

**British government policy and diplomacy in Southern  
Rhodesia, 1979-1980**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on the use of policy and diplomacy by the British government in Southern Rhodesia during 1979-1980. In particular, the necessity of combining short-term flexibility and contingency alongside long-term policy planning during this period will be explored. In order to do so, this thesis uses documents from the British National Archives, in particular files from the Prime Minister's Office (PREM) and the Cabinet Office (CAB). These documents, released in 2011, allow for a close examination of the issues faced by the British government in achieving long term goals whilst circumventing short term crises. This is due to their thorough documentation of high-level political decisions within the British government and their chronological approach, which offers an insight into the ways in which priorities and alliances shifted over time. This work will contribute to the existing material and knowledge on the subject due to its ability to use these recently released documents, which provide a more in-depth insight into high level British government political decisions on Rhodesia than had previously been available. By utilising these within a chronological approach, this work aims to show the development of long-term British government policy in Rhodesia and the ways in which emerging crises and changing relationships affected this.

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**Author's declaration**

I declare that this thesis is an original work, of which I am the sole author. This thesis has not been previously presented for an award at any University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

## Introduction

British government diplomacy regarding Rhodesia during 1979 and 1980 was an invaluable tool. It allowed the government react to short and long term power shifts within the nation and wider Southern African region during a period where Western influence was increasingly limited. The use of diplomacy by the British government as a way in which to affect policy in other nations, particularly the increasingly influential Frontline States, allowed for greater control over the implementation of long term policy goals in Rhodesia. The use of diplomacy to remain in close contact with these nations on a high political level had an impact on the ability of the British government to secure settlements on the future of Rhodesia and to control tensions within a region that was rapidly experiencing growing Cold War tensions. These tensions were particularly important as they drew other Great Powers such as the USA into the situation in Rhodesia, providing a counterweight in assemblies such as the UN against the often Socialist Frontline States. The British government was forced to balance cooperation with its allies alongside satisfying the demands of African nationalist governments in order to maintain as much stability as possible in Rhodesia. This was particularly vital during the vital Lancaster House Conference and 1980 elections, as these events were key to securing a legitimate transition to majority rule for the country. Most important to this stability in securing a settlement was diplomacy with the Frontline States, as the cultivation of influence with these nations in turn provided influence in organisations such as the OAU and offered a middleman through which the demands of the Patriotic Front could be addressed and countered. In return, the continuing economic and political dependence of these states on reaching a stable situation in Southern Africa was exploited in order to ensure that diplomacy was successful. The British government and Frontline States both had an incentive for a mutually agreeable resolution in Rhodesia, with close and precise diplomacy at key intervals being important in preventing this from becoming an impossibility.

On the eve of the February 1980 general election in Zimbabwe Rhodesia, the British government held the greatest presence in the country since Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence fifteen years earlier in 1965. This presence was vital to the government's wish to finish spreading the 'Winds of Change' across Africa that had been started almost twenty years earlier by Harold Macmillan. This had begun the

British government's commitment to majority rule for its African colonies through the process of legitimate, organised and fair elections. Whilst this had for the most part proceeded quickly and relatively smoothly throughout the 1960s, progress in Rhodesia stalled as Ian Smith's rogue white minority government stood between Britain and complete and successful decolonisation of her colonies within the continent. A legitimate election was the main aim of the British government with regards to Rhodesia during this period of involvement, as doing this would address a number of key concerns for Britain. Not only would a legitimate election overseen by the British government constitute success from a moral standpoint, but would also represent a coup for Britain in terms of political power and influence in the region. A majority-ruled Zimbabwe aligned with Britain would present a great opportunity for the British government to expand its influence within a Southern Africa dominated throughout the past five years by Socialist and anti-Western groups backed by China and the USSR.

For this it will be necessary to closely look at the 1979 and 1980 elections in Southern Rhodesia<sup>1</sup>, as British influence and standing within both the region and the wider international community depended on the successful legitimisation of black majority rule in Rhodesia. This was a task that would only be made more difficult by the uncooperative nature of current Prime Minister Ian Smith, and his ideologically hostile opponents in the region. Smith's major opponents were the African nationalist parties ZANU and ZAPU, which were Rhodesian parties that operated from outside the country. These were supported by the governments of the Frontline States, which included Zambia, Angola, Tanzania, and Mozambique. The Rhodesian Internal Settlement was a 1978 agreement between Ian Smith and moderate African leaders Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole and Jeremiah Chirau. This agreement set terms for the country to hold elections leading to black majority rule in 1979, but excluded popular African nationalist parties ZANU and ZAPU. By this time, there was a need for the British government to be able to influence events in Rhodesia as successful and fair decolonisation still relied on the transition to legitimate majority rule. The new British Conservative government faced a situation in Rhodesia that was constantly changing as legitimate majority rule became vital. Due to the recent (2011) declassification of a number of PREM files at the National Archives, this work can utilise

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<sup>1</sup> Known from 1 June 1979-12 December 1979 as Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, henceforth referred to as Rhodesia or Southern Rhodesia

a rich collection of new primary materials in order to explore just how a need to establish a legitimate government in Rhodesia affected British government policy and diplomacy at the time. These sources will help to explore how this policy was formulated in response to wider British government fears about black liberation, the 'new' Africa that was emerging from the ashes of European colonialism, Britain's role as mediator in international conflict, and the continued growth of the Cold War superpowers.

The use of these recent sources will place this work within the framework of existing literature, but will aim to be able to show the progression of events in detail from the perspective of the highest levels of British government. Whilst existing works are valuable in understanding many of the issues surrounding British involvement in Rhodesia such as the changing political climate in Southern Africa and issues of electoral legitimacy in Rhodesia, many were written at the time and as such without access to new primary materials. Dunn's 'Diplomacy at the Highest Level' and Vines' 'Liberation Movements in Power' cover issues surrounding British government diplomacy and involvement in Rhodesia from a modern perspective, but do not make the British perspective across a longer period the main focus of their work.<sup>23</sup> The goal of this thesis is to use close examination of British government archives in order to show the effects of shifting alliances, changing international situations and the emergence of crises on British government diplomacy and planning in Rhodesia. By offering a chronological look at high-level political decisions, it is the aim of this thesis to offer an insight into the longer-term impact of key short-term situations that the British government faced, such as at Lancaster House and during the 1979 and 1980 elections themselves.

### **Methodology and existing material on the topic**

Amongst the wider range of material that has been written about the later years of the Rhodesian UDI, there have been a number of main works covering the time period surrounding the 1979 and 1980 elections such as 'The Zimbabwe Election: The political and military implications' by Martyn Gregory, and 'From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: The

2 Dunn, D.H. ed., *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: The evolution of international summitry*. New York: Springer. 2016

3 SOUTHALL, ROGER. *Liberation Movements in Power: Party and State in Southern Africa*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013.



politics of transition' by Wiseman and Taylor.<sup>45</sup> These works largely concentrate on the implications of the elections and the process by which they were reached, and look at the situation more from a perspective that stays within the front lines of the Crisis within Africa, at times focusing on the British political aspect of the transition to majority rule, but without this becoming the main focus of these works.

There have, however, been some works focusing intensely on the legitimacy of these elections, but even fewer still focusing on the political implications of this legitimacy to Britain, with the major works focusing on this aspect being 'The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia' by M Delap<sup>6</sup>, 'The 1980 elections- a first hand account and analysis'<sup>7</sup> by Gregory and 'From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe' by Lord Soames,<sup>8</sup> the then governor of Rhodesia. The general agreement on the definition of a legitimate election in Rhodesia was one brought about not by an Internal Settlement, but through the same process as had been used by the British government for past colonies. This would include an independence constitution providing the machinery for free and fair majority rule elections. As the Internal Settlement was between the rogue white minority government of Smith and a small number of chosen political groups in the country, these criteria were not met. The exclusion of ZANU and ZAPU, and the lack of British government involvement in the process prevented the agreement from being internationally viewed as legitimate. As Rhodesia was still officially a British colony, Smith did not have the right to transfer power from British rule.

These three works give an invaluable insight into the 1979 and 1980 elections from a perspective that focuses on the events in Rhodesia during the election. These works offer viewpoints on impact that the conduct of the election had on its legitimacy and more importantly, how this legitimacy was to impact British long and short term policy in Southern Africa. These works (particularly the work of Soames) give a valuable insight

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4 Wiseman, Henry, and Alastair M. Taylor. *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: the politics of transition*. Elsevier, 2013.

5 Gregory, Martyn. "The Zimbabwe election: the political and military implications." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, no. 1 (1980): 17-37.

6 Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." *African Affairs* 78, no. 313 (1979): 431-438.

7 Gregory, Martyn. "The 1980 Rhodesian Elections—A First-Hand Account and Analysis." *The World Today* 36, no. 5 (1980): 180-188.

8 Soames, Christopher. "From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 56, no. 3 (1980): 405-419.

into the issues of legitimacy during these elections and offer some immediate reaction into how these issues were addressed by the British government on the highest level; as such, this body of work is incredibly valuable at showing these issues from the perspective of those writing at the time, and in the case of Lord Soames offers a candid look into government thought process during this time period regarding Rhodesia. But this is also the drawback of these works, and of literature regarding these Rhodesian elections as a whole; most works were written as reactions at the time, and have not had the advantage of thirty years of debate on the issue, or access to extensive government sources at will.

This work aims, therefore, to expand on the factors driving British government policy during the 1979 and 1980 elections due to the ability to use resources which were unavailable at the time, and to take advantage of the relatively sparse nature of literature on the topic. The main way this will be achieved is by using Prime Minister's Office (PREM) and Cabinet Office (CAB) files from the National Archives that were released as recently as 2011, and have as such seen little use in scholarly works. These files offer a close and thorough look into the formulation of British diplomatic and foreign policy towards Rhodesia during the course of these years, and offers an insight previously unavailable. The Prime Minister's Office documents are generally between 250 and 450 pages long, and primarily showcase diplomatic communication between the Prime Minister of Britain, members of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and important political actors within Southern Africa, the USA, or the Commonwealth. The Cabinet Office files show a summary of the week's events in Rhodesia and offer an insight into decisions and discussion at the highest level of British politics- that of the Prime Minister and her cabinet ministers.

These files are useful as they display government policy planning and diplomacy at the very highest level and provide an insight into the processes of both long-term planning and crisis management. These files will be used to build upon already established debates on the legitimacy of these elections, whilst closely showing the ways in which British government policy in Rhodesia shifted over time. The fact that these files are organised chronologically provides a strong case for a similarly structured exploration of them, as this will provide a natural way in which the evolution of British government policy-making and diplomatic communication as a response to events in Southern

Africa can be examined. This can help to further highlight the shifting alliances and international pressures that acted as the driving forces of British government involvement in Rhodesia and in which ways these affected longer term policy plans for the nations decolonisation. A chronological approach can also show the impact of key events during this period on British policy formation and the points at which critical shifts in longer term diplomatic strategy occurred.

An important area of this was long-term policy planning following the widely criticised 1979 election and the ways in which these plans gave way to short-term crisis management during 1979 and early 1980. For this thesis, policy is used to imply the longer-term plans formed by the British government, with these plans revolving around achieving specific overall goals, these being; the holding of a constitutional conference, the overseeing of an internationally legitimate election, and the eventual successful decolonisation of Rhodesia. Diplomacy here is used to refer to a fluid and often reactive tool used in order to strengthen relationships and ease the implementation of longer-term policy. Diplomacy was used during this period both as a constant force targeted at key allies and opponents in order to achieve long-term goals and also as a short-term method of navigating crisis scenarios.

### **Southern Africa in the 1970s; Decolonisation, Pan-Africanism, and the Cold War**

In order to show the major themes of British government reactions to shifting alliances and situations thoroughly it is necessary to explain the issues driving the situation in Rhodesia by 1979, and why British involvement was required in order to end the crisis as peacefully as possible. By showing these forces pulling at Rhodesia during the late 1970s it is possible to see why and how British involvement became key to establishing a legitimate government in Rhodesia. This will help in placing this work within the academic framework on Rhodesia which already exists.

By the late 1970s, the nation of Rhodesia and its government were in a difficult situation. Since the UDI of 1965, the nation had withstood political, economic and military challenges from a number of enemies. ZANU and ZAPU, and their military wings ZANLA and ZIPRA, waged guerilla and conventional warfare within the country and gained external support and shelter from Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia. As

the 1970s progressed, this support reached a global scale through Sino-Soviet backing of ZANU and ZAPU, whilst the UN condemned Smith's government and passed Security Council Resolutions mandating sanctions. These factors led to the vast majority of countries refusing or unable to recognise or trade with Rhodesia, causing Rhodesia to be economic opponents who were becoming increasingly organised through pan-African cooperation. These issues were, by 1978, becoming insurmountable, leading to the situation in Rhodesia by then becoming an urgent need to draw the tenure of Ian Smith as a white minority leader to a close.

A major issue which forced Rhodesia into the 1978 internal settlement and the eventual acceptance of Britain as overseer for elections to end Ian Smith's government along with the increasingly violent Bush War was that of decolonisation in Southern Africa during the 1970s. This began in the mid 1970s as Mozambique, Tanzania, Angola and Namibia all saw their governments become increasingly socialist, following support from the USSR and China during their decolonisation, leading to a feeling that 'it was clear... that the focus for Cold War competition in Africa was shifting... to the Southern Part of the continent',<sup>9</sup> causing ever deepening rifts in relations between the Western, strongly anti-communist Rhodesia and her socialist neighbours. Due to the tumult created by these changes and power struggles within the former Portuguese empire, increasing pressure was put on Smith's government in Salisbury which Hargreaves believes accelerated the collapse of Rhodesia as a white minority ruled nation due to the new-found ability of ZANLA and ZIPRA to infiltrate Rhodesia via Mozambique.<sup>10</sup> The issue of Rhodesia's hostile neighbours was mentioned heavily throughout 1979 and 1980 in British high level political discussion as a constant threat to security in the region. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's administration regularly entreated President Machel to provide more ways to limit the infiltration of ZANLA guerillas into Rhodesia during the elections from Mozambique,<sup>11</sup> an issue that was continuing to his knowledge on a 'large scale'<sup>12</sup> up until the 1980 election despite the implemented ceasefire.

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9 Westad, Odd Arne. *The global Cold War: Third world interventions and the making of our times*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. 207.

10 Hargreaves, John D. *Decolonization in Africa*. Routledge, 2014. 235.

11 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/343 'Situation in Rhodesia 13'. 14-24 January 1980. 121.

12 TNA: PREM 19/343, 'Situation in Rhodesia 13'. 14-24 January 1980. 230.

This issue of decolonised states turning towards socialist government backed by communist superpowers was endemic to Southern Africa at the time and the support of liberation movements by Rhodesia's neighbours crippled its military prowess over time. This was possibly the greatest cause for Smith's willingness to restart majority rule discussions from the mid-1970s onward, a process accelerated by the insistence of Vorster and Kissinger that majority rule being given to moderate African parties was vital to avoiding the further radicalisation of Rhodesian blacks in light of these changes in the region.<sup>13</sup> Onslow argues that the 1975 independence of Angola and Mozambique was central to this decline in Rhodesian stability and security as it led to the country's Eastern border becoming a trafficking point for rebel forces and supplies, whilst Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola so soon after independence led to a very powerful realisation that the Cold War was much closer to Rhodesia than it had ever been before. The great weight of this issue is supported from a military point of view by Arbuckle who reinforces the importance of the Mozambique border to guerillas as an entry point into Rhodesia,<sup>14</sup> whilst suggesting that the socialisation of several of Rhodesia's neighbours contributed to the proliferation of anti-government dissidents throughout both the armed and civilian populations.<sup>15</sup>

The central and landlocked position of Rhodesia within the region created insurmountable problems, as their neighbours turned against them, and made border controls incredibly difficult; a problem identified as early as 1974 by the Portuguese Prime Minister, who stated that the withdrawal of Portugal from its Southern African colonies would create an economic threat effective and immediate because of socialist governments in these countries preventing Rhodesia from their use.<sup>16</sup> This weak tactical placement of Rhodesia was exploited from the early 1970s by FROLIZI<sup>17</sup> who infiltrated the country from points where the borders of Mozambique and the also-

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13 Hargreaves, John D. *Decolonization in Africa*. 241.

