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MASTER

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. GARFIELD TODD AT 1030 ON TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER AT 10 DOWNING STREET

The Prime Minister invited Mr. Todd to describe the present situation in Zimbabwe. Mr. Todd said that the most immediate problem was an extremely serious petrol shortage, caused by the recent blowing up of a refinery.

More generally, things had gone very well during the first year after independence. But then problems had arisen. Arms caches had been discovered in Matabeleland. Some of the whites in the security services, who had been kept on from pre-independence days, had been manipulated by South Africa. Then "someone" had arranged to assemble all the fighter aircraft of the Zimbabwe airforce in one place, where they had been blown up. The South Africans were the only people who would consider doing a thing like that. More recently, there had been the South African raid into Lesotho resulting in the death of 40 people. Against this background it was surprising that Mugabe remained so calm. It was fortunate that he had taken power with such an overwhelming majority. The first speech he had made on reconciliation was outstanding.

Despite all the difficulties, the armed forces had remained strong. But the arrest by the Government of the ZANU military leaders, Dabengwa and Masuku, had led to the departure of a number of Zipra soldiers.

There was a tendency in London to gauge the situation by the reactions of the white community rather than those of the seven million blacks.

The Prime Minister said that a number of matters had caused concern. There had been the case of Mr. Stuttaford. Then there had been the allegations of torture of certain officers of the Zimbabwe airforce, who were still being held without trial. Mr. Todd commented that he himself had been imprisoned for 5½ years without trial under the Smith regime. He had not himself been tortured but the person who was to give evidence against him had admitted that his written evidence had been extracted by torture.

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Zimbabwe depended on its judiciary. The Chief Justice was first class, so was another judge called Baron who was a brother of the scientist, Dr. Bronowski. The behaviour of the Minister for Home Affairs gave cause for concern. He (Mr. Todd) had protested strongly to Mr. Mugabe about him. The Minister had now been sent on long leave though it remained to be seen how significant this was. Many people in Zimbabwe were deeply concerned and would do all they could to support the judiciary. But it had to be realised that the whole country was shaken by South African behaviour - South Africa would stop at nothing, as had been seen when white South African soldiers, carrying explosives for sabotage, were discovered inside Zimbabwe.

The Prime Minister said that she always had reservations about people who had led terrorist campaigns. Mr. Todd suggested that Mr. Ian Smith had himself led a terrorist campaign against the people of Zimbabwe. The Prime Minister said that we had asked Mugabe to surrender the bullet for the ballot box and he had in fact done so. We were very fortunate that he was now Prime Minister. He had behaved very well and had abided by the fundamentals of the Lancaster House Agreement. She understood that he knew nothing of the torture of the detained airforce officers. We were however concerned about the moves towards a one-party state. Mr. Todd said that progress in that direction was not very quick. Mugabe would observe the Lancaster House Agreement. The recent events which had led to criticism of the Zimbabwe regime were aberrations rather than normal policy. He had great confidence in the present Minister of Justice who was dedicated to upholding the law. During his present visit to London he had been in touch with the International Commission of Jurists and had arranged for them to send out a good lawyer when Dabengwa and Masuku stood trial for treason in January. The Prime Minister commented that it would be disturbing if the trials of the airforce officers were delayed until July. She was grateful for Mr. Todd's assurances that he and people like him would stand up for the judiciary. The rule of law was the single most important thing.

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/ Mr. Todd

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Mr. Todd said that he thought the Prime Minister would find it helpful to have a talk some time with Lord Campbell of Eskan. He was sensitive and knowledgeable and had vast experience of newly independent countries.

He (Mr. Todd) would be returning to Zimbabwe tomorrow, would see Mugabe and would press for the trials of the airforce officers to be brought forward. But we should remember that Mugabe himself had been imprisoned for ten years. It was surprising that he was still as reasonable as he was. During the Smith regime all values had been abandoned. No-one wanted that to happen again.

The Prime Minister asked how badly affected Mr. Todd's area had been by the present drought. Mr. Todd said the situation was so bad that, on his return to Zimbabwe, he might have to sell his whole herd. The people who lived in his area would have no crops this year at all. The situation was desperate.

The conversation ended at 1115.

A.J.C.

21 December 1982

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ZIMBABWE

HL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 December 1982

Dear Roger,

Zimbabwe: Call on the Prime Minister by
Mr. Garfield Todd

Mr. Todd called on the Prime Minister this morning. I enclose a record of the conversation.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever

John Colson.

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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