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DESKBY 101100Z  
FM HARARE 100904Z DEC 82  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 734 OF 9 DECEMBER.

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I D SMITH AND ANGLO/ZIMBABWE RELATIONS.

SUMMARY.

1. REACTION TO SMITH'S LONDON AND WASHINGTON VISITS IS GROWING FIERCER, AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. WE SHOULD TRY TO DEFUSE IT. MUGABE'S ORAL MESSAGE ABOUT TORTURE GIVES US AN OPENING. I SHOULD LIKE INSTRUCTIONS TO CONVEY AN ORAL MESSAGE TO HIM (IN MY IFT)

*Please ignore. The F/c.o. do not recommend a message to Mugabe yet. A.J.C. 10/12*

ARGUMENT.

2. YOU HAVE MY ACCOUNTS OF CONVERSATIONS WITH SEKERAMAYI (TELNO 710) AND MUBAKO (TELNO 723), ALSO MUGABE'S MESSAGE ABOUT TORTURE VIA GENERAL SHORTIS (TELNO 712). SQUIRE MAY HAVE REPORTED HIS TALKS WITH THE TWO WHITE MINISTERS NORMAN AND ANDERSON.

3. DAVID YOUNG - INFLUENTIAL AND LEVEL HEADED TREASURY SECRETARY UNDER SMITH, MUZOREWA, SOAMES AND MUGABE, AND NOW CHAIRMAN OF THE STEEL CORPORATION - SOUGHT ME OUT TO SAY THAT HE IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT SMITH'S CURRENT STATE OF MIND AND THE EFFECTS OF HIS RECENT ACTIONS. YOUNG CLAIMS TO HAVE TWO INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTS OF A RECENT GATHERING OF PROMINENT PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA AT WHICH SMITH SAID HE IS AWAITING AN EARLY CALL TO RESUME THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE. AS YOUNG COMMENTED, SUCH TALK IS BOTH FANCIFUL AND DANGEROUS. YOUNG UNDERSTOOD SMITH HAD SUFFERED A MILD STROKE EARLIER THIS YEAR, AND WONDERED IF HE HAD FULLY RECOVERED. THAT COULD BE. WHATEVER HIS FAULTS, SMITH HAS ALWAYS HAD THE INTERESTS OF THIS COUNTRY AND THE WHITES IN IT CLOSE TO HEART, AND I AGREE WITH YOUNG THAT HIS CURRENT LINE THREATENS BOTH.

4. TRACEY (YOUR TELNO 435) ASKED ME TO LUNCH WITH HIM YESTERDAY TO DESCRIBE HIS VISIT TO LONDON AND TO SAY THAT HE ALSO IS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF SMITH'S VISIT ON OPINION IN BRITAIN AND HERE. TRACEY ATTENDED THE LORDS DEBATE ON 2 DECEMBER AND CLAIMS THAT LORD PAGET TOLD HIM AFTERWARDS THAT HIS (PAGET'S) SPEECH WAS BASED ON NOTES PREPARED FOR HIM BY VAN DER BYL.

5. MRS MUGABE YESTERDAY TELEPHONED MY WIFE AND RAISED THE SMITH QUESTION. DURING AN AMICABLE CONVERSATION SHE SAID HOW SHOCKED SHE AND MUGABE WERE BY SMITH'S BEHAVIOUR, SURPRISED THAT HE HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER HERSELF, AND UPSET BY THE SUBSEQUENT BAD PRESS ON ZIMBABWE. THE (BLACK BUT PRAGMATIC) MINISTER OF EDUCATION HAS SAID THE SAME TO US, AS HAVE SENIOR WHITE BUSINESSMEN INCLUDING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ZIMBABWE STOCK EXCHANGE.

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6. DENIS NORMAN REPEATED TO ME THIS MORNING THAT WHAT MOST CONCERNS HIM ABOUT SMITH'S RECENT LINE IS ITS EFFECT UPON THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TO THE WHITE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. WHEN SMITH BEHAVED LIKE THIS IT GENERATED AN EMOTIONAL REACTION FROM BLACK POLITICIANS AND HE WAS DISMAYED TO NOTE OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS A SLIGHT BUT PERCEPTIBLE COOLING IN THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIM OF HIS FELLOW BLACK MINISTERS. I AM SURE THAT WILL PASS, BUT IT HAS CLEARLY WORRIED NORMAN.