14 Arbuckle, Thomas. "Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: An Assessment." *The RUSI Journal* 124, no. 4 (1979): 27-33. 31.

15 Arbuckle, Thomas. "Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: An Assessment." 31-32.

16 Dr. Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister speaking in 1973. Cited in Davidson, Basil. "South Africa and Portugal." *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 4.2 (1974): 9-20. 16.

17 The Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe, a short-lived militant group consisted of ZANU and ZAPU members which existed from 1971 to 1974, when it was integrated into the UANC and eventually turned to support of the Internal Settlement

hostile Zambia met with Rhodesia;<sup>18</sup> there is also a suggestion by Kirk that FROLIZI, ZANU and ZAPU agreed to work together to use this multitude of borders to their advantage wherein each would take a region of the country and would use the nearest border to infiltrate accordingly.<sup>19</sup>

These changes in the region were tied to the weakening of Rhodesia's position as it reinforced a feeling of growing radicalism in the region and led to greater cooperation between African nationalist movements, with Guelke arguing that this allowed for the widening of the war in Rhodesia.<sup>20</sup> A 1975 report by Adelman perhaps best sums up the loss of these nearby allies to Rhodesia as such; 'with the decolonization of Angola on the west coast and particularly of Mozambique on the east, the white ruled states have lost their border guards and been jolted into a realization that major adjustments are now needed. Rhodesia has already released black nationalist leaders in return for a ceasefire on its borders and has agreed to consultations on eventual black majority rule'.<sup>21</sup> This report, written in 1975, showed the immediate dangers to Rhodesia from these changes in the region. The instant loss of two allied countries, along with the increasing socialist leanings of Tanzania, was a great blow to an already weakening Rhodesia, and helped to kick-start a renewed process towards majority rule for the nation led by 'the governments of Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana, along with FRELIMO and later the MPLA, (who) met to formulate "a united policy for negotiations with the Rhodesian government"'.<sup>22</sup> Whilst this agreement was, in its most organised form, short lived, it did pave the way for future negotiations involving the Frontline States and Rhodesia, and these states would remain politically involved as far as 1980, at which point their involvement became an issue for the British government to contend with as diplomacy with the leaders of African nations became crucial to maintaining the Rhodesian ceasefire implemented in 1979<sup>23</sup> and ensuring peace within the nation after

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18 Kirk, Tony. "Politics and violence in Rhodesia." *African Affairs* 74, no. 294 (1975): 3-38. 9.

19 Kirk, Tony. "Politics and violence in Rhodesia." 12.

20 Guelke, Adrian. "Southern Africa and the super-powers." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 56, no. 4 (1980): 648-664. 655.

21 Adelman, Kenneth L. "Report from Angola." *Foreign Affairs* 53, no. 3 (1975): 558-574. 574.

22 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." *African Studies Review* 36, no. 2 (1993): 31-59. 43.

23 Eg. A discussion between British and Tanzanian diplomats about Tanzanian influence over ZANU being used to release some political prisoners. See The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/343, 'Situation in Rhodesia; part 13'. 102.

the 1980 election, as Frontline State acceptance of its legitimacy was an essential prerequisite of achieving stable majority rule.<sup>24</sup>

Alongside these issues of decolonisation in the region and the growing threat to Rhodesia of its increasingly socialist neighbours, were the effects of the Cold War on a global scale, which aside from leading to the aforementioned socialisation of several political groups within Southern Africa, created a whole host of other problems that helped to whittle down Rhodesian resistance to majority rule. The introduction of American and British political support against the funds of the USSR, China and their allies led to a deepening of the situation in Southern Africa as several groups within the region relied on the support of these superpowers. As the Rhodesian UDI continued throughout the 1970s, the conflict took on an increasingly global form that all parties were willing to exploit. Smith attempted to portray the guerilla war as an East-West conflict rather than one between blacks and whites in order to enlist the help of Britain and the United States as its position weakened during the late 1970s.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the Angolan conflict saw Cuban<sup>26</sup> and Soviet involvement in Southern Africa grow to an all time high as an attempt to counteract the links that China had previously established in the region during the early years of the decade and to minimise the potential for growth in Western influence.<sup>27</sup>

In 1977, the President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere wrote that any direct military action from a foreign government in Rhodesia would lead to even further globalisation of the war, as nationalist groups would be forced to seek assistance from communist states. With this, the United States and Britain would be unable to prevent the war from becoming 'internationalised',<sup>28</sup> which occurred at a greater rate during the late 1970s shifts in the structure of global politics. The widening of relations between the Soviet

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24 Eg. Consultations with Mozambique over whether the 1980 election would be accepted as legitimate See The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/345, 'Situation in Rhodesia; security issues in countryside; intimidation allegations during elections; part 15'. 7.

25 Guelke, Adrian. "Southern Africa and the super-powers." 657

26 Lowry, Donal. "The Impact of Anti-communism on White Rhodesian Political Culture, ca. 1920s–1980." *Cold War History* 7, no. 2 (2007): 169-194. 186.

27 Guelke, Adrian. "Southern Africa and the super-powers." 658.

28 Nyerere, Julius K. "America and Southern Africa." *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 4 (1977): 671-684. 679

Union and China<sup>29</sup> led to ZANU and ZAPU each having a different communist superpower funding and backing them. This led to inevitable competition between the two countries that added to the existing East-West tensions in the region and helped to intensify competition for influence and control over the region.<sup>30</sup> ZANU in particular framed the conflict in terms of East-West relations and that of socialism against 'imperialism' (here defined as Soviet or Western advances of power in the region),<sup>31</sup> partly due to its political philosophies and also partly as a way to ensure the support of its Chinese allies, who were worried about Soviet influence over the older and more established ZAPU, along with FRELIMO in Mozambique; this was China's reason for backing groups such as ZANU due to their rivalry with Soviet backed organisations.<sup>32</sup> This widening of conflict in Africa to become more internationalised entrenched Rhodesia's position and ensured its isolation as the super powers struggled for influence within the continent. A fear of China, the USSR and the Western powers was that they might 'back the wrong horse'<sup>33</sup> in a conflict led to a constant state of competition between these powers. The aim was to support the most successful movement(s) in any given country, with this Sino-Soviet divide being particularly effective in Rhodesia as Tanzania, FRELIMO and ZANU worked in tandem under the support of the Chinese government.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the strong anti-communist stance of the Rhodesian government that followed these changes within Africa and the increasingly partisan nature of political struggle within the continent essentially sealed Rhodesia's political fate according to Lowry, who suggests that this strict adherence to an anti-communist position made compromise between the government and Socialist rebels incredibly difficult.<sup>35</sup> The Rhodesian Front used propaganda portraying white Rhodesians as the people who

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29 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 35.

30 Guelke, Adrian. "Southern Africa and the super-powers." 649.

31 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 42.

32 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 40.

33 Barratt, John, 25th February 1981. 'The Soviet Union and Southern Africa' (speech made at the Witwatersrand Branch of the South African Institute of International Affairs, 25 February 1981) 17.

34 Barratt, John, 25th February 1981. 'The Soviet Union and Southern Africa' 10.

35 Lowry, Donal. "The Impact of Anti-communism on White Rhodesian Political Culture, ca. 1920s–1980." 169.



'once made the 'Great' of Britain'<sup>36</sup> and of the United States as a champion of the free world, drawing together themes of anti-Communism and white nationalism that became unacceptable to many across the world as time progressed into the 1970s. The 'fall' of previously friendly Mozambique and Angola was a turning point for this use of Communism as a spectre haunting Rhodesia in propaganda, with leader of the Rhodesian Armed Forces General Peter Walls proclaiming that the country would not 'be pushed around or surrender to any Marxist-inspired land grab'.<sup>37</sup>

This opposition only intensified further as time passed and Jimmy Carter gained power in the United States and rejected the reforms of the Internal Settlement for failing to include the guerilla-led political groups in the nation,<sup>38</sup> which stemmed from a fear of further Cuban intervention in the region and the possibility of Rhodesia becoming a fully fledged Cold War crisis.<sup>39</sup> The propaganda used in Rhodesia assisted this notion of the conflict as becoming fully entrenched in the global Cold War climate and led to the Western powers becoming reluctant to assist Smith in maintaining any degree of power if it was to be at the expense of security in the region as a whole. From early on, Smith's propaganda enforced this feeling within Rhodesia and led to an 'embattled, besieged... mentality'<sup>40</sup> which, whilst initially effective at maintaining harmony within the white settler population of the country, did have the effect of bringing the Cold War closer to home and enforcing in the minds of the superpowers a need to bring Rhodesia to majority rule as quickly as possible. This Cold War climate led to the once passive Britain to the forefront as it realised that a solution to the crisis on its own terms was necessary as the USSR and China closed in on complete influence within Southern Africa; Britain could not afford to 'lose' Rhodesia to Socialist rebels through a military coup, a possibility which was seeming ever more possible as the 1970s progressed.

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36 Lowry, Donal. "The Impact of Anti-communism on White Rhodesian Political Culture, ca. 1920s–1980." 178.

37 Lowry, Donal. "The Impact of Anti-communism on White Rhodesian Political Culture, ca. 1920s–1980." 187.

38 Mitchell, Nancy. "Tropes of the Cold War: Jimmy Carter and Rhodesia." *Cold War History* 7, no. 2 (2007): 263-283. 263.

39 Mitchell, Nancy. "Tropes of the Cold War: Jimmy Carter and Rhodesia." 264.

40 Onslow, Sue, ed. *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation*. Routledge, 2009 14.

The issues faced in Rhodesia during this time were further compounded by the emergence of pan-African sentiment amongst some in countries neighbouring Rhodesia, leading to further isolation of the white minority in the face of a more organised and homogeneous opponent than ever before. This grew over the course of the 1970s and was led by Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, who maintained a strong stance against white rule in Rhodesia, believing that cooperation within Africa could lead to the collapse of Smith's government. Kaunda attempted this whilst remaining relatively non-aligned within the greater Cold War, and was a major figure in the rise of pan-Africanism during this time. This was a factor that greatly weakened Rhodesia as her enemies were now increasingly united in opposition for a wider range of reasons than before, with either Cold War or pan-African concerns often at the forefront of anti-Smith thought. Zambia, in maintaining this non-aligned stance, held sanctions against Rhodesia at great cost to Zambia's own domestic economy<sup>41</sup> whilst Kaunda himself recalled telling Mugabe and Nkomo that if they refused to attend the 1979 peace talks, he would withdraw support for their armed and political struggle.<sup>42</sup> This goal of black liberation and African unity was consistently followed by Kaunda and helped to weaken Smith's defence of his rogue state as he often acted as an intermediary between black and white political actors in Southern Africa.

Zambia carried much of the burden of sanctions against Rhodesia despite its own economy struggling against the falling price of copper and the rising price of oil<sup>43</sup> and encouraged an ultimately failed round of independence discussions as early as 1975 between Ian Smith and African political groups. Hargreaves further suggests that this was a failure due to the expansion of the Rhodesia crisis into a wider, more Cold War influenced conflict that by 1975 had not reached a tipping point from which Smith's government would be forced into majority rule. He points to 1976 as this turning point due to the rise of Mugabe within ZANU that was helped along by efforts from the rulers of neighbouring states who were working to unite the 'bitterly divided nationalist and guerilla leaders'.<sup>44</sup> However, once these elements had been united under a banner of

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41 Onslow, Sue, ed. *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation*. 5.

42 Charlton, Michael. *The Last Colony in Africa: Diplomacy and the Independence of Rhodesia*. London: Blackwell (1991) Cited in Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 51.

43 Hargreaves, John D. *Decolonization in Africa*. 241.

44 Hargreaves, John D. *Decolonization in Africa*. 241-2.

socialism and black liberation, Kaunda was able to utilise his pan-African stance to help peace talks along during the 1970s - his non-aligned viewpoint helping to temper the more radical nationalist elements within the Frontline States and Rhodesia in order to achieve a reasonable independence agreement. Furthermore, Reed states that it took Kaunda's intervention to convince Britain to allow PF involvement in the post Lancaster House government at a time where Britain and Muzorewa were equally reluctant to give the less moderate Africans within Rhodesia a political voice. Kaunda's involvement led to Britain allowing the PF to play a role in elections and promised that guerilla forces would be given the same rights as the Rhodesian forces during any ceasefire- a vital requirement to keeping peace during the 1980 election.<sup>45</sup>

Kaunda's non-aligned and pan-African views allowed him to be seen as a somewhat unbiased negotiator, as evidence by his changing viewpoints on ZANU. Kaunda at first tolerated ZANU,<sup>46</sup> before changing his viewpoint in 1974 as he sought a solution to the Rhodesia problem that could have mitigated instability in the region following the decolonisation of Angola and Mozambique.<sup>47</sup> This relationship reached a low point in March 1975 when Herbert Chitepo<sup>48</sup> was assassinated in Zambia, leading to the arrest of many ZANLA militants and ZANU members in the country as Kaunda blamed the assassination on 'enemies of Zimbabwean unity'.<sup>49</sup> This relationship was not to thaw until 1978, as Mugabe's attempts to re-establish ZANU as a force in international affairs<sup>50</sup> coincided with the deeply unpopular Internal Settlement, leading Kaunda to once again become heavily involved in the crisis as a mediator between Britain and the more radical Zimbabwean political parties. The holding of the 1979 Lusaka Conference in Lusaka as a vehicle for lobbying Britain to allow these parties to participate in the following election was an example of this renewed involvement and was a statement Kaunda's commitment to democratic black liberation in Rhodesia. The growth of pan-

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45 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 52.

46 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 41.

47 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 43.

48 Leader of ZANU until his death in March 1975.

49 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 44.

50 Reed, William Cyrus. "International Politics and National Liberation: ZANU and the Politics of Contested Sovereignty in Zimbabwe." 45.

African sentiment in those invested in the Rhodesia crisis allowed for a greater degree of cooperation between those in the continent, and offered these actors more power over any settlement. This arguably led partly to Britain's anxiety over legitimacy during Lancaster House and beyond, as the British government knew the growing influence that the Frontline States had in the region.

The situation in Southern Africa and Rhodesia by 1979 was one featuring a number of nations and political groups exhausted from a decade of political, economic, and military conflict. This led to an incentive for these groups to find a solution and stability emerging and offered an entry point for the British government back into the political future of Rhodesia. The general climate of economic decline and political uncertainty placed the British government in a prime position for expanding its influence in the region through careful diplomacy in order to gain allies in the region whilst improving its international reputation through the successful decolonisation of Rhodesia.

