



Prime Minister

Mr. Onslow's report (attached) is well worth reading. Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2. Agree that we should now deliver the Hunters and second 12 RAF technicians?

21 January, 1983

A.J.C. $\frac{20}{1}$

John Selous

Zimbabwe

Mr Pym has asked that the Prime Minister should see / the enclosed report prepared by Mr Onslow following his recent visit to Zimbabwe. I am also taking the opportunity / to forward Mr Mugabe's reply to the Prime Minister's letter of 31 December (the text of which you will already have seen in Harare telno 2).

The immediate issue for decision is whether to go ahead now with the delivery of the Hunter aircraft. Our hesitations have been caused by our concern about the treatment of the detained air force officers, and doubts about their prospects of a fair trial. Mr Mugabe has given us an assurance that the trial will be fair and that the allegations of torture will be properly investigated. The difficult decision now is whether to accept that assurance, or to continue to play for time. The trial is not expected until later this spring. Some observers have mentioned late February, but according to the defence lawyers it is likely to be later than that, and if as is possible, the lawyers press for a prior civil hearing the trial proceedings might not be completed for several months. We must clearly not appear to be pressing the Zimbabwe authorities to bring the trial forward if defence lawyers believe that the interests of their clients would be better served by a different - albeit more lengthy - procedure.

In the circumstances, therefore, Mr Pym believes that we should go ahead with the package as originally envisaged, including the delivery of the Hunters and ancillary equipment, and the secondment on commercial terms for a limited period of 12 RAF technicians. In doing so, we would instruct the High Commission to make clear that our decision was taken after careful consideration of Mr Mugabe's letter and in recognition of Mr Mugabe's assurances. Mr Pym would be grateful for the Prime Minister's agreement, and that of the Minister of Defence, that we would proceed with the Zimbabweans on this basis. If the Prime Minister prefers, Mr Pym would be happy to have a word about this before a decision is taken.

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I am sending copies of this letter and enclosures to Richard Mottram at the MOD and to John Rhodes in the Department of Trade.

Yes

R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 January 1983

ZIMBABWE

The Prime Minister has read your letter of 21 January and the enclosed report by Mr. Cranley Onslow on his visit to Zimbabwe last month.

The Prime Minister agrees with the proposal of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary that we should now go ahead with the delivery of the Hunters and ancillary equipment and the secondment on commercial terms for a limited period of 12 RAF technicians.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and John Rhodes (Department of Trade).

A. J. COLES

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Secretary of State

1. I visited Zimbabwe from 5-8 January.
2. I had a good meeting with Mugabe, at which I was able to hand over the Prime Minister's message. (He has, as you know, since replied.) He welcomed our decision on the Hunters. I also saw the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Industry and Energy. I had meetings with John Nkomo (representing ZAPU); with Ian Smith; and with Chris Andersen (a junior Minister and de facto parliamentary leader of the Whites opposed to Smith). I paid a brief visit to the BMATT operation at Inkomo, spent part of a day on a White farm north of Harare, and met a wide cross-section of politicians, farmers, academics, industrialists and businessmen at social functions organised by the High Commission.
3. There are some serious problems in Zimbabwe. But the full picture is rather different from that presented in recent British press reports.
4. Not all of the country's difficulties are susceptible to remedial action by the Government. Drought; the world recession; and the disruption of the economy caused by the blowing up of the Beira pipeline and petrol storage tanks are serious examples. But others are within the power of the Government to tackle - notably the security situation in Matabeleland and its effect on the morale of the White community, and also the apparent reluctance of the authorities to take prompt steps to deal with the arbitrary behaviour of the sinister Zimpolis (a shadowy force of plain clothes security thugs answerable only to the Minister of Home Affairs).
5. There are equally very positive indicators. The policy of reconciliation has so far been maintained, and seems in general to be working well. The willingness of all sections of the community (including all but a hard core of Whites) to forget the past and work to build the future is truly impressive. It is a particular tribute to Mugabe, whose personal commitment has been central to the success of the policy, and without whose encouragement it could still break down.
6. The recent spate of dissident attacks in Matabeleland has undoubtedly had a bad effect on White morale. But the military authorities have moved promptly to shore up the morale of the (White) farming community. Orders have been issued that harassment must stop; and in sharp reversal of previous practice, farmers in the worst affected areas have