7. MUCH OF THE BLACK REACTION TO SMITH'S ACTIVITIES IS TIRESOME EMOTIONALISM. BUT GIVEN THE HISTORY OF THE PAST 20 YEARS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT IAN SMITH CAN SO EASILY AROUSE EMOTIONS. THE WHITE REACTION REFLECTS AN APPRECIATION THAT THESE EMOTIONS CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR THEM. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WISE FOR US TO TRY TO DRAW A LINE UNDER THE CURRENT CHAPTER (THAT ASSUMES THAT NEITHER SMITH NOR THE GOVERNMENT HERE WILL TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO KEEP THE ROW GOING). I WOULD WELCOME AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN FORMALLY TO MUGABE THAT, WITH REGARD TO SMITH'S VISIT TO LONDON, THERE ARE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES ON OUR SIDE AS WELL AS HIS. BUT I WOULD PREFER TO DO SO ON GROUNDS OF OUR OWN CHOOSING (SEE MIFT) RATHER THAN AWAITING A ZIMBABWEAN INITIATIVE.

8. IN ALL THIS WE NEED TO BE CLEAR WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE. MR SMITH ARGUES THAT WE SHOULD USE OUR AID TO INFLUENCE ZIMBABWEAN POLICY. THAT HAS BEEN OUR CONSTANT ENDEAVOUR. BUT (AS HE HIMSELF RECOGNISES) WE CANNOT MAKE THE LEVER MOVE MORE THAN ITS STRENGTH WILL BEAR OR WE RISK AN ADVERSE REACTION.

9. BMATT HAS ENABLED US TO INFLUENCE MILITARY POLICY, AS GENERAL SHORTIS, CURRENTLY IN LONDON, CAN CONFIRM. MILITARY DISCIPLINE IS NOT BEING TAKEN IN HAND (THOUGH THERE IS MUCH YET TO BE DONE). THE COMMANDER OF THE NORTH KOREAN FIFTH BRIGADE IS NOW DEMANDING MORE THAN HIS SHARE OF THE PLACES ON BMATT COURSES BECAUSE 'WE HAVE ARREARS TO MAKE UP COMPARED WITH THE OTHER FOUR BRIGADES'. (THAT HARDLY SUGGESTS LOSING OUT TO COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.)

10. ON THE LAND SETTLEMENT SIDE WE HAVE BEEN USING THE LEVERAGE OUR AID GIVES US, WITH PROGRESSIVE SUCCESS SO FAR, TO WEAN THE ZIMBABWEANS FROM UNREALISTIC OR DAMAGING COURSES. THEIR NEW DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MY TELNO 693) FOR THE FIRST TIME FIRMLY ADMITS THAT THE TARGET OF RESETTLING 162,000 FAMILIES CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IN THREE YEARS. THE MINISTER OF LANDS RECENTLY TOLD WHITE FARMERS THAT HE WOULD NO LONGER BUY FARMS ANY OLD WHERE, BUT ONLY IN AREAS SUITED TO RESETTLEMENT RATHER THAN INTENSIVE COMMERCIAL FARMING. THESE ARE BOTH VITAL POINTS FOR THE FUTURE OF COMMERCIAL FARMERS WHICH WE HAVE BEEN PUSHING FIRMLY BUT QUIETLY. WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE SO WITHOUT AID INVOLVEMENT.

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Now? ?



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11. ON TORTURE AND DETENTIONS WE ARE ALSO MAKING SOME PROGRESS. I HAVE REPORTED ON THE FORMER. ON THE LATTER, IN THE AFTERMATH OF ELAM'S INTERVENTION (HIS TELNO 675) I WAS SHOWN ON 3 DECEMBER A LETTER FROM USHEWOKUNZE TO THE COMMERCIAL (WHITE) FARMERS UNION SAYING HE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THAT DETENTION OF FARMERS FOR MINOR FIREARMS OFFENCES MUST CEASE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO RECENT CASES.