### **The 1978 Internal Settlement**

The road to majority rule and the removal of Smith as Prime Minister of Rhodesia, along with a renewed involvement in the nation for Great Britain, came in 1978 courtesy of the Internal Settlement, an agreement between the white-led Rhodesian Front party (henceforth RF) and Bishop Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANNC). Up until this point Rhodesia had been subsiding as an isolated rogue state within Southern Africa, using its relative prosperity compared to its neighbours<sup>51</sup> at the time to withstand sanctions placed upon it throughout the 1970s. Despite this relative modernity, Rhodesia was increasingly economically, politically and militarily isolated by the late 1970s due to the the influence of the Cold War climate, growing pan-Africanism and the reopening of the Zambia-Rhodesia border.<sup>52</sup> The loss of several key allies in the region

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51 Zimbabwe had a GDP per capita of \$916 by 1980, a number that compares favourably to that of Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania and Angola (data only available from 1988 and 1985 onwards, respectively, but with these values far below Rhodesia's value for 1980). Only South Africa and Namibia had a significantly higher GDP per capita than Rhodesia in 1978-80, with Botswana's sitting marginally higher at just over \$1000 per capita. Whilst these figures are not sufficient to show wealth distribution or modernisation in these nations, they do provide the insight that Rhodesia had a level of wealth as a nation that was a degree above that of its neighbours. Data from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?view=chart>, accessed 14 March 2016

was also an important factor as South Africa began to 'turn the screws'<sup>53</sup> economically and politically in a bid to become 'the regional hegemon'<sup>54</sup> in the new climate of Southern Africa. Whilst South Africa continued to covertly finance non-aligned Africans within Rhodesia during the 1979 election, the fear of renewed pressure from South Africa was enough to prevent a regression of Rhodesian political thought away from allowing majority rule.<sup>55</sup> As Rhodesia's reliance on South Africa for import and export reached an all time high, its allies in Africa diminished rapidly in number.<sup>56</sup>

The confluence of these factors placed a great deal of pressure upon Ian Smith's government as the United States and Britain began to put more pressure on Smith to accept a multi-racial settlement from 1977 onwards. The Internal Settlement was a reaction to this new involvement and to the Anglo-American proposals of 1977. These proposals were considered unacceptable by Smith due to their insistence on removing the army from white control during constitutional discussions which had the potential to allow militant African groups excess bargaining power.<sup>57</sup> Smith knew that he had to act in tandem with moderate Africans in order to reach a settlement acceptable to him; by agreeing to hand over power without external influence, Smith believed he had 'outmaneuvered the British government'<sup>58</sup> and would be able to transition to a majority rule that was at the very least acceptable to those outside Rhodesia whilst remaining advantageous to Rhodesian whites. As such, Smith met with moderate Africans such as Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole to discuss an agreement that would allow for the transition of power to the black majority whilst avoiding politically empowering militant Africans within the country.

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52 Reopened in 1978 due to economic pressure on Zambia; whilst this did allow some trade between the two nations, it also eased the transport of militants from Zambia into northern areas of Rhodesia. Explained in Minter, William, and Elizabeth Schmidt. "When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined." *African Affairs* 87, no. 347 (1988): 207-237. 213

53 Minter, William, and Elizabeth Schmidt. "When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined." 228

54 Onslow, Sue, ed. *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation*. 11

55 Minter, William, and Elizabeth Schmidt. "When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined." 229

56 Minter, William, and Elizabeth Schmidt. "When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined." 227

57 Day, John. "The Rhodesian internal settlement." *The World Today* 34, no. 7 (1978): 268-276. 272

58 Day, John. "The Rhodesian internal settlement." 273

These discussions resulted in the Internal Settlement, signed in March 1978, and would lead to the election of 1979, which would be central in determining the fate of Rhodesian decolonisation; whilst Smith was determined to allow majority rule only on his own terms, international recognition would be difficult to achieve, and the legitimacy of any future governments would be carefully scrutinised. This signalled Britain truly becoming further involved in the fate of the nation, as the unpopular settlement faced strong opposition from the international community. By this point Rhodesia was in a precarious position and was slipping ever closer to collapse, either economic or military; the ill-fated 1978 Internal Settlement was a last chance for Smith to attempt to allow majority rule only on these terms. It was at this point that the British government realised that its involvement could not only solve the Rhodesia crisis from a colonial and moral standpoint, but also from a tactical standpoint as a legitimate transition to majority rule with a moderate government would assist British interests in the region. Whilst this would not occur in 1978 or 1979, the Internal Settlement signalled an end to the worst period of the Rhodesia crisis and allowed for a concerned Britain to increase its involvement in the nation. The new-found concessions to majority rule made by Smith allowed the British government negotiating power with regards to this, something that had previously been impossible due to Smith's strong stance that caused negotiation to be incredibly difficult.

### **Chapter 1: The 1979 election, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and Lancaster House**

The April 1979 election was fraught with complications and issues that had the undesirable effect of harming its legitimacy with a wide range of governments and political groups, both Rhodesian and foreign. Some of these issues stemmed from the conduct, mechanics and process of the election itself, but most were resultant of the 1978 Internal Settlement and its constitution implemented by Ian Smith and Bishop Muzorewa. This agreement came into fruition from talks between these men as heads of the largest<sup>59</sup> white and black political parties in the nation. Whilst this was a step forward in many ways for Rhodesia in terms of progress towards black political enfranchisement and equality, it did include clauses seen by some international critics

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<sup>59</sup> Whilst ZANU and ZAPU were more popular than these parties, the PF parties were banned until after the 1979 election

as outside the norm for majority rule constitutions<sup>60</sup>, such as provisions for whites to retain a large degree of control over parliament and institutions such as the army and police. These included 'a number of seats reserved for whites', which provided 'extensive powers of veto'<sup>61</sup> and further allowed the white minority 'continued control over the army'.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, only whites could vote on this constitution.<sup>63</sup> Whilst the 1979 election did succeed in its creation of a black majority parliament as a result of the enfranchisement of almost three million black Rhodesians for the first time, international observers failed to acknowledge the election as legitimate due to issues raised by deficits in the Constitution.

The key issues that caused a number of international governments to question the results of the election and its resulting government were the exclusion of the Patriotic Front from the Internal Settlement and election, and a belief that whites still held power in the House of Assembly that was disproportionate to their position as a demographic minority consisting of four percent of the population,<sup>64</sup> with 100,000 eligible to vote<sup>65</sup>. Criticism of these issues greatly outranked any concerns about the election itself on an international scale, as for opponents of the Internal Settlement any election resulting from its Constitution was illegitimate despite the mechanical successes of the election. Whilst the election did have issues relating to intimidation, coercion and its mechanics for preventing voter fraud, on an international scale these were little more than additional proof of the election's lack of legitimacy. The known issues regarding the 1978 Internal Settlement and its resulting constitution were more than enough to create the level of international backlash to place the election under insurmountable scrutiny.

The consequence of this was that the Rhodesian election was seen as illegitimate by the vast majority of international governments, with the UN Security Council pre-emptively condemning the election in March whilst commending the Frontline States for their continued opposition of the Rhodesian government.<sup>66</sup> This was supported by a further Resolution that swiftly followed the election and denounced the results of the

60 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/106, 'Situation in Rhodesia: Elections, April 1979; part 1'. 16

61 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 205

62 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/107, 'Situation in Rhodesia; part 2'. 32

63 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 8

64 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 205

65 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 244

election and the Rhodesian constitution, describing the election results as 'null and void' and appealing to UN members to refuse recognition of the Rhodesian government.<sup>67</sup> This precedent was followed by the international community, with members of the Commonwealth and the Frontline States among those to immediately condemn the election and its results, whilst Britain, the USA and France were among nations to abstain from immediately deciding on whether to recognise the government's legitimacy. Without international recognition of the election, the chances of Rhodesia's government facing continued sanctions and guerilla warfare were high. The pressure placed on the Rhodesian government by this international lack of recognition was what ultimately led to the British government to become further involved in future Constitutional talks and election planning in Rhodesia.

Whilst issues with the election itself were important to solidifying international opinion against the results of the 1979 election, by viewing these diplomatic and government responses it is possible to understand the general discontent with the Internal Settlement and its constitution, and how the illegitimate nature of these ultimately subjected the election to insurmountable levels of international scorn from the beginning. By doing so, it will also be possible to explain the ways in which diplomacy allowed for the implementation of policy over time, and the ways in which this ultimately prevented the 1980 election from receiving the same degree of criticism, despite sharing many of the mechanical issues as in 1979. The failure of the 1979 election allowed the British government a mandate to use diplomacy from afar in order to achieve a settlement. The concession of Smith to majority rule had provided the beginnings of this transition, whilst the continued commitment to sanctions by the UN ensured that the Rhodesian government had little choice other than to allow British involvement, knowing that any internally organised election had little chance of international recognition.

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66 United Nations Security Council Resolution 445, 8 March 1979. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/370/59/IMG/NR037059.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed 19 May 2016

67 United Nations Security Council Resolution 448, 30 April 1979. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/370/62/IMG/NR037062.pdf?OpenElement>. Accessed 19 May 2016



## **The election mechanics, process and structure**

The 1979 election was based upon the new Constitution of Rhodesia that had been agreed upon by Ian Smith of the RF, Bishop Muzorewa of the UANC, Ndabaningi Sithole of ZANU, and Chief Jeremiah Chirau of ZUPO as key to discussions. Smith called for these talks primarily due to a need to end or lessen the intensity of the guerilla war, due to the economic and social impact it was having on Rhodesia. The constitution was Smith's way of transitioning power to the black majority whilst keeping major concessions for whites, and hoped that despite this, Rhodesia would be recognised internationally. The key ways in which white power was to be maintained was by having an Executive Council with one black and one white minister sharing each department of government, by allowing whites to hold twenty eight seats in government for at least the next 10 years, and to prevent black influence in the police and army by stating that these must be 'maintained... free from political interference'.<sup>68</sup> The constitution was a way for give Africans genuine majority rule whilst 'prolonging white management of the principal institutions of the state'.<sup>69</sup> As such, the 1979 election was seen within Rhodesian politics as not only a vote on who was to be in government, but also as a way of legitimising the Internal Settlement's constitution. An argument in favour of the election in its immediate aftermath was that high voter turnout showed tacit approval of the constitution, whilst arguments condemning its results often focused on the unjust constitution that it was based upon.

The election itself took place during April 1979, with one hundred total seats to be contested. Voting for the seventy-two black (known as common) roll seats in the Assembly taking place from 17-21 April, with this vote being counted on 23 and 24 April. The election for twenty of the white seats took place earlier in the month, on the 10 April.<sup>70</sup> After this, all elected members of the House would vote on 8 further white members, meaning that the 100 strong Assembly was divided between seventy-two black and twenty-eight white members as detailed in the Internal Settlement, with eight of these white members not elected by the public. These eight not elected by the public

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68 Day, John. "The Rhodesian internal settlement." 273.

69 Day, John. "The Rhodesian internal settlement." 273.

70 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 153.

were voted for after the main election, and were not divided by constituency, but rather all running in opposition, with the eight receiving the most votes being elected.

The 1977 elections had seen an Assembly of sixty-six seats, fifty of which were on the white roll with eight black roll seats,<sup>71</sup> both of which contained property qualifications, and eight Tribal seats voted for by the Chiefs of the native African tribes in Rhodesia. Citizenship was also a requirement for voting, and as a result only 83,762 whites voted in 1977, largely due to the fact that many never took dual citizenship after emigrating, usually from Britain or South Africa.<sup>72</sup> Only 7,468 black Rhodesians voted in 1977, with this being 0.2 percent of the overall African population of the country, and estimations suggesting that around 50,000 would have been eligible to vote.<sup>73</sup>

The country was split up into constituencies, with these differing between the black and white rolls. For the black roll, Rhodesia was split into eight regions,<sup>74</sup> each of which was further allocated a number of seats for election- for example, the province of Victoria was split into ten constituencies, whilst Mashonaland West was split into six.<sup>75</sup> This depended on size and population density of the different regions, with cities being split into several constituencies as is the norm in nations such as Britain. For the white roll, new constituencies were created based on amalgamations of pre-Internal Settlement constituencies due to there being thirty fewer white seats than before. This resulted in fewer constituencies overall, but with these new constituencies each covering a broader area than before.

The results of the election saw Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front winning all twenty white seats voted on by the public, and all eight seats chosen by the Assembly on the 7 May. Of all these seats, only four were contested and all of these were won easily by the RF candidates.<sup>76</sup> For the common roll, fifty-one seats were won by Bishop Muzorewa's

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71 'Smith Keeps power in Rhodesia', 31 August 1977

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/31/newsid\\_2510000/2510755.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/31/newsid_2510000/2510755.stm). Accessed 10 September 2016

72 Lemon, Anthony. "Electoral Machinery and Voting Patterns in Rhodesia, 1962-1977." *African Affairs* 77, no. 309 (1978): 511-30. 513

73 Lemon, Anthony. "Electoral Machinery and Voting Patterns in Rhodesia, 1962-1977.513.

74 (TNA) PREM 19/106 192.

75 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 186.

76 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 153.

UANC, with this resulting in an overall majority in parliament. Twelve seats were won by Ndabanagi Sithole's ZANU, with the UNFP winning nine seats.<sup>77</sup> This meant that the government was headed by Bishop Muzorewa as Prime Minister, heading a cabinet made up of twelve black and five white ministers. Ian Smith held a position in the cabinet as 'minister without portfolio' which allowed him to remain politically involved in the government whilst appearing to have fully conceded the bulk of his political influence and involvement to Muzorewa, leading to Nkomo suggesting that Smith was rather 'the minister with all the portfolios'.<sup>78</sup> The composition of this post Internal Settlement government did, however, have a greater proportion of black cabinet and constituency members than there had been previously.

### **The parties of the 1979 election**

The only white party in Rhodesia to field candidates in the election was Ian Smith's ever present RF, with the four contested constituencies having independent opposition. The RF was formed in 1962 under Winston Field, with leadership being assumed by Smith from April 1964 onwards. From the 1962 election until its dissolution in 1981, the RF was the dominant party in Rhodesia, a title that it had taken from the previous main white party, the United Federal Party. From the point of UDI in 1965, the RF was practically unopposed for the white roll vote, and was the leading party in Rhodesia under Smith until 1979. Due to being unopposed in most constituencies and winning all opposed constituencies, the RF won almost one hundred percent of all white roll votes in the 1979 election.

The United African National Council was a party in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe from 1979 to 1994, and was led during the 1979 election by Bishop Muzorewa. Being a relative moderate, Muzorewa was chosen by Smith for constitutional talks and was key to the agreements secured at the Internal Settlement. Muzorewa's moderacy was seen to have been based around his 'penchant for organisation... (and lack of desperation) for power'<sup>79</sup> and his relative lack of strong rhetoric or idealism when compared to Mugabe and Nkomo. Due to this, Muzorewa and his party were the most popular legal black

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77 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185-7.

