

February 20, 1975

J.F. Gaylard to Air Vice-Marshal H. Hawkins

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*Note/ P.M. was on his own in his meeting with South African Ministers
at Lusaka. Minister, EAT bank and England had
spoke simultaneously with P.M. & V.S. Baza.*

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AND PERSONAL**

20th February, 1975

In the discussions on Sunday it became clear that Mr. Vorster and his colleagues are convinced that they can trust the four presidents and they believe the "promise" that after the Rhodesian and South West African issues have been settled the status quo in South Africa will be accepted. This belief persists despite recent remarks by Kaunda, Nyerere and Machel. They were not shaken by any of the evidence put by the Prime Minister of long term African objectives, including the latent joint South African/Rhodesian military intelligence appreciation, from which the Prime Minister quoted. (I do not think it had yet filtered through to their level but they discounted its findings nevertheless). They are quite sure that the somewhat harsh terms of the Lusaka manifesto - as it applies to South Africa - have been mitigated by the detente exercise.

The Prime Minister detailed the factors which have led to recent African euphoria in and over Rhodesia and to a lowering of white morale here -

- (a) Release of detainees - effect on chiefs - militant claims particularly by Sithole - failure of Chona's assurance that he had brought back "men of peace who would maintain a low profile and whose urgent task was to win white confidence."
- (b) The so-called Vorster plan which the Prime Minister read out to them. Vorster strenuously denied any knowledge of it. The Prime Minister readily accepted this but said that the damage had nevertheless been done as the African nationalists, who were given copies of this document in Lusaka, believed implicitly in it.
- (c) Repeated calls in the South African press for early majority rule in Rhodesia. Vorster reacted strongly and quoted Masekela reports of his own speeches. The Prime Minister could not get Vorster to see that he was not criticising him in any way but was merely pointing

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out the effects on Rhodesians - black and white - of the many damaging press reports and comments. You will recall having had the same reaction from Vorster in response to earlier complaints about the South African press. There seems to be scope for follow-up action here and it will be helpful if you can re-assure Vorster that his own remarks have throughout the exercise been unexceptionable, and that the Prime Minister has been grateful for them. Regrettably the good they do is invariably nullified by the unjustified interpretation placed on them by Afrikaans and English newspapers in South Africa, whose comments receive much publicity and are widely quoted overseas and here. The Prime Minister was trying to indicate that these comments do not upset him because he knows the facts, but nevertheless they encourage African euphoria and at the same time depress white morale here.

3. Your own very pertinent point about the world-wide psychological pressure on white Rhodesians bears repetition. Previously the South Africans held aloof from this pressure or gave us moral support, despite strenuous efforts on the part of the British to drive a wedge between us. It is a pity they do not seem able to comprehend that if our negotiating position is weakened the chances of a settlement will be reduced because the Prime Minister's basic philosophy is to avoid negotiating from a weak position. Only today we had a further indication from intelligence sources that Sithole is convinced that Vorster will support his demand for immediate majority rule. Whether that is so or not is immaterial - what is significant is that Sithole believes it. The point which emerges from all this is that if they want a Rhodesian settlement they must strengthen us, not weaken us.

4. Botha asked about the security of investment in Rhodesia and wondered whether, when the chips were down, Rhodesia would fight or give in. The Prime Minister told them in no uncertain terms that Rhodesia would fight and would never give in to terrorist pressures. If necessary we would fight alone, but the South African Government should be in no doubt about our determination. These remarks seem to have caused some long faces but apparently Botha gave an assurance that they would never leave us in the lurch.

5. Kruger spoke of the urgent need to bring his police home because he was terribly stretched and particularly because they were now "twiddling the U thumbs" in Rhodesia. The Prime Minister suggested in reply that the SAP should be replaced by the military but he was told that any move of this sort would wreck the prospects of detente. He seems to have had a rather half-hearted assurance from Kruger of consultation at Prime Minister level before any further withdrawals took place and he was told that there would certainly have to be an effective cease fire first. You are well placed to judge the value of these promises in the light of their separate attempts to make the cease fire effective.

The Prime Minister ridiculed any suggestion that we should stop seeking out terrorists. His pouring of scorn seems to have had more effect than our own protracted arguments on Sunday morning because the South African Ministers did not contest this point. In this connection I have asked Derek Robinson to keep you posted daily through Fletcher regarding incidents. You will judge how and when to use the information. Derek telephoned Chona on Tuesday morning and again yesterday morning to give him information on the latest incidents. It was received cordially if not enthusiastically. You will have noted the evidence of a fresh incursion through the border sanitaire. ~~Incidents of these kind have occurred in the past~~ Minister level. The Prime Minister's very clear statement

6. They pressed the Prime Minister on the inevitability of majority rule in our philosophy, but he refuted it. He reminded them (and this bears frequent repetition to the South African press) that the 1969 Constitution makes no provision for majority rule and that progression to parity in Parliament in terms of the present income tax regulator would be measured in centuries and not decades. He said he would be prepared to move to a common roll and a qualified franchise but at a level which would ensure the control of the white man for a long period, bearing in mind the effects of immigration after a settlement. They suggested ten years as an acceptable period to majority rule but he gave them no comfort on this point. (This suggestion accords with an opinion said to have been expressed by General van den Bergh to Patrick Walls). The Prime Minister then asked them whether they would prefer us to move to the South African system of Bantustans. This evidently caused some pale faces and Haller described at length the disastrous effect which any such move would have on world opinion.

7. The Prime Minister spoke of the intransigence of Sithole and the impossibility of reaching any settlement with him. But I am not sure that he stressed to the extent we did the need for Kaunda and company to neutralise ZANU as a whole. I believe it would be helpful to take a positive line and to express confidence in the chance of reaching a realistic settlement with ANC and ZAPU with suitable encouragement from Kaunda.

8. The Prime Minister suggested that Vorster should put it to Kaunda that in keeping with the spirit of detente he should allow South African goods bound for Zambia to be carried by Rhodesia Railways via the Victoria Falls. Such goods, after all, are going through to Zaire directly. This appealed to Vorster and he said that he would take it up with Kaunda. (The Prime Minister suggests that you should follow this up in due course). Vorster evidently appeared disappointed that so far he had not been able to meet Kaunda in person and he hinted at an attempt in the near future.

9. A worrying aspect is the South Africans' apparent belief that renewed terrorism would defeat us. It would help to take every opportunity of putting the two-year campaign in perspective regarding the failure of the terrorists to achieve their objectives, the relative casualties - military and civilian - and to stress our capacity to retaliate against Zambia and Mozambique if fresh attacks were launched from those countries. The South Africans certainly

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do not relish any new upsurge of terrorism and if they can be convinced that we would react strongly there is a prospect that they would convey this impression to the appropriate quarters in the north.

10. Summing up it seems that the South Africans are hell bent on detente and are just not prepared to consider any evidence which does not accord with the political conclusions they have reached. In particular they will disregard the evidence of their own military authorities-if these are ever permitted to penetrate to Prime Minister level. The Prime Minister's very clear statement of Rhodesian determination may give them some second thoughts. I do not believe that they dare jettison us, so perhaps they will realise the advantages of applying persuasion to Banda and his colleagues. I am afraid, however, that the latest statements from the north seem to indicate that the Presidents sense that they have South Africa "on the run" and are increasing the pressure accordingly.

11. When the Prime Minister reported to his colleagues there was complete support for the firm line he had taken.