12. ALL THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT TROUBLES WILL SOON BE OVER. ZIMBABWE IS NOW A BLACK AFRICAN STATE WITH AN AFRICAN NATIONALIST/AFRICAN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT. STANDARDS OF ADMINISTRATION AND EFFICIENCY WILL INEVITABLY BE LOWER THAN WE WOULD WISH. THEY WILL DECLINE FURTHER (THOUGH I HOPE NOT MUCH) BEFORE THEY SETTLE AT A LEVEL.

13. HOWEVER, A PLACE FOR THE WHITE COMMUNITY REMAINS AND CAN BE PRESERVED. TWO THINGS ARE NECESSARY FOR THAT: AN UPTURN IN WORLD ECONOMY TO BOOST THE LOCAL ONE (WELL POISED TO REACT) AND A CHANGE IN THE PRESENT EMOTIONAL AND ARBITRARY INCUMBENT OF THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (POLICE, DETENTIONS, PASSPORTS, EMIGRATION, ETC).

14. WE HAVE SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT A MAJOR POWER STRUGGLE MAY BE COMING TO A HEAD IN THE CABINET, IN THE FORM OF A MOVE TO OUST USHEWOKUNZE FROM HOME AFFAIRS. HIS BITTER OPPONENTS ARE AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF INFLUENTIAL MINISTERS, SOME OF WHOM WE HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED AS MODERATE (MUZENDA, CHIDZERO, MUNANGACWA) AND OTHERS WHO USED TO BE THOUGHT RADICAL (NKALA, NUAGUMBO). ZAPU, WHOSE RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT ARE IMPROVING, IS SOLIDLY AGAINST HIM. HE SEEMS TO HAVE NO REAL FRIENDS, BUT HE IS USEFUL TO MUGABE IN THE SENSE THAT THE GRASS ROOTS OF ZANU REGARD HIM AS THE SOLE REMAINING EFFECTIVE VOICE IN THE CABINET OF THE PARTY'S 'REVOLUTIONARY' CONSCIENCE. WITH LUCK A RESHUFFLE MIGHT AT LEAST MOVE HIM SIDWAYS.

15. PERHAPS THE MOST WORRYING ASPECT OF THE TENSION WHICH SMITH HAS PROVOKED IS THAT THEY PLAY INTO USHEWOKUNZE'S HAND BY RAISING EMOTIONS AGAINST MODERATION. THIS AT A TIME WHICH CHIDZERO ALREADY REGARDED AS SO CRUCIAL AS TO FORGO A MUCH-NEEDED DECEMBER LEAVE. I FEEL STRONGLY THAT WE MUST FIND A WAY TO PLAY OUR HAND SO AS TO HELP IN CURRENT MOVES TO PULL THE RUG FROM UNDER USHEWOKUNZE'S FEET. MUCH MAY DEPEND, FOR THE WHITES AND OUR INVESTMENT AND TRADE INTERESTS IN ZIMBABWE, ON THAT HAPPENING SOON BEFORE HE HAS DONE PERMANENT DAMAGE TO THE EFFICIENCY OF THE POLICE AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF LAW. AS MATTERS STAND HIS REPLACEMENT BY A LEVEL-HEADED MINISTER WOULD, I BELIEVE, LEAD TO A DRAMATICALLY RAPID IMPROVEMENT ON MATTERS SUCH AS DETENTION AND TORTURE. WE CANNOT ENSURE USHEWOKUNZE'S REMOVAL, BUT WE CAN TRY TO AVOID A SITUATION WHERE, FOR MUGABE, POSTING HIM BECOMES A MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL FACE.



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16. I THINK THAT MUGABE'S LATEST MESSAGE ABOUT TORTURE GIVES US AN OPENING. WE SHOULD PIN HIM TO IT BY WELCOMING IT WARMLY, AND INDICATE THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO PICK A ROW OVER MR SMITH'S VISIT TO LONDON. WE COULD AT THE SAME TIME TRY TO PREPARE A FAVOURABLE BASIS FOR MR ONSLOW'S FORTHCOMING VISIT (SEE MIFT)

BYATT

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PS/HR ONSLOW

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SIR J LEAHY

MR SQUIRE

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