78 Moorcraft, Paul. 'Rhodesia's war of independence.' *History Today* 40, no. 9 (1990) <http://www.historytoday.com/paul-moorcraft/rhodesias-war-independence>. Accessed 10 December 2016

political organisation in Rhodesia at the time, with the Patriotic Front garnering more overall support but being unable to win any seats in the 1979 election due to still being embroiled in ongoing war against the state. This popularity was reflected in the 1979 election as the UANC won enough seats for a majority, a total of fifty-one seats, or 1,212,639 votes and 67.27 percent of the popular vote.<sup>80</sup> The UANC were most successful in the Western, Eastern and Central Mashonaland regions, in which they won all twenty one seats and 80.67 percent of the vote.<sup>81</sup> Whilst contested in all regions and constituencies, the UANC were generally dominant in the election, losing only in Matabeleland South with only one seat to the UNFP's 3.<sup>82</sup>

The next most successful party in the election was Zimbabwe African National Union, led by Ndabaningi Sithole. This was an offshoot of Robert Mugabe's ZANU, which had at this point temporarily joined with Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU to form the patriotic front. This split had begun in 1975 after the assassination of the previous leader and party founder along with Sithole, Herbert Chitepo. This split was due to Mugabe's belief in continued violent struggle and the use of guerilla warfare at times targeting the civilian population. Sithole was a believer in non-violent political progress towards majority rule, and his ZANU became a legitimate party in Rhodesia during the Internal Settlement. Meanwhile, Mugabe continued to lead ZANLA, the military wing of ZANU, illegally against the government. Ultimately, Sithole's ZANU was to lose in the 1980 election to Mugabe's newly legal ZANU-PF party, failing to win any seats in 1980 and dissolving thereafter. In the 1979 election, ZANU won twelve seats and an overall 262,928 votes, or 14.58 percent of the vote.<sup>83</sup> ZANU failed to win any regions overall, but performed fairly well in Manicaland, Victoria and Midlands, winning ten seats out of a possible thirty one in these regions. Whilst failing to take any sort of lead over the UANC, ZANU were consistent across most regions as the second biggest party.<sup>84</sup>

The only other black party to win any common roll seats was the United National Federal Party. This party was lead by Chief Kayisa Ndiweni, who had previously been a

79 Sithole, Masipula. "Is Zimbabwe Poised on a Liberal Path? The State and Prospects of the Parties." *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 21, no. 1/2 (1993): 35-43. 38.

80 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

81 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185-6.

82 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 187.

83 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

84 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 186.

part of the Zimbabwe United People's Organisation and had served as Cabinet Ministers in the previous RF government. In November 1978 Ndiweni left ZUPO to form the UNFP, winning nine seats in the 1979 election but failing to win any in 1980. The UNFP won 194,446 votes, or 10.97 percent of the vote,<sup>85</sup> and were most successful in Matabeleland North and South, where they won a total of seven seats out of a possible fifteen, and an overall majority in Matabeleland South, where they won 58.90 percent of the popular vote.<sup>86</sup>

There were two other parties on the Common Roll, neither of which won any seats. ZUPO, a party that had been involved in the Internal Settlement talks before Ndiweni's defection to the UNFP, was led by Chief Chirau. ZUPO contested in the 1979 election, but saw declining support and dissolved before the 1980 election. ZUPO won a total of 114,570 votes, or 6.36 percent of the vote, but this was spread relatively evenly over the different regions and resulted in the party failing to win any seats.<sup>87</sup> The other party to contest the election was the National Democratic Union. This party only contested in Mashonaland East, and won 18,175 votes in this region. Overall the NDU won exactly one percent of the vote and failed to win any seats.<sup>88</sup>

These results handed Muzorewa's UANC an overwhelming majority within the common roll section of government, with Smith's RF being the only other party in the nation to receive a similar number of votes. The overwhelming victory for Muzorewa's party was not, however, seen as conclusive proof of a black majority government in the country due to the exclusion of the PF, a vital issue for the Frontline States which increased their commitment to securing a settlement that included these groups. This commitment, alongside Smith's unwillingness to be seen as personally legitimising the PF, allowed the British government an entry point into the situation. A settlement overseen by the British government with the blessing of the Frontline States would be viewed far less controversially by both black and white Rhodesians than an internal settlement or regime change through nationalist military action.

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85 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

86 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 186-7.

87 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

88 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

## **Polling and voter eligibility**

Aside from the parties voted for in this election, there were 66,319 spoiled papers and a total of 1,802,758 votes, with spoiled papers making up 3.55 percent of all votes. This meant that around 64.5 percent of eligible adults voted in the election, including those who spoiled their ballots- a relatively high turnout considering the circumstances.<sup>89</sup> This figure is based upon Rhodesian authorities' estimates of the electorate as being around 2.9 million people, with Lord Goronwy-Roberts estimating a higher number of 3.5 million prior to the election.<sup>90</sup> These figures indicate that between fifty two percent and 64.5 percent of people who were eligible voted in the election, with the figure of 64.5 percent being given immediately after the election by the Rhodesian Authorities.<sup>91</sup>

The 1979 election was the first in Rhodesia that allowed voting by all black citizens, after the January 1979 Constitutional Referendum saw whites vote eighty five percent in favour of enfranchisement of all citizens regardless of income, wealth or race as had previously been barriers to voting.<sup>92</sup> The two requirements to be able to vote in this election were residence in Rhodesia for at least two years, and to be over eighteen years of age. The first requirement was checked by using immigration documents that would be handed to polling station attendants before voting. The issue of people who were not from Rhodesia being able to vote despite failing to fulfil this criteria was relatively minor, as due to martial law and the use of locals at polling stations deception of this kind would have been difficult to achieve. Returning residents and those who had immigrated legally would have had passports or immigration documents to prove their eligibility.<sup>93</sup> The issue of under-age voters was slightly more pressing, with the National Electoral Directorate estimating that there were 750,000 fourteen to seventeen year olds who could attempt to pass for eighteen in order to vote.<sup>94</sup> The main ways in which this was combated by the authorities was to ask for documents from those who

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89 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

90 'Rhodesia: Estimated Population'. House of Lords debate 03 April 1979, vol 399. Columns 1791-5. From <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1979/apr/03/rhodesia-estimated-population>. Accessed 10 August 2016

91 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 185.

92 Data on 1979 Constitutional referendum in Rhodesia.

[http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1979\\_Constitutional\\_Referendum](http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1979_Constitutional_Referendum). Accessed 10 August 2016.

93 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 177.

94 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 178.

looked under eighteen or were acting suspiciously, to ask all voters their age (some were unaware of the requirement or were swept up in the excitement and just wanted to vote), and through the use of school teachers to identify local students who were under eighteen.<sup>95</sup>

As this was the first time that most blacks had been able to vote in Rhodesia, there was no electoral roll for the almost three million potential voters. This posed a problem of duplicate voting and electoral fraud. The way in which these problems were addressed was through the use of invisible marking fluid which showed up under a certain kind of light. This fluid was generally successful as it was indelible and prevented double voting in a simple to understand manner. The only issue with the fluid was that it was alien to many, and some found it worrying to see their hands change colour under the light. This was generally explained by those manning the voting booth in order to minimise worry, and some polling stations were willing to demonstrate to voters how the process worked when necessary.<sup>96</sup> So whilst the lack of voter registration was certainly a concern, the effectiveness of the ink solution at least worked effectively to minimise the possibility of duplicate voting.

### **The Boyd, Drinkwater, Palley, and Chitnis reports**

The 'Boyd' and 'Drinkwater' reports on the 1979 election were published in mid May 1979 for the British government's use in assessing the election's successes and failings. The Boyd report was published by Lord Boyd, an observer sent with a five-man team of helpers by the British government to produce a report that could be used officially to prove the legitimacy (or lack thereof) of the Internal Settlement government, or simply as an aid for the British government in policy formation.<sup>97</sup> The 'Drinkwater' report was by John Drinkwater QC, who travelled with Boyd to Rhodesia, but produced a separate report and did not necessarily experience the exact same series of events as Boyd.<sup>98</sup> This was not an official document, but was given to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by Mr Drinkwater as an addition to the conclusions found in Boyd's report. These reports were sent to the Prime Minister for inspection around a

95 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 178.

96 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 177.

97 Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 431.

98 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 235.

month after the election, with both reports being circulated internally on 16 May.<sup>99</sup> These reports were read by the Prime Minister, but were not published as government White Papers, as they were 'not compiled under government auspices'.<sup>100</sup> Despite this, the reports were made generally available, with copies placed in the Parliamentary libraries, copies released to the press by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and with copies sent abroad to other governments and other interested parties.<sup>101</sup>

The general findings of these reports were that the elections in Rhodesia were free and fair, and that the government was, by extension, legitimate.<sup>102</sup> The main areas that these reports focused on were the exclusion of the PF, electoral intimidation or coercion, and the voting process itself. On the exclusion of the PF, the 'Boyd report' concluded that it was the 'avowed intent of both (PF) factions to wreck the election',<sup>103</sup> and that their exclusion was at least partially self-inflicted. Boyd states that 'the absence of candidates cannot be held to invalidate the election unless they were prevented from standing',<sup>104</sup> and that Mugabe and Nkomo could have 'taken part in the consultations leading to... the constitution and... could have returned and freely taken part in the election'.<sup>105</sup> Likewise, Drinkwater stated that the PF's refusal to participate was a political decision, and that he would not comment on its 'rightness or wrongness'.<sup>106</sup> On electoral intimidation and coercion, Boyd and Drinkwater found that the main blame was to be placed on the PF guerillas, with infractions by white employers and the government to be incidental for the most part. Boyd found that guerilla attacks 'eroded the Government's authority' and left only 'fear and superstition, and blind obedience'.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, coercion was found to have been an issue that, whilst not irrelevant, was not sufficient in invalidating the election results. The main concern with regards to this issue was coercion by white employers on black voters. Boyd and Drinkwater found that due to the secretive nature of the vote, employees could 'spoil their paper or leave it blank',<sup>108</sup> and addressed the issue of employees being

99 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 135.

100 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 120.

101 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 120.

102 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 235.

103 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 169.

104 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 173.

105 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 173.

106 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 269.

107 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 158.

108 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 162.



transported to polling stations by their employers as a positive factor that allowed for a higher voter turnout.<sup>109</sup> Despite this, Boyd did suggest that 'it would be a brave (employee) who would not join the others on the truck'.<sup>110</sup> Despite these concerns, Boyd and Drinkwater reported the election as being a success due to the fulfilment of four objectives set internally by Rhodesia for the election.<sup>111</sup> Due to the general fulfilment of these, Boyd stated that 'in our view the elections were "fair" in the sense that the electoral machinery was fairly conducted... (after applying) the strictest Western European criteria'.<sup>112</sup>

Dr. Claire Palley, a Rhodesian constitutional lawyer, also published two reports on the election in May and July. The first of these was incomplete and brief compared to the latter, which was able to take conclusions from other reports in order to form a more coherent viewpoint.<sup>113</sup> These were not government sanctioned reports and were written by Palley as an independent observer for the Catholic Institute for International Relations. As such, limited copies of these exist, and as such a secondary source is used in order to examine their conclusions. Palley was most critical of the exclusion of the PF, stating that 'no alternative choice was made available to the African people' who did not want to vote for any of the internal parties.<sup>114</sup> Whilst Palley accepted the mechanical successes of the election, she argued that these were largely irrelevant and that 'pressures on the voters, regarded as acceptable by the Boyd Report, in fact meant that the elections were neither free nor fair'.<sup>115</sup> Palley argued that 'a number of changes in the electoral law... made it easier for the authorities and politicians to turn out the vote'.<sup>116</sup> Palley believed that these issues distorted the results of the election and were amplified by issues of violence and intimidation, and 'that while each factor on its own might not invalidate the election results, the cumulative effect of all the vitiating factors

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109 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 162.

110 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 265.

111 These being; the education of the electorate, the organisation of the election in wartime, the prevention of violence at polling stations, and the ability to demonstrate the its mechanical success. From (TNA): PREM 19/106. 159.

112 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 188.

113 Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 437.

114 Palley, Claire, 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia: Should the Present Government be Recognised?' July 1979, CIIR and Minority Rights Group, in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 432

115 Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 436.

116 Palley, Claire, 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia: Should the Present Government be Recognised?' in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 437.

is such as to render the results suspect and unreliable'. Palley concludes that the elections were not sufficiently 'free and fair', as would be required for legitimate majority rule.<sup>117</sup>

Lord Chitnis released his report on the election in May. This report was prepared for and published by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, a cross-party parliamentary body that was not directly associated with the government. This report was not published by the British government, after a discussion in parliament on 18 May, in which it was agreed to be placed in the parliament library but was not to be considered a government document.<sup>118</sup> As with the Palley report, this document was not widely reproduced, and as such only limited understanding of its exact contents can be achieved through secondary materials. Chitnis' main issues with the election centred around what the election stood for, and what people were voting for. He argued that the election was 'not about the settlement proposals or constitution (and) the choice facing the electorate to determine the nature of the future government was purely an illusion'.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, he felt that the lack of an anti-settlement campaign and the exclusion of the PF showed this and prevented the elections from being a valid endorsement of the 1978 constitution.<sup>120</sup> Whilst he felt that many did vote for a candidate that they wanted, the successes of the election were insufficient proof of 'a valid test of opinion' when taking into account the election's myriad issues.<sup>121</sup> The other issue that condemned the election to illegitimacy for Chitnis was the scale of intimidation and coercion in the country. Chitnis argued that according to the Red Cross, the election was held in a 'climate of wanton and persistent cruelty' and that martial law had as much of an impact as guerilla activity in terrorising the population.<sup>122</sup> Chitnis also accepted the crimes of the guerillas, summarising that 'intimidation and coercion were so widespread as to render the election results meaningless' and that

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117 Palley, Claire, 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia: Should the Present Government be Recognised?' in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 437-8.

118 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 125.

119 Chitnis, Pratap. Free and Fair ? The 1979 Rhodesian Election, May 1979, Report prepared for and published by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 435.

120 Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 435.

121 Chitnis, Pratap. Free and Fair ? The 1979 Rhodesian Election, May 1979, in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 436.

122 Chitnis, Pratap. Free and Fair ? The 1979 Rhodesian Election, May 1979, in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 435.

'the only thing we feel... with any certainty... is that one side was more effective (at this) than the other'.<sup>123</sup>

Press reaction to the 1979 election was split, both before and after the publication of these reports. Colin Brown of *The Guardian* wrote in mid-May that 'recognition would cost Britain any influence she had in bringing about a ceasefire and would bring charges of breach of faith from African Commonwealth countries'.<sup>124</sup> Following a statement by former British Foreign Secretary David Owen that suggested that 'recognition now of the internal constitution would increase soviet influence in Africa',<sup>125</sup> Brown concluded that 'Britain must convince Bishop Muzorewa that he had no future tied to Mr. Smith'.<sup>126</sup> This aligned with an article written by James McManus before the election, in which he stated that 'the exclusion of the Patriotic Front from any settlement can only guarantee further war',<sup>127</sup> a view shared by *The Observer* which highlighted the 'international hostility'<sup>128</sup> that recognition of Muzorewa would cause despite the Boyd report providing 'justification for recognising Rhodesia's return to legality'<sup>129</sup> in the eyes of Thatcher. This article also highlighted the fact that civil war in Rhodesia would only end through 'a political settlement acceptable not only to Bishop Muzorewa, but also to the leaders of the Patriotic Front'.<sup>130</sup>

Whilst these reports were not vital to influencing British government policy following the 1979 election, they were relatively widely discussed, with *The Observer* also covering Chitnis' report and summarising the elections as being 'seriously challenged' by this report.<sup>131</sup> *The Times* reported perhaps the strongest analysis of election outcomes in April, discussing that as 'many Conservatives... believe that the election provided at least as good a legitimation as that enjoyed by many other governments in Africa... it

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123 Chitnis, Pratap. Free and Fair ? The 1979 Rhodesian Election, May 1979, in Delap, Mick. "The April 1979 Elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." 436.