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been issued with weapons by the Government to help them defend themselves. Tough action to flush out the bandits has been promised. The practical results, of course, remain to be seen, and it is probable that there will still, unhappily, be some successful dissident attacks on White targets. But the Government reaction should have a significant effect in enabling the White community to recognise that they are not being left defenceless. However, it would be wrong to underestimate the effect that continuation of deliberate harassment by the Zimpolis may have on White confidence in the Government's motives.

7. In Matabeleland the root cause of the trouble is almost certainly tribal, involving gangs of former ZIPRA men, and closely associated with land tenure problems. In dealing with this the Government scores less well. Mugabe does not disguise his bitterness about the attitude of his old adversary Joshua Nkomo, who remains the titular spokesman of the (minority) Ndebele tribe, and there is evident reluctance on his part to do any deal with him. He does however have representatives of Nkomo's party in his Cabinet, and senior Ministers in his Government spend long hours trying to ensure that the tribal rivalry does not get out of control. But as long as Nkomo remains in the wilderness, the potential for friction is there, and Mugabe evidently believes that it is being exploited by South Africa.

8. The Government's overall record on human rights and civil liberties is not altogether bad, given the circumstances. There have been some serious lapses, which have been widely publicised. But Mugabe was emphatic (and I believe him) that he holds no brief for human rights abuses, and that any allegations would in due course be fully investigated and appropriate action taken. I was encouraged to see in this context that three policemen convicted of maltreatment of prisoners in their custody were themselves sentenced to long jail sentences the day before I arrived. It is still most important that the same care for civil liberties should be manifested on the security side.

9. The Government are particularly touchy over the detained Air Force officers (who are, of course, Zimbabwe citizens). I raised the question with Mugabe, as John Nott had done, and his immediate response was that we were only concerned because the officers were White. I did my best to rebut this, and hope I made some impression: nevertheless, he remains adamant that any investigation into the torture allegations must wait until after the trial. The Government clearly wants to dispose of the matter as quickly as it can. The Minister of Justice has spoken of having the trial over by the end of February. I have my doubts about this, not

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least because of the tactics the defence lawyers seem to be adopting. On substance, however, I found general acceptance (shared by the head of the Air Force, Air Marshal Walsh, with whom I had a long discussion) that the trial would be fair and any evidence obtained under duress would be declared inadmissible. It remains to be accepted, however, that there must, at the very least, have been serious and culpable negligence on the part of some Air Force personnel, and the troubles of the ZAF are by no means going to end when the treason trial is over.

10. I was much impressed by the quality of the Ministers I saw. Mugabe's Cabinet must be one of the most highly educated, and able, in Black Africa. Pragmatism is clearly gaining against Marxist dogma, but the decision process is painfully slow. I was equally impressed by the genuinely easy relationship between the different communities, and the evident determination of large numbers of Whites to stay, and to see the present difficulties through.

11. The greatest danger facing Zimbabwe is not, I think, internal. It comes from South Africa. I found all sections of the community deeply worried by the growing evidence that South Africa is now actively involved in a destabilisation campaign aimed at Zimbabwe. South Africa undoubtedly has the ability, by systematic use of sabotage and economic pressures, and by covertly inflaming local and regional jealousies, to undermine all that has been achieved. Like others of South Africa's neighbours, the Zimbabweans are right to be worried, and I believe the problem is one that we ourselves need to reappraise as a matter of urgency.

12. In sum, I found much that was positive in Mugabe's Zimbabwe. There are obvious blemishes. But any turn of events that led to Mugabe's departure, or to any substantial weakening of links with the West (with the exodus of Whites that would surely follow) would, after all that has been achieved, be nothing short of a tragedy. The stakes remain as high as ever, but we still enjoy a unique position of respect and authority.

