.6	-78.0
	Overall Balance of Payments (in Z\$m. 1Z\$ = £0.75)		108.4	43	-11.4	-120.3
			<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	
(3)	UK Exports		16.3	45.3	approx.100	
	UK Imports (in £m)		28.7	38.3		
(4)	UK Development Aid Forecast Expenditure:			<u>1982/83</u>		
				(£m)		
	Technical Cooperation					6.2
	Capital Aid					
	- Equipment (including railway vehicles)		4.7			
	- Reconstruction		4.3			
	- Land Resettlement		<u>5.5</u>			<u>14.5</u>
						20.7
(5)	Land Resettlement					
	- so far purchased:	800,000 hectares				
(6)	UK Military Assistance	<u>1982/83</u>	(£m)			
		<u>In UK</u>		<u>In Zimbabwe</u>		
		0.06		3.3	(1)	

(1) The Zimbabwean authorities contribute another £0.45 million to this programme.

BMATT now totals 44 officers and 60 NCOs.

Zimbabwe
UK/relations



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✓ cc. MOD.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 December 1982

Zimbabwe

The Prime Minister has seen the minute of 9 December by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary covering a note on policy towards Zimbabwe.

Mrs. Thatcher is now inclined to think that it may be best to postpone the proposed review of our policy towards Zimbabwe. She believes that it will be particularly important to see how the human rights situation in Zimbabwe develops in the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, she believes that any decisions which have been held up by the preparation of the review should be brought forward. In particular, she recognises that an early decision on the proposed sale of six Hunter aircraft and ground equipment to the Zimbabwe airforce on commercial terms is needed. This matter could be considered immediately following the meeting at 1730 on Wednesday 15 December when, as you know, Mr. Pym and Mr. Nott are to discuss with the Prime Minister the question of a possible contribution to the multi-national force in the Lebanon. It would be helpful if you could let me know whether Roger Bone's letter to me of 2 December about the proposed aircraft sale still represents the advice which Mr. Pym would wish to put to the Prime Minister before the meeting on 15 December.

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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