124 Brown, Colin. 'Government will lift Rhodesia sanctions'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 19 May 1979. 4.

125 Brown, Colin. 'Government will lift Rhodesia sanctions'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 19 May 1979. 4.

126 Brown, Colin. 'Government will lift Rhodesia sanctions'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 19 May 1979. 4.

127 'Time to dust off the Bishop Option'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 16 April 1979 11.

128 'Tories to back Bishop'. *The Observer*. (London: UK) 20 May 1979

129 'Tories to back Bishop'. *The Observer*. (London: UK) 20 May 1979

130 'Tories to back Bishop'. *The Observer*. (London: UK) 20 May 1979

131 Legum, Colin. 'Rhodesia Poll 'too one sided''. *The Observer* (London: UK) 29 April 1979. 8.

would be immoral and inconsistent of Britain to reject the result<sup>132</sup> in favour of a plan that included the PF, 'especially as this plan has clearly encouraged and endorsed guerilla violence'.<sup>133</sup> This article also documented the reverse opinion, that as 'the internal settlement is overwhelmingly opposed by black African leaders',<sup>134</sup> Britain could 'find herself isolated and faced with a real danger that Cuban troops could enter the war', concluding that Thatcher would have to balance 'the essential justice of the Conservative view... against these risks' and 'move slowly... by way of intense consultations with the Americans and with African governments'.<sup>135</sup> The dangers of recognition were echoed by 'outgoing Labour Foreign Office ministers', who warned that 'recognition of the new regime in Rhodesia could imperil billions of pounds worth of British trade'<sup>136</sup>, an article in *The Guardian* correctly guessing that a boycott was 'very much a possibility' and would largely be focused 'in black Africa, led by Nigeria'.<sup>137</sup> In this article, Hoggart highlighted the growth in trade between Britain and black Africa, with Britain selling '£1,000 millions of goods to Nigeria'<sup>138</sup> in 1978, and 'trade with Tanzania (increasing) from £72 millions to £112 millions'.<sup>139</sup> Even this soon after the elections, the potential economic and political consequences of British recognition of the Muzorewa government were being recognised. As a result, the importance of strong relations with these nations for the future was understood alongside the necessity for careful diplomatic ties with Southern African states. The current and future benefits of friendlier economic and political ties with these nations, and the consequences of the opposite were becoming clear.

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132 'The election issues of foreign policy'. *The Times* (London: UK) 30 April 1979. 9.

133 'The election issues of foreign policy'. *The Times* (London: UK) 30 April 1979. 9.

134 'The election issues of foreign policy'. *The Times* (London: UK) 30 April 1979. 9.

135 'The election issues of foreign policy'. *The Times* (London: UK) 30 April 1979. 9.

136 Hoggart, Simon. 'Ex-Ministers warn PM on Rhodesia'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 8 May 1979. 32.

137 Hoggart, Simon. 'Ex-Ministers warn PM on Rhodesia'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 8 May 1979. 32.

138 Hoggart, Simon. 'Ex-Ministers warn PM on Rhodesia'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 8 May 1979. 32.

139 Hoggart, Simon. 'Ex-Ministers warn PM on Rhodesia'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 8 May 1979. 32.

## **British government reaction to the 1979 election; Immediate crisis management**

Due to the refusal of the international community to recognise the government of Rhodesia as legitimate after the 1979 election and the continued commitment to guerilla warfare by the Patriotic Front, the British government was forced to react quickly to developments in the nation. As the foreign entity most commonly associated with the white regime in Rhodesia, many governments across the globe looked to Britain with the expectation that the government would immediately condemn the 1978 constitution and 1979 election, and would quickly work to find a new settlement for majority rule. This put a great deal of pressure on the British government, as it was precariously balanced between appeasing these nations through quick and decisive action whilst successfully negotiating with Ian Smith and the PF- a task that had proven difficult in the past. The British government's immediate concerns were to abate the anger of those anxious to see the removal of Smith from power as soon as possible, whilst ensuring that Rhodesia did not become a state completely consumed by chaos and violence through long-term solutions. This need to plan for the long term whilst managing diplomatic relation crises in the short term characterised British government policy in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 election.

British government diplomacy followed different procedures and approaches depending on the nation or leader involved. For example, diplomacy with Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia often focused on what Britain could provide or withhold in the event of disputes over Rhodesia. This approach was effective due to the fact that these nations were economically struggling by the end of the 1970s, and had less of a financial incentive to continue action against Britain or Rhodesia than, say, Nigeria. Diplomacy with Nigeria largely focused on placation, due to its greater amount of financial capability and political influence within the Commonwealth and Africa. Aid programmes were less efficient to the wealthier Nigeria than Zambia and Tanzania, and in fact Nigeria would eventually threaten to economically sanction Great Britain in the result of the government recognising Muzorewa. Whilst there were some common factors, such as Lord Harlech's<sup>140</sup> visit to the Frontline States and Nigeria in

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<sup>140</sup> David Ormsby-Gore, 5th Baron Harlech was a Conservative politician and diplomat. Previously ambassador to the United States during the 1960s, he was tasked on visiting the Frontline States and Nigeria as part of a diplomatic mission to Africa during the Rhodesia crisis

order to foster diplomatic ties, the manner in which diplomacy was carried out and the incentives offered was tailored to the relative strengths and weaknesses exhibited on a per-nation basis.

Direct pressure was key in influencing British policy in the short term; this mostly came from the Nigerian, Kenyan, Zambian, Mozambican and Tanzanian governments, with the latter three being part of a group known as the Frontline States. The FLS were already working independent of the Commonwealth in order to destabilise the situation in Rhodesia through the supply of arms, training and men to the PF, and by implementing what was effectively a blockade around Rhodesia through sanctions.<sup>141142143</sup> These actions against the Rhodesian government had been ongoing since the early 1970s, but it was after the 1979 election that some of these nations began to widely use their Commonwealth status in order to directly pressurise the British government into action regarding majority rule in Rhodesia. The fact that Smith had conceded (even limited) power to the black majority gave hope that it was a matter of when, rather than if, an acceptable settlement could be achieved in Rhodesia. Due to these concessions it appeared increasingly possible that a constitution and election acceptable to the African states would be achievable with the help of the British government. In addition to this, the timing of the Lusaka Conference later in the year afforded leverage over the newly elected British government, as the event of them recognising the Muzorewa government as legitimate would have caused monumental backlash at the conference.<sup>144</sup>

The importance of Nigeria in particular was made apparent soon after the election in Rhodesia. At this time, Nigeria was a nation with a military government that was

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141 These nations pressing for 'mandatory sanctions' on Rhodesia from the UN, (TNA): PREM 19/106. 315.

142 'Zambia was an enthusiastic advocate of sanctions and moved quickly to reduce trade with and through Rhodesia', 'after Mozambique's independence... the new government there implement(ed) sanctions', Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. *When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined*. 226.

143 For example, FRELIMO in Angola and ZANU leaders having a 'personalised... relationship', and ZANLA being allowed to use the Tete province as an operational base since 1973. From Martin, David, Johnson, Phyllis, and Mugabe, Robert. *The struggle for Zimbabwe: the Chimurenga war*. London: Faber & Faber, 1981 19.

144 This was recognised by the British government, who agreed that no recognition of Muzorewa could come before Lusaka, so that the government's hands 'could be free' at the conference. (TNA): PREM 19/106. 365-6.

opposed to Muzorewa and contained significant hard-line elements willing to advocate extended violence in Rhodesia in order to achieve majority rule.<sup>145</sup> Despite this, there was a hope that the Nigerian government would play 'a helpful role' at OAU and UN meetings.<sup>146</sup> The fact that Nigeria was allied to the Frontline States, whilst being a key member of the OAU and an important African member of the Commonwealth, had a distinct impact. Whilst Nigerian interest in the Rhodesia problem had certainly been growing during the course of the Internal Settlement, the elections in Rhodesia and Britain being only a week apart meant that the Nigerian government redoubled communication with the new British government. The first communication between the Prime Minister's Office and the Nigerian Commissioner for External Affairs was one week after Thatcher officially became Prime Minister. In this early dialogue, pressure was already being placed upon the British government but remained civil, with the Commissioner emphasising the necessity for cooperation towards a UN sanctioned election, but issuing a veiled warning that 'if Nigeria's views were disregarded, (the government) would no longer be able to render any effective assistance'.<sup>147</sup> The British response to the concerns of the Nigerian government were cautious but hopeful, agreeing that 'there were serious problems... to be faced and which could lead potentially to conflicts of views and interests', noting from the start the policy of the new government to 'make full use of diplomatic dialogue to minimise those risks'.<sup>148</sup>

Despite this relatively positive beginning, the Foreign Office quickly recognised the potential danger of lifting sanctions or recognising Muzorewa and the likely repercussions of doing so. British sanctions had been applied from the first day of UDI, and began with the tobacco and sugar industries, the cessation of aid, the banning of arms sales, and the removal of Rhodesia from the Commonwealth.<sup>149</sup> This was extended in 1966 to a full export ban to Rhodesia, which whilst not fully effective in preventing British companies operating in Africa from trading in Rhodesia,<sup>150</sup> the

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145 In May 1979 Nigeria supported the 'armed struggle' in Rhodesia, and felt that the British government could aggravate this by recognising Muzorewa. (TNA): PREM 19/107. 138.

146 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 43.

147 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 281.

148 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 280.

149 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 212.

150 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 215.

eventual result of majority rule being accepted by Smith did 'come close to achieving the goal of sanctions as defined by Britain'.<sup>151</sup> Britain was throughout this period the 'leading actor in implementation of sanctions'.<sup>152</sup> Due to this element of leadership, British adherence of sanctions being a key element in their observance globally, with this ensuring 'nominal compliance from even sceptical Western powers'.<sup>153</sup> In addition to this, the adoption of sanctions had thus far prevented African nations from pressuring the British government into 'the use of force or all-out economic warfare';<sup>154</sup> sanctions could not be discontinued due to the fear of 'provok(ing) African and Commonwealth reaction'.<sup>155</sup> This was acknowledged by Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington who argued that even the U.S could not end sanctions, as this would put the British government 'in a very difficult position at Lusaka'.<sup>156</sup> These ranged from relatively minor and ceremonial diplomatic penalties such as the removal of British diplomatic elements from Nigeria for a time, to extreme measures such as extensive economic sanctions and the withdrawal from the Commonwealth,<sup>157</sup> with the British government planning to counter these actions with similar penalties when possible, noting here the usefulness of Germany as a block to Nigerian sanctions due to its financial support in several major Nigerian development projects.<sup>158</sup>

It is at this point that British government policy can be seen to be formulating, with the emphasis on the short term on preventative measures to protect the British economy and the Muzorewa government, at least until long-term policy could be discussed at Lusaka. Nigeria, as a relatively economically and politically strong African nation, faced the brunt of this policy due to it holding the greatest amount of leverage against the British government at this point. Whilst not able to seriously damage the British economy as a whole, the fact that 'Nigeria had already taken steps to deprive British

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151 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 229.

152 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 214.

153 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 213.

154 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 214.

155 Minter, W. and Schmidt, E., 1988. When sanctions worked: The case of Rhodesia reexamined. 215.

156 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 360.

157 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 128.

158 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 129.



firms of contracts<sup>159</sup> in the wake of the elections meant that the threat to British 'interests in black Africa' had to be strongly considered as a problem for the future.<sup>160</sup> The non-aligned nature of Nigeria<sup>161</sup> likely contributed to this, and led to it being discussed along with Zambia as key examples of British interests in Africa that could be 'lost', with an implication that this loss could be to Soviet or Chinese influence.<sup>162</sup> First World Commonwealth nations were unlikely to act hostilely against the British government, whilst other African states were generally unable to act individually due to economic concerns. Nigeria was as such a key threat to the stability of the situation, as evidenced by concerns within the government that regarding the possibility that Nigeria lead the OAU against the British government, or attempting to convince other African states to join it en masse in leaving the Commonwealth.<sup>163</sup>

British government policy at this early point consisted of attempting to stall recognition of the Muzorewa government and the abolishment of sanctions, whilst planning for the medium term at Lusaka. Unfortunately, this policy was interrupted by the Nigerian government as early as 24 May. The establishment of a British representative in Salisbury triggered Nigerian concerns that the recognition of the Muzorewa government was imminent, and as a result the government placed an embargo on the awarding of public sector contracts to British firms, beginning by rejecting a British firm bidding on a contract worth 130 million Naira.<sup>164</sup> This embargo was publicly announced, and was stated as; 'until the British government clarifies its attitude to black Africa, the Nigerian government is not prepared to entertain any new proposals from British companies'<sup>165</sup> The loss of not only the 130 million Naira contract, but also a number of other contracts were at risk, at least until the embargo was lifted, at which point bids could be resubmitted.<sup>166</sup> Whilst this embargo was not across all British contracts in Nigeria,<sup>167</sup>

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159 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 365.

160 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 24.

161 'The communist powers seemed increasingly resigned to the fact that the West would always hold the upper hand in Nigeria. They also knew that the attainment of socialism in the country was, at best, a distant dream' Ogunbadejo, O., Nigeria's foreign policy under military rule 1966-79. *International Journal*, 35(4), (1980) 748-765. 762.

162 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 24.

163 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 128-9.

164 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 64.

165 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 63.

166 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 29.

167 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 28.

there was a strong fear that this could eventually be the case, and harmed British businesses' confidence in the region. General Electric Company had been asked to bid for a large power station project in Lagos state, and was worried about whether it was worth 'undergoing the considerable expense of preparing a bid'.<sup>168</sup> The possibility of expanded embargoes in Nigeria led to great uncertainty for British businesses, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office worried that about considerable financial losses in the region as a result of this uncertainty.<sup>169</sup> As Britain's largest trading partner in Africa, Nigeria held a degree of power over the British government that the FLS could not.<sup>170</sup> The Nigerian government made its motives clear regarding the embargo, through a statement from the Nigerian Minister for Works agreeing to remove the embargo only if the British government made a statement clarifying that the establishment of a representative in Salisbury did not indicate support for Muzorewa.<sup>171</sup>

The use of direct action was the first sign of British policy being forced to deviate from stalling for time with regards to the recognition of Muzorewa due to the nature of the embargo. The Foreign Office stated that due to the official announcement by a government figure that the contract would be rejected, 'the embargo... (was) made in a more public way than we feared'. This led to the necessity for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to formulate policy immediately, as other contracts would be at risk. The threat of further embargo led to Mervyn Brown<sup>172</sup> recommending that action be taken immediately due to the possibility of 'growing public demand for the Nigerian government to take further damaging measures'.<sup>173</sup> The next day, the government agreed to send Lord Harlech to Nigeria during a trip to the Frontline States (which Nigeria was not part of), due to the 'political and economic importance (that) justifies the inclusion of Lagos in the itinerary'.<sup>174</sup> Whilst this meeting was to be held slightly later, in June, at this point the British government was beginning to understand the troubles that Nigeria could cause, and this inclusion showed the necessity of keeping a clear diplomatic channel between the two nations. Despite this, there was a worry in

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168 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 24.

169 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 24.

170 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/108, 'Situation in Rhodesia: Visit of Bishop Abel Muzorewa to USA and UK, July 1979; part 3'. 199.

171 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 65.

172 British High Commissioner to Nigeria 1979-83.

173 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 63.

174 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 45.

Nigeria that this meeting may not come soon enough, and this translated to threats from Nigerian government representatives on the 29 May regarding the nation's place in the Commonwealth should Muzorewa's government be recognised.<sup>175</sup> Only a day later, it was discussed that bringing Harlech's trip to Nigeria forward by over a week would be vital to preventing further damaging punitive action by the Nigerian government to British economic interests in the nation.<sup>176</sup>

Whilst there were fears as to what Nigeria might demand or what actions they might take at the Lusaka meeting,<sup>177</sup> by the end of June this policy of constant communication and reactive diplomacy had borne some fruit. The Nigerian government had not progressed any further with sanctions against British firms, and Lord Harlech's 'mission' to Africa had 'made good progress in convincing (the Nigerian and other African governments) that (the British government) was genuinely trying to find a way forward.'<sup>178</sup> Whilst the Nigerian government had no real reason to extend unnecessarily harsh sanctions and in general 'did not mind who won the elections, provided they were fair',<sup>179</sup> warnings that recognition of Muzorewa by the British government would exacerbate the armed struggle abounded in meetings between representatives of the two nations.<sup>180</sup> Despite this scepticism, Harlech's mission had succeeded in helping to convince the Nigerian government to 'make the kind of contribution at the OAU meeting that Britain was requesting' if the British government could attempt to make a public statement, backed by Muzorewa, stating only that further constitutional talks would be needed.<sup>181</sup> Whilst time certainly played a factor in the softening of the Nigerian government's position,<sup>182</sup> as did visits by Muzorewa to Washington and London,<sup>183</sup> the continued use of diplomacy that ended with Harlech's visit was arguably the key factor

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175 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 28.

176 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 24.

177 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 365.

178 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 72.

179 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 138.

180 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 138.

181 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 45.

182 As the British government's refusal to recognise Muzorewa's government continued, this increased Nigerian confidence in this continuing to be the case, For example, the repeated statement that the British government would not go to Lusaka 'with their minds made up on the precise terms of a settlement' was reassuring (TNA): PREM 19/108. 47.

183 After which he was believed to be increasingly likely to 'persuade the whites to acquiesce in (changes in the Constitution to lessen minority power in government)... in return for the prize of British recognition' (TNA): PREM 19/108. 101.

in defusing this situation, at least until the Lusaka conference. For the first time since the election, the British government could believe that it shared 'a common objective' with the governments visited by Harlech.<sup>184</sup> Diplomacy over time with Nigerian representatives reached a level that was 'calm... friendly and good humoured'<sup>185</sup>, with a working relationship forming over time that resulted in a much less hard-line and more flexible stance from the Nigerian government that simply requested reassurance that the British government was not stalling on recognition until after Lusaka, with the two parties eventually agreeing in a 21 June meeting that the British government would attempt to propose a new constitution as soon as possible, and that a settlement would need to involve Muzorewa.<sup>186</sup> This resulted in a far more stable situation than before for the British government, and meant that their greatest threat to a solution in Rhodesia was for the most part nullified until after the Lusaka conference.

In the event of crisis, Nigeria's power as a Commonwealth nation was to be supported mostly by the Frontline States of Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Tanzania and Mozambique. However, these nations were unlikely to act alone or as leading a group of nations in any type of drastic manner, as had been threatened by Nigeria. This was due to their relative political<sup>187</sup> and economic<sup>188,189</sup> weaknesses when compared to Britain, and due to their placement in the midst of the Rhodesia crisis could not afford to invite more unrest when acting alone. Nigeria knew this and utilised its power to 'nationalise British Petroleum's holdings and from time to time linked its oil policies with Western policies on Southern Africa', something that these weaker nations could not afford to do.<sup>190</sup> In contrast; Mozambique and Angola were known in 1980 for seeking 'more, rather than less, economic relations with the West',<sup>191</sup> with Mozambique in

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184 (TNA): PREM 19/108. 118.

185 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 138.

186 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 137.

187 In 1980 Bienen called Nigeria 'the largest power in black Africa', Bienen, Henry. "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa." *Political Science Quarterly* 95, no. 1 (1980): 29-42. 36.

188 Nigeria was known for having vast oil reserves that the others lacked. See Bienen, Henry. "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa." 39.

189 For example, Nigeria's GDP in 1980 was \$64bn, Zambia's was \$3.85bn, Botswana's was 1.06bn, Mozambique's was \$3.52bn, whilst Angola's was \$6.68bn in 1985 and Tanzania's was \$5.1bn by 1988. From <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=TZ-NG-ZM-MZ-AO-BW>

190 Bienen, Henry. "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa." 39.

191 Bienen, Henry. "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa." 40.

particular aiming for American investment.<sup>192</sup> Similarly, Zambia relied heavily on copper exports, and faced disruptions limiting the trade of this coming from within the region even without clashes with Western powers.<sup>193</sup> Nigeria was able to withstand the effects of withdrawing from the Commonwealth or placing sanctions, and was politically important enough to lead a group of smaller nations against Britain, the Frontline States were too politically weak, too economically fragile to attempt something similar until the Lusaka Conference. As a result, British government policy took a different form with these nations and was far less preventative, instead taking the form of reassurances and attempting to take a leadership role in the developing situation. As there was less short-term threat from these nations acting to disrupt Britain, there was less need to constantly monitor the situation and act to placate them, and more of a focus on ongoing diplomacy and assurances in order to assure a respectful and neutral climate for future discussion on the wider scale.

In mid May, meetings with representatives with Angola and Tanzania showed this wish to keep positive relations with these economically weaker states in order to prevent a cohesive campaign against the British government or increased support for the PF. The Angolan government here warned that recognition of Muzorewa would have the potential effect of pushing them closer to the OAU or the Soviet Union or support in the region, but that Russian relations may not necessarily be Angola's first choice, stating that the nation was pleased with UK/Angola relations, which were 'progressing satisfactorily'.<sup>194</sup> Government discourse with Mozambique was generally non-committal on both sides, with the British government managing to curtail any extreme Mozambican reactions by arguing that the current Mozambique and Angolan regimes had been recognised by the British government despite the fact that 'democratic elections had never been held in these countries'.<sup>195</sup> This, combined with Mozambique's precarious position as sharing a 550km border with Rhodesia that saw a large amount of guerilla fighting,<sup>196</sup> meant that this policy of relative non-committal in the short run

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192 Bienen, Henry. "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa." 39.

193 For example, when the Benguela Railroad was cut in Angola. Bienen, Henry. "Perspectives on Soviet Intervention in Africa." 40.

194 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 131.

195 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 74.

196 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 315.

prevented Mozambique from acting in an extreme manner, partly due to fears of 'major escalation of the conflict in Southern Africa'.<sup>197</sup>

Most important of the Frontline States were Tanzania and Zambia. These nations had comparatively more influence over the situation, and so it was the British government's responsibility to avoid angering them. Zambia was an influential nation during this time due to its position as a non-aligned state, and as such diplomacy between its government and Britain's was important to securing long term peace in the region. President of Zambia Kenneth Kaunda approached the problem from a positive and friendly stance, emphasising in early communication with Thatcher the importance of Britain to trade,<sup>198</sup> and whilst condemning the current Rhodesian regime as unsuitable to lead,<sup>199</sup> suggests support by stating that 'the new British government should seek the vigorous assistance of those able and willing to help', and that Kaunda was willing to write to show how the British government could act in a way that would guarantee his support.<sup>200</sup> Kaunda was still committed to 'hanker after the unattainable' of a traditional decolonisation<sup>201</sup>, but was viewed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that his 'mind was not closed'. On the whole, Kaunda was willing to 'support any genuine effort' towards majority rule, with the use of the Commonwealth as a collaborative group seen as a potential route to take.<sup>202</sup> Through continued discussion, the British government managed to achieve some progress as Kaunda understood that he needed 'a free, independent, peaceful and viable Zimbabwe'<sup>203</sup>, and after Harlech's visit he was 'not closed on the possible ways forward'.<sup>204</sup> This meeting in particular helped to make Kaunda understand that 'the Zambian and British governments shared the same goal' as Zambia needed 'a stable neighbour in the south',<sup>205</sup> and British diplomacy immediately after the 1979 election helped to convince Kaunda of the helpfulness, with this ever-improving relationship contrasting with Kaunda's declining relations with some of the Frontline States, particularly Nyerere.<sup>206</sup> This more positive relationship helped

197 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 131.

198 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 254.

199 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 255-7.

200 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 261.

201 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 212.

202 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 211.

203 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 262.

204 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 196.

205 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 189.

206 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 128.

set the scene for a positive Lusaka Conference and ensured that this bloc, whilst strong, would not rival Nigeria in terms of influence and power.

Britain's status as 'one of Zambia's biggest trading and development partners'<sup>207</sup> and the common knowledge that Zambia's economy was struggling intensely both contributed to British influence in reaching a positive solution with Kaunda. This was a key issue as it meant that a quick solution was needed in order to save the Zambian economy, which had gotten so bad that it had required the reopening of some trade links with Rhodesia from late 1978 onwards.<sup>208</sup> The closing of these links would have led to Zambia further being 'unable to avail herself of potentially efficient trading links across the Zambezi, with this potentially crippling Zambia as 'the area of soils (in Zambia) which (would) grow maize (the staple food) successfully (was) minute'; any food shortages could not have been dealt with efficiently had Zambia closed off all links with Rhodesia.<sup>209</sup> Along with this, the 'uncertainty of copper prices... (created) an insecure foundation for the Zambian economy.'<sup>210</sup> At this time, copper was 'over 90 percent of the export earnings of Zambia', and so the 'short-term volatility' of copper led to widely varied export earnings and government tax revenue.<sup>211</sup> Due to this, and the fact that copper contributed to 14 percent of the overall wage employment of the nation in the mid-1970s, Zambia could not afford to shun British economic involvement. Had the Zambian government done so, the British government could have restricted aid programmes or trade. Since Zambia's independence in 1964, the British government had given £139.4 million in aid, £33.3 million of which had been in 1978.<sup>212</sup> The withdrawal of future funds to Zambia would have caused increased economic issues for the country. These economic problems had also led to a general feeling of disenchantment with armed struggle and the presence of ZANU forces in the nation

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207 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 254.

208 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 230.

209 Daniel, Philip. *Africanisation, nationalisation and inequality: Mining labour and the Copperbelt in Zambian development*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1979. 14.

210 Daniel, Philip. *Africanisation, nationalisation and inequality: Mining labour and the Copperbelt in Zambian development*. Vol. 4. XIII

211 Obidegwu, C.F., 'The impact of copper price movements and variability on the Zambian economy: A dynamic analysis' (PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania: 1980) 2.

212 'Zambia: Aid Provisions'. House of Lords debate 27 July 1979, volume 401. Columns 2167-70. From [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written\\_answers/1979/jul/27/zambia-aid-provisions#S5LV0401P0\\_19790727\\_LWA\\_27](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1979/jul/27/zambia-aid-provisions#S5LV0401P0_19790727_LWA_27)

due to the strain that they placed on the economy.<sup>213</sup> Whilst Kaunda did still support the PF ideologically, the Zambian economy was failing due to its dependency on Rhodesia and the impact that sanctions had had on this relationship,<sup>214</sup> and this allowed for British policy to convince him of the government's intentions by Lusaka.

Facing similar issues, diplomacy with President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania proceeded in a similar manner as he was said to have given representatives 'a general instruction to avoid the adoption of extreme attitudes' on Southern Africa, and was initially unwilling to openly conflict with the British government.<sup>215</sup> Nyerere was concerned with economic issues in the region that revolved around Uganda due to close links between the Ugandan and Tanzanian economies. This meant that Nyerere was unwilling to act rashly in case British economic or political assistance was needed should other situations in the region damage 'his relations with other African states and the OAU'.<sup>216</sup> Due to this, continued diplomatic contact bore fruit, with Nyerere making it clear that he was largely unwilling and unable to 'live up to his reputation as a leader of the liberation struggle'<sup>217</sup>, partly due to his fears of the Rhodesian situation 'leading to an East/West situation' that would have repercussions economically and politically for Tanzania.<sup>218</sup> The British government recognised this willingness, and whilst using continued diplomacy and reassurances, the British government's 'generous aid programme'<sup>219</sup> helped initially with Tanzania/Britain relations and showed the use of economic incentives as a way to prevent immediate action from these smaller nations. British policy in Tanzania concentrated on ensuring that 'the greater the loss involved for Tanzania in possible deprivation of our help, the more carefully Nyerere will reflect before encouraging or supporting extreme action damaging to (British) interests... in Africa'.<sup>220</sup> This policy arguably succeeded, and by late July Nyerere agreed to go to Lusaka 'to be helpful' and that 'he hoped that there would be immediate progress towards achieving acceptable constitutional change'.<sup>221</sup> The Foreign and

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213 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 217.

214 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 196.

215 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 133.

216 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 134.

217 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 36.

218 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 37.

219 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 37.

220 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 37.

221 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/109 Situation in Rhodesia: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Lusaka, August 1979; part 4'. 214.



Commonwealth Office felt that, in the wake of this, alongside Harlech's 'mission', there was 'some sign of movement in the thinking of the Front Line presidents'.<sup>222</sup> This feeling was echoed by Thatcher, who believed that Nyerere and Kaunda were in 'considerable difficulties and would probably welcome an agreement on Rhodesia', showing an awareness of the types of interactions that would work best on Nyerere.<sup>223</sup> Through the policy of constant reassurance of British commitment to finding a new solution and an understanding of Tanzania's needs, by the start of August the government had begun to adopt a more moderate position, a change seen across most of the Frontline States.

Whilst not such a troubling prospective for the British government in the short term, policy and diplomacy with British allies such as Australia and the USA was important to the formulation of longer term policy, as a concerted effort was needed in order for this to be implemented. Whilst these nations did not pose a direct threat to British influence in the region or the economy, their cooperation was key for the successful implementation of future plans. British policy regarding Australia was as such generally positive and cooperative, with both governments wishing for a peaceful solution in the long run. The Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser wrote to Thatcher on 19 May stating that whilst the elections symbolised a step forward for Rhodesia, there was still much progress needed in order for the government to be accepted as fully legitimate, suggesting further talks including the PF.<sup>224</sup> There was really very little for the two nations to disagree over during this time, with Thatcher writing in May that she welcomed the Prime Minister's 'wish to keep in close touch' and disclosed early British policy, including Harlech's visit to Africa.<sup>225</sup> This continued through to June and July as the Lusaka Conference approached, with a meeting at the end of June focusing on this very issue.<sup>226</sup> As the British and Australian governments were broadly in agreement over Rhodesia, and understood that whilst the situation had changed due to the successes of the election, its legitimacy was still under question.<sup>227</sup> This meant that policy towards Australia did not need to include any coercion as was the case with African nations, but rather focused on preparing for future challenges, such as how to

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222 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 359.

223 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 76.

224 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 112.

225 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 9.

226 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 72-9.

227 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 72.

proceed at Lusaka,<sup>228</sup> when to renew or remove sanctions on Rhodesia,<sup>229</sup> the state of current relations with Nigeria and the Frontline States, and how this could be influenced in the future.<sup>230</sup> There was a general friendly, positive and cooperative atmosphere between the two governments, and this was reflected in the close diplomatic ties shared during this time.