13. It follows that we should continue to do all we can to help: this is no time to adopt a more distant and formalistic attitude. We are already heavily involved. Our aid programme stands at f114 million. BMATT has earned deserved praise for the excellence of its courses and advice. What is needed now is, in Mugabe's words, a little friendly encouragement. The emphasis in recent months has tended to dwell on the negative aspects. We should in future seek, without blinding ourselves to the defects, to present a more balanced picture and to emphasise what has been achieved since Independence. In practical terms, we should also give renewed, favourable consideration to those elements in the Air Force package which we have for the moment put on one side.

/14. Finally

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14. Finally, we should consider what we can do, by ourselves or with our allies, to bring home to the South Africans the folly of seeking to create chaos along their northern borders. It is certainly not in our interests that they should succeed in doing so. It is hard to see that it can be in theirs.

Cranley Onslow

18 January 1983

PRIME MINISTER

HARARE



7th January, 1983.

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

I write to thank you for your letter of 31st December, 1982, which Mr. Cranley Onslow was kind enough to deliver to me. I am glad that General Shortis transmitted to you my Government's position regarding the case of the Air Force Officers awaiting trial.

I have now, once again, expressed to Mr. Onslow the attitude of my Government to that case and to a number of others of the same category. At the same time, I have also expressed to him my dismay at the accusation of the violation of human rights levelled at my Government by you and your Government at a time we are doing our best to make the situation here more peaceful and, therefore, more protective of the Constitution and the democratic order it creates for the sustenance of those human rights. Indeed, in a situation in which some misguided and lawless elements are taking to terrorism and acts of sabotage, while South Africa is daily planning and executing its own programme of direct and indirect attacks on us, we have refused to be stampeded into hasty actions whose possible effect might be to curtail civil liberties. And this is precisely how we propose to continue governing. What we need, therefore, is a

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little word of encouragement and acknowledgement of what we have managed to achieve so far even against the tremendous odds that faced us at Independence, arising from the hostilities that prevailed during UDI.

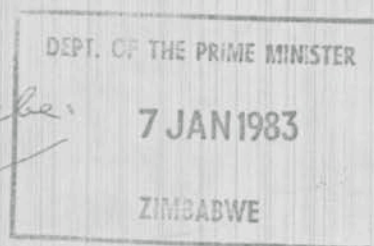
My Government is very happy indeed that the BMATT team has recently been increased. As I have stated on several occasions, this team has contributed in no small way towards the peace and stability we generally have in the country.

I am glad that your Government is now ready to proceed with arrangements for the sale of Hunter aircraft and ground equipment. Mr. Onslow has discussed the matter briefly with me, but I hope conclusive arrangements can be gone into before he leaves.

Once again, Happy New Year!

Yours sincerely,

Robert G. Mugabe



The Honourable Mrs. Thatcher
10 Downing Street,
London.

Zimbabwe: UK Relations
Pt 3

21 JAN 1983



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Zimbabwe



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone ~~01-930-7622~~ 218 2111/3

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25th January 1983

I have asked Rod to copy this to
the F/C.O.

N.B.P.R.

A.J.C. 15.

Dear John,

ZIMBABWE

The Defence Secretary has seen a copy of Roger Bone's letter to you of 21 January and your reply of 24th January about the sale of Hunter aircraft and the loan of 12 RAF personnel to the Zimbabwe Government.

The Defence Secretary agrees that both our defence sales interests and the wider considerations of our relations with Zimbabwe argue in favour of our now proceeding with both elements of the package. In the case of the RAF technicians, however, the loan must be subject to acceptance by the Zimbabwe Government of our usual financial arrangements, and of suitable volunteers being identified. On this understanding the Defence Secretary is content that we should go ahead with the arrangements for the delivery of the Hunters, and that we should initiate discussions with the Zimbabwe authorities about the terms for the loan of the RAF personnel.

Yours ever,

(J E RIDLEY)(MISS)

A J Coles Esq

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Zimbabwe UK Relations PT 3

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
AIR MAIL UNIT LONDON SW1



25 JUN 1983

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