Whilst communication with the United States was similarly positive and did not harbour a direct threat to British government influence, it was still not as straightforward as with Australia, due to US fears of Socialist influence in the region. Whilst looking to find a solution that would include 'more legitimate and genuine majority rule', the US government also was deeply concerned with Western influence in the region, starting in early June that any solution 'should preserve our diplomatic and ties of trade with friendly African governments and also limit... the opportunity of outside powers to take advantage of the situation... at the expense of the United States'- adding of the latter issue that 'this is very important'.<sup>231</sup> As can be seen, the US government focused not solely on cooperation for British interests, but also for its own.

This can be seen best in the US Congress and Senate initially voting to remove sanctions against the behest of President Carter<sup>232</sup>, as many did not understand the current problems in Rhodesia and saw the continued imposition of sanctions after an election that was successful on the surface as unjust. As a result Carter had to 'fight congress' due to his belief that if the British government wished to maintain these that it was necessary to continue them, at least in the short term.<sup>233</sup> The removal of these sanctions would have been disastrous for Britain, as this would have been widely seen as tantamount to recognition of the Muzorewa regime<sup>234</sup> due to their status of being imposed by a mandatory UN resolution.<sup>235</sup> On May 15th, Senate passed a resolution by seventy-five to nineteen in favour of removing sanctions, 'and that the installation of the new multiracial government satisfied U.S. demands for majority rule and therefore

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228 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 74.

229 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 73.

230 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 76.

231 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 350.

232 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 44.

233 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 17.

234 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 16.

235 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 366.

sanctions should be lifted'.<sup>236</sup> Carter and Thatcher needed each other's support on this issue, as 'both needed each other's support to stave off domestic pressure to lift sanctions immediately'.<sup>237</sup> Similar to Britain, the USA received a warning from Nigeria that any removal of sanctions would result in 'an appropriate response from Lagos'.<sup>238</sup> This, luckily, prevented the Senate and Congress from going over Carter's head to force the issue; 'the threat of a Nigerian oil embargo grabbed the public's, and congress's, attention (and) was a splash of cold water that made people ready to listen to the argument that it would be rash for the US to lift sanctions before Great Britain'.<sup>239</sup> Despite Carter's lack of support in Congress and the Senate, the threat of Nigerian action convinced the public and government figures that to keep sanctions would be the best action for the USA at that time.

As this shows, British policy and diplomacy had only a small impact on the almost completely autonomous US policy in Southern Africa, but often worked in tandem with the desires of Carter, who was determined to achieve a free and fair majority rule. Whilst the United States and Britain were generally agreed on what needed to be done in Rhodesia, they were not always united on a wider government level on how these aims could be achieved. This was in part due to US fears for its own interests and lack of understanding of the broader picture. British government diplomacy regarding the USA focused on attempting to prevent the removal of sanctions due to the potential impact that this would have.<sup>240</sup> This focused on maintaining a stance that the British government would not do this until at least November when the sanctions would expire naturally, as this would allow Britain to attend Lusaka 'in the position of being able to point to continuing consultations with all the parties concerned'.<sup>241</sup> The removal of sanctions would have shown Britain as willing to ignore the concerns of African governments. Luckily, this tactic worked as President Carter announced that 'the US could not unilaterally move ahead of the UK on the Rhodesia issue'.<sup>242</sup>

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236 Francis, Samuel T. 'The Rhodesian elections and the sanctions issue', May 1979. From <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1979/05/the-rhodesian-elections-and-the-sanctions-issue>, accessed 30 Aug 2016.

237 Mitchell, Nancy, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War*. 555.

238 Mitchell, Nancy, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War*. 566.

239 Mitchell, Nancy, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War*. 572.

240 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 27.

241 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 27.

242 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 26.

Initial diplomatic movement by the British government during this time largely focused on ensuring that allies remained allies whilst attempting to mitigate the effects of crisis on its relations with its critics within Africa. The emerging nature of crises during this early post-election period and the new-found scrutiny of British government policy in Rhodesia ensured that quick and precise diplomatic actions were absolutely necessary to establish the greatest degree of stability possible, as this would be necessary for achieving an eventual settlement.

### **British government policy and diplomacy until the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**

British policy after immediate crisis management was split between plans leading up to and including the Lusaka Conference in early August, and plans from then until the Lancaster House Conference in early September. The reason for this split in policy was due to the fact that, until the Lusaka Conference, there was no confirmed mandate for another election or constitution. This meant that policy mostly focused on whether either should happen and if so how to broach the subject on an international level. In contrast, in the month leading up to Lancaster House, it was known that there would indeed be both a new constitution and election, and as a result policy was focused on how to address the situation in ways that would allow for the smooth completion of the Constitutional Conference, and how to ensure all parties attended. Due to this, it is necessary to split British government policy into that which was formed before the agreement at Lusaka on a new constitutional conference, and the policy formed after.

By July, the British government had accepted the election as being mechanically legitimate but as needing improvements due to 'criticism of the Constitution... and (a need for) progress to be made towards ending the war'<sup>243</sup>. As a result, the British government's policy objective was now openly 'to try to bring about condition in which legal independence can be granted to Rhodesia with wide international acceptance'.<sup>244</sup> This was clearly something to be done at Lusaka with the other Commonwealth heads of state, with the possibility of eventually including the Frontline States and the PF if

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243 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 50.

244 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 50.

necessary. Due to this, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Prime Minister's policy was mostly focused on continued diplomacy as seen previously, but this time with a growing emphasis on planning for the Lusaka conference.

The initial plan was to bring about constitutional talks in Rhodesia that would at least be acceptable for the majority of international observers. This was formulated in late June, primarily between Lord Harlech, Sir Anthony Duff<sup>245</sup> and Thatcher.<sup>246</sup> At the conference, a starting point for bringing Rhodesia to acceptable majority rule would be to propose plans that would convince Muzorewa to allow discussion on more than 'purely cosmetic changes' to the constitution which would allow for wider acceptance of the regime.<sup>247</sup> The talks at Lusaka would then be followed by a constitutional conference that would either be shunned by the PF (leading to their loss of a great deal of political credibility) or would commence to either success or collapse. This would then lead to the new constitution and new elections. The long term goal was to implement this constitution along the lines of other 'standard UK sponsored constitutions given to Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda',<sup>248</sup> and would need to be carefully balanced to be acceptable to those supportive of the Internal Settlement and those critical of it. The plan was to float these ideas at the Lusaka conference, with Harlech suggesting in his June report that the key issues to be addressed were; the need to improve the current constitution, to reach a settlement that stemmed from Britain as the legally responsible authority, to attempt to reconcile the internal and external parties, and to oversee eventual departure of Smith from government.<sup>249</sup> These would be suggested at Lusaka in an attempt to formulate an acceptable agreement for the widest range of groups involved.

These policies were first discussed officially and put into a coherent document on 4 July 1979, in which a timetable based on Harlech's advice and included proposed changes to the constitution that would gain the widest internal and external acceptance.<sup>250</sup> November was stated as the point at which this plan needed to be in motion as that

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245 Sir Anthony Duff was a British diplomat, previously High Commissioner to Kenya from 1972-75. In 1979 he was to be the leader of the British delegation to Lancaster House, and was later appointed Deputy Governor of Southern Rhodesia under Lord Soames.

246 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 103.

247 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 104.

248 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 104.

249 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 70.

250 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 22.

was the time for renewal of sanctions in Rhodesia, and any decision without progress towards a new constitution would cause anger internationally and could further harm British interests in Africa.<sup>251</sup> Further, it outlines that a 'determined policy' should be announced after the Lusaka conference and that these discussions needed to be taken in mind of the level of support from black African states at the Conference.<sup>252</sup> These basic plans included: to bring Rhodesia to legal independence as soon as possible, with the understanding that the current settlement would not gain international recognition;<sup>253</sup> that a constitutional conference and election would be necessary to achieve this; that it was possible that there would be resistance from within Rhodesia;<sup>254</sup> and that it was necessary to ensure friendly relations with African states in order to put pressure on the PF should they refuse to attend the conference.<sup>255</sup>

These plans were to be fully announced at the Conference, but policy was used to improve the chances of these being successful during July. In talks with the Nyerere, Thatcher accepted the responsibility of Britain to implement these plans, but requested African help in doing so. Nyerere agreed that a talk condemning the current constitution and espousing the virtues of talks for a newly proposed one would help to convince African states of the legitimacy of any future elections, and would assist in forcing the PF to stop hostilities.<sup>256</sup> Similarly, it was agreed in a meeting prior to the conference with the New Zealand Prime Minister that was necessary to avoid an onslaught against Muzorewa, and that too hard a line on the situation should be avoided at all costs.<sup>257</sup> The British government at this point believed that there was a general consensus on the Lusaka Conference as being a new start for progress in Rhodesia, and most involved in the situation were willing to wait until the Conference commenced before acting rashly. British diplomacy had combined with policy planning for the long term to create a positive atmosphere for the start of the conference which was to be built upon throughout its proceedings.

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251 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 22.

252 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 24.

253 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 22.

254 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 23.

255 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 24.

256 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 209.

257 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 194.

## **British government diplomacy at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**

At the Lusaka Conference itself, British policy focused on mediating the attendees whilst attempting to espouse the virtues of the previous election. Policy focused on accepting the failures of the previous election whilst not seeking to dwell on them but rather to attempt to move forward with discussions. The end result of the Conference was overall incredibly successful, with even relative hard-liners such as the Zambian government through a national newspaper praising the 'frankness and sincerity of purpose' of the British government, and describing past friction as 'natural between close friends'.<sup>258</sup> The same article further explains the dangers of Smith as a stumbling block to proposals, signifying a change in Frontline State rhetoric to being more sympathetic to British interests, with this being a result of the careful diplomacy of months gone by.<sup>259</sup> Similarly, the *New York Times* was pleased with developments at Lusaka, praising the 'talent of the British for diplomacy' and suggesting that even if the initiative were to fail, Britain would still be commended for beginning the process.<sup>260</sup> Even relatively hard-line non-Commonwealth Presidents such as Antonio Neto<sup>261</sup> of Angola accepted the proposals of Lusaka on the basis that they had been accepted by all thirty-nine commonwealth leaders. By adopting the idea for a moderate new constitution along the lines of previous British decolonisation efforts, whilst including African nations in a positive and diplomatic manner, the British government had successfully navigated the main issues faced following the election. In doing so it had managed to use immediate and short term policy in order to bring the Frontline States, Muzorewa and the Commonwealth to some form of common ground for the basis of progress in Rhodesia.<sup>262</sup>

During the Conference, a continuation of previous diplomacy and the moderate nature of the British plans was key to the success of the conference as a starting point for further progress. Despite the Conference starting off with an 'unfriendly and

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258 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 17.

259 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 17.

260 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 19.

261 President of Angola from 1975-1979 and leader of the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) from 1975-1979. He was to die during cancer surgery in the Soviet Union on the 10th September 1979, to be replaced by Jose Eduardo dos Santos.

262 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 28.

unpromising' atmosphere,<sup>263</sup> 'an early talk with President Nyerere of Tanzania revealed that the Front Line Presidents had agreed among themselves to leave the initiative'<sup>264</sup> to the British delegation. This was due to their reliance on the British government with help for domestic issues, and a general anxiety that the a solution to the Rhodesia problem would be key to solving some of these issues. The cabinet felt that 'because of their domestic difficulties Presidents Nyerere, Machel and Khama were all anxious to see a settlement' and that 'the same was probably also true of President Kaunda of Zambia, whose economic problems were even worse'.<sup>265</sup> In the eventual Lusaka document outlining the plans for a constitutional conference<sup>266</sup>, 'all Commonwealth governments had accepted the primacy of Britain's role'.<sup>267</sup>

This new-found willingness was enhanced by Thatcher's 'new and moderate tone' that reassured that recognition of the current Rhodesian government would not occur in the light of the new constitutional plans, an anxiety that had plagued the Frontline States since April.<sup>268</sup> This was followed by a speech in which she emphasised a need to avoid being isolated from the Commonwealth, a wish to deal more tactfully with African partners in the wake of issues with Nigeria, and a feeling of reassurance due to the new-found moderation of the Frontline States.<sup>269</sup> In this speech, Thatcher highlighted the positive aspects of the 'consultations (Britain had) been pursuing within the Commonwealth and with other African governments'<sup>270</sup> and outlined the British government's commitment 'to genuine black majority rule in Rhodesia'.<sup>271</sup> Perhaps the key element of this speech, however, was Thatcher's future commitment to diplomacy with the Commonwealth over Rhodesia, stating that 'the value of these days in Lusaka will lie not only in the outcome of our discussions around the table... (but) equally... in

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263 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 1 .

264 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 1.

265 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 1.

266 A conference involving two equally sized delegations; one from Muzorewa and the internal parties, and the other led by Nkomo and Mugabe as representatives of the PF. This was to discuss a new constitution for Rhodesia. The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128 66 13'. 10 August 1979. 1.

267 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 2.

268 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 13.

269 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 13-14.

270 Thatcher, Margaret. 'Speech at opening of Lusaka Commonwealth Meeting'. 1 August 1979. From <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104126>. Accessed 10 December 2016

271 Thatcher, Margaret. 'Speech at opening of Lusaka Commonwealth Meeting'. 1 August 1979. From <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104126>. Accessed 10 December 2016



the friendships which we are able to renew and in the fresh contacts which we are able to make during our time together'.<sup>272</sup> This renewed commitment to close diplomacy and cooperation was to form a key element of future British government policy in Rhodesia, and the language and tone of Thatcher's opening speech at Lusaka clearly displayed this on a public level.

This progress was emphasised shortly after the Conference ended, in a television news interview in which the Prime Minister stated that she expected to work with the Frontline states, and that there was no longer a reason for conflict with the British government now that there was an agreement on what should be done.<sup>273</sup> Similarly, a press meeting on 6 August from Lusaka showed the successes of the talks, and the quick manner in which agreements had been reached due to British diplomatic efforts leading up to the Conference. At this meeting, the Prime Minister stated that the Conference offered 'hope... (as) each and every one of its clauses has the support of our Commonwealth partners who are just as anxious to end the hostilities', mentioning specifically Tanzania and Zambia as being particularly afflicted by the violence<sup>274</sup> and reiterating the fact that over time all parties had been able to 'recognise the urgency of the problem and that the chance (to solve it) might not occur again'.<sup>275</sup> British policy thus far had been used to improve foreign relations with key nations to the point that, when the urgency and importance of the chance offered at Lusaka became clear, these nations were at their most willing to work together with the British government to find a solution where before they may have resisted.

This attempt at foreign relations and diplomacy between the 1979 election and Lusaka is shown through the Prime Minister's Office files available at the National Archives. These show that Thatcher met or spoke directly with Nyerere five times,<sup>276</sup> and Kaunda ten times.<sup>277</sup> Similarly, meetings between these leaders and diplomats were common,

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272 Thatcher, Margaret. 'Speech at opening of Lusaka Commonwealth Meeting'. 1 August 1979. From <http://www.margarethatcher.org/document/104126>. Accessed 10 December 2016

273 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 73.

274 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 77.

275 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 79.

276 See (TNA): PREM 19/106. 46, (TNA): PREM 19/108. 118 and 124, (TNA): PREM 19/109.115 and 208.

277 See (TNA): PREM 19/107. 262, 25, 68 and 91,(TNA): PREM 19/108. 234, (TNA): PREM 19/109. 10, 74, 106, 115, 211.

with Zambian<sup>278</sup> diplomats meeting with Thatcher twice, and British High Commissioners Sir. W. Leonard Allinson<sup>279</sup> and Sir Peter J.S Moon<sup>280</sup> meeting with Kaunda and Nyerere five<sup>281</sup> and seven<sup>282</sup> times, respectively. with additional meetings between diplomats also occurring.<sup>283</sup> Key meetings during this time were bilateral events, with these being between leaders, during Harlech's 'mission'<sup>284</sup>, and 'at least one' occurring<sup>285</sup> between Allinson and Kaunda. These bilateral meetings were relatively uncommon due to the fact that often diplomatic discussions were during meetings including other 'distinguished visitors' to a country.<sup>286</sup> Whilst simply meeting does not fully prove intent, the constant communication at varying levels of government showed a level of commitment from the British government to attempts at diplomacy leading up to the Lusaka conference on both a Prime Ministerial and Foreign and Commonwealth Office level.

The success of the Lusaka Conference was largely due to this commitment to convincing the Frontline and Commonwealth states to work in tandem with the British government to find a solution; British policy at the Conference itself was an extension of this diplomacy. As a result, the future plans for a Constitutional Conference and a new election were universally accepted at Lusaka, and for the first time in years the Frontline States were seen to be 'in agreement... that continued bloodshed must cease'<sup>287</sup> and newly agreed on the necessity of putting pressure on the PF should they refuse to attend future British-led Constitutional talks.<sup>288</sup> Perhaps the greatest progress that policy at the Lusaka Conference established was that Frontline State members no longer followed the previous line of the PF as the only acceptable solution that had

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278 See (TNA): PREM 19/107. 249, 107.

279 Sir. W. Leonard Allinson was High commissioner to Zambia from 1978 to 1980. From Mackie, Colin, 'A directory of British diplomats, part 3'. 64. From [https://issuu.com/fcohistorians/docs/bdd\\_part\\_3\\_with\\_covers](https://issuu.com/fcohistorians/docs/bdd_part_3_with_covers), accessed 16 November 2016

280 Sir Peter J.S. Moon was High Commissioner to Tanzania from 1978 to 1982. From Mackie, Colin, 'A directory of British diplomats, part 3'. 59 .

281 See (TNA): PREM 19/106. 36, 53, 66. (TNA): PREM 19/107. 374, 16, 185, 192.

282 See PREM (TNA): PREM 19/107. 42, 110, 195, 203, 224.

283 (TNA): PREM 19/106. 133. PREM (TNA): PREM 19/107. 51.

284 Harlech met in private with Kaunda on the 14th of June and with Nyerere on the 12th and 13th of June. (TNA): PREM 19/107. 369.

285 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 226.

286 (TNA): PREM 19/107. 226.

287 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 88.

288 (TNA): PREM 19/109. 80.

been set at the OAU Summit ten days before,<sup>289</sup> with Kaunda and Nyerere going as far to privately admit that they would accept the eventual winner of any fair election under the terms set at Lusaka.<sup>290</sup> The shift in opinion from the Frontline States showed that cooperation between them and the British government could be possible, and that continued contact since May had allowed for these nations to see the British government as an ally on the issue of Rhodesian majority rule. Whilst immediate crisis management was to remain vital, longer term diplomacy targeted at maintaining good relations with the government's harshest critics was also critical in achieving a settlement containing terms conducive to the holding of legitimate elections in the future.

### **British government planning and diplomacy from Lusaka to Lancaster House**

As a result of this combination of diplomacy and longer term policy planning, the previously formulated British plans for Rhodesia were announced and agreed upon at the Lusaka Conference and contained basic provisions for the country's decolonisation. These specified that the cessation of hostilities and an end to sanctions were the key objectives, and that this would be achieved through a specific process, agreed on by the countries at the conference.<sup>291</sup> This process was that there would be a Constitutional Conference later in the year, at which there would be two delegations of equal size, divided between the internal and external parties. These parties would receive an outline of what the new Constitution would be beforehand, with the current administration being made aware of more complete details of the Constitution in advance. This process was utilised in order to ensure fairness for all parties, and to allow all groups to examine the new constitution without the pressures associated with an internationally-scrutinised conference. In addition, the British government pledged to allow the Frontline States to remain involved in order to put pressure on the PF to attend the conference and to remain open minded about progress in Rhodesia.<sup>292</sup> Due to the rocky relations exhibited previously between the PF and British government, chain diplomacy was key to the achievement of British government objectives in Rhodesia and as a result much effort was made to ensure strong relations with the

289 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 1.

290 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 5.

291 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 5.

292 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 4.

Frontline States remained. This was in order to allow the Frontline States to use their influence on the PF where the British government could not, with this being agreed upon by Nyerere who stated that he could 'argue for Britain's authority and impartiality between the parties fighting the election'.<sup>293</sup> The presence of the Frontline States as allies was to be key in ensuring that the PF remained willing to continue talks over Rhodesia, as direct contact between the British government and PF leadership was to remain minimal until Lancaster House.

The pre-Lancaster House process also included several additional technical aspects that would have to be adhered to in order for the various parties involved to be satisfied. Recognition by Commonwealth States that there was a new dimension in Rhodesia due to the limited successes of the election, and Commonwealth affirmation that it was Britain's responsibility to lead this effort to bring Rhodesia to majority rule<sup>294</sup> were the key elements of this. This understanding was to be coupled with a relative lack of partisanship, and an absence of condemnation of Muzorewa or endorsement of the PF was requested. From a British perspective, pledges that the constitution would contain appropriate safeguards for minorities and that it would be Britain's responsibility to oversee the next set of elections were made.<sup>295</sup> These agreements, checks and balances were made in order to ensure a positive atmosphere leading up to Lancaster House, and to prevent division between Britain and her Commonwealth allies until December.

The new task was to implement the policy goal of achieving new elections in Rhodesia through the formation of a British-designed constitution. Whilst the main points of this constitution were to be discussed at Lancaster House and as a result were not the focus of policy during this time, it is important to note the key areas of the constitution that were to be discussed. The outline of this new constitution was proposed internally on 9 August in the wake of the Lusaka conference, and was expanded upon over the coming month into a draft constitution to be debated by the invited delegations.<sup>296</sup> The main areas in which this new constitution differed from older ones were; that white

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293 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/110, Situation in Rhodesia: Constitutional conference, Lancaster House, London, September-December 1979; part 5'. 67.

294 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/13'. 10 August 1979. 5.

295 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 2.

296 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 11.

representation in parliament would be reduced,<sup>297</sup> that bills would no longer require a positive vote of 78 out of 100 members to become law in order to prevent whites from blocking laws,<sup>298</sup> that whites would nonetheless receive a guaranteed number of seats for a period of years after independence,<sup>299</sup> and that control over the army and police would be given over to commissioners, with these following general policy directives of the Prime Minister.<sup>300</sup>

By doing so, the police and defence forces would not be completely controlled by the government as was previously the case under Smith, but would rather follow a general set of guidelines with a degree of autonomy. These changes were sought to 'render the Independence Constitution defensible to international and democratic opinion and more comparable to those we have agreed... to certain other African countries' whilst ensuring that these changes were still moderate enough so as not to 'undermine the confidence of the white community'.<sup>301</sup> These were the main points of the draft constitution, and led to its quick completion between the Lusaka and Lancaster House conferences- as the constitution was to be discussed, 'changes in other areas (were) less essential'<sup>302</sup> and could be added to at the conference, such as 'making it easier to acquire land... for Africans'.<sup>303</sup> These key goals were outlined in Cabinet Office records, and were the main focus of the newly written constitution.

As this technical side of the draft constitution was quickly completed and was largely based upon a combination of previous independence constitutions, the goal of the British government for the coming month was to ensure that both the internal and external parties were present and willing at the Lancaster House Conference in September. As the Commonwealth Frontline States had agreed upon this at Lusaka, diplomacy with Muzorewa and the PF came to the fore, as their attendance was essential to any future progress in Rhodesia. The cabinet suggested that 'we must now move quickly to take advantage of the agreement reached at Lusaka', stating further that initial contact had been made with Muzorewa and that invitations would be sent to

297 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 14.

298 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 14-15.

299 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 11.

300 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 12.

301 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 13.

302 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 15.

303 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 16.

his party and the PF in the following week.<sup>304</sup> Whilst Muzorewa was expected to be open to these ideas, the issue of the PF failing to attend was one which needed to be immediately addressed, with a key policy directive at the beginning of August being to ensure that it was difficult for the PF to 'claim that it is not worth their while attending the conference at all'.<sup>305</sup> This was to be done by minimising the amount of information about the new constitution that would be sent to parties beforehand, as it was expected to 'incorporate the substance of the existing constitution' which may have been a barrier to PF attendance.<sup>306</sup> British government policy in the longer term relied on this, as once at the conference the PF would either have to accept or reject the constitution. The need for secrecy until then was due to the fact that should the PF reject this, it was necessary for the British government to be able to 'demonstrate that it is their intransigence which is the main obstacle to a wider agreement'- the attendance of the PF and the presentation of a reasonable constitution would ensure either this, or the acceptance of the terms included.<sup>307</sup> By ensuring this, British relations with the 'African presidents and others'<sup>308</sup> would hopefully improve to a point at which the PF lacked outside sufficient outside support to continue armed insurgency against Muzorewa under a new constitution.

The attendance of the Bishop was a relatively simple affair as he had so far failed to gain a significant foothold within Rhodesia and faced continued opposition from outside. Due to the Commonwealth wide agreement that the Conference was needed, and the targeting of reforms at the constitution rather than at Muzorewa himself, the British government ensured that there would be little resistance from Salisbury when asked to attend.<sup>309</sup> Whilst Muzorewa initially criticised the Conference and described the Lusaka Agreement initially as "an insult to the electorate and the government of this country', upon reassurances from the British government as to the nature of the constitutional talks he agreed to attend two days after the conclusion of the conference at Lusaka.<sup>310</sup> Muzorewa was told that Thatcher was fully willing to continue to work

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304 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 3.

305 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 4.

306 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 4.

307 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 4.

308 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 3.

309 Gregory, Martyn, 'Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House'. *The World Today*, 36(1) (1980) 11-18. 14.

310 Gregory, Martyn, 'Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House'. 14-15.

closely with him, that a representative from Britain would visit Salisbury to go through the plans, and that it would only be Rhodesian parties allowed at the Conference, with 12 representatives each.<sup>311</sup> This alleviated his fears that the British government was abandoning him, and that other African nations would be allowed into the conference, with this assurance in particular said to please Muzorewa greatly.<sup>312</sup> A later meeting confirmed this, whilst showing his worry regarding 'his serious misgivings about further elections'.<sup>313</sup> Despite this, Muzorewa agreed to attend on assurances that elections themselves would not be decided upon at the conference. This was likely due to his wish to avoid another election, and his hope that by attending the conference he might be able to 'pursue his arguments' for decolonisation whilst avoiding having to immediately contest in another election.<sup>314</sup> Shortly after, Muzorewa contacted the British government to confirm his place at the Conference, reiterating his wish to continue a friendly relationship with the government that had begun to develop, asking only for the addition of funds to bring extra members of his administration with him.<sup>315</sup> This was quickly accepted by the government as it was feared that refusing to do so would be taken very badly and could cause problems for the smooth running of the conference.<sup>316</sup> Ensuring that Muzorewa attended Lancaster House was key to British government policy, as without his participation the PF would have been incredibly unlikely to attend either. This would have destroyed hopes for a settlement and may have ensured that the Rhodesia situation would be ended only through violence.

In contrast, ensuring PF attendance at the Lancaster House Conference was no easy task. The British government knew that attendance by the PF was absolutely vital to a settlement in Rhodesia as their absence during the last election had been a key issue among the Frontline States. To ensure PF attendance, the British government aimed to create independence plans that would be seen as reasonable enough to allow the government to claim that 'refusal... to attend... or to work within the traditional framework of an independence constitution would be unreasonable and a proof of bad faith' on the PF's part.<sup>317</sup> This was to be done by releasing only 'the bare outline of the

311 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 262.

312 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 263.

313 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 209.

314 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 209.

315 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 166.

316 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 167.

317 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 3.

independence constitution', as by giving more details to the PF would only offer them more points to take issue with.<sup>318</sup> By implementing this idea the policy goal was to make it difficult 'for them to claim that it is not worth their while to attend'. This was because the easiest way to achieve a settlement was either through PF inclusion in the constitution, or by being able to 'demonstrate that it is their intransigence which is the main obstacle to a wider agreement' to a degree that would force the Frontline States to drop their support of the PF and recognise the Muzorewa government.<sup>319</sup> As it was, this policy worked as the PF accepted British invitations to the Lancaster House Conference but rejected their initial constitutional outline, allowing for either of these outcomes to be a possibility.<sup>320</sup> British government diplomacy over the past months had been key to this, as without the Frontline States' compliance in British-led proposals for a new constitution it would have been impossible to pressurise the PF.

Due to this, government policy towards the PF was divided between ensuring that the Frontline States would make good on their promises to pressure the PF should the settlement have gone awry, and convincing the leaders of the PF to attend the conference. Whilst the Frontline States were seen as being generally on the side of the British government for this round of negotiations, continued diplomacy was necessary to ensure that things remained as such. It was suggested that whilst the Tanzanian, Mozambican and Kenyan governments 'wanted out of their commitments to the PF', Kaunda would be the least reliable in putting pressure on the PF if needed.<sup>321</sup> As a result of this, government diplomacy focused mostly on Kaunda and Zambia, and began soon after in a letter from the Prime Minister to Kaunda, in which she described her 'deep appreciation and admiration for (his) Chairmanship of (the conference), and how his 'handling of the discussions (allowed the outcome) to be so constructive'.<sup>322</sup> This letter was ended by stating that Kaunda's 'continued support will be essential if we are to succeed, and I am sure that I can count on it'.<sup>323</sup> Thatcher's rhetoric here showed her willingness to continue diplomatic links with Kaunda, and her understanding of him as a powerful ally in the region. Kaunda was said to have agreed to cooperate in

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318 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 4.

319 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 129/207/3'. 9 August 1979. 4.

320 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/14'. 30 August 1979. 4.

321 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 349.

322 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 299.

323 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 300.



Rhodesia should a 'genuine democratic regime be established',<sup>324</sup> but followed this up by warning that time was running out for the Rhodesian regime and suggested that this would be the last chance for peace, with this appearing as a veiled threat in retaliation to previously shunned Zambian efforts.<sup>325</sup> Despite this, in his response to Thatcher he wished her 'God's blessings and guidance in the very difficult task you are undertaking on behalf of all of us', showing the level of respect built up between the two.<sup>326</sup> Due to Zambia's strong links to Nkomo, it was difficult for Kaunda to pressurise him to the extent required by the British government. This need to convince him was reiterated on the 17th, with the idea for a further visit by Lord Harlech being discussed.<sup>327</sup>

An early way in which this support was achieved was ensuring that a £10 million aid package that was expected by Kaunda was delivered as soon as possible, as 'to withhold signature at this time would cause serious misunderstanding in our relations with Zambia'.<sup>328</sup> Whilst ensuring no misunderstandings was important, key to securing Zambian support were plans made in late August, during which a government representative was sent to meet Kaunda with the intention of convincing him.<sup>329</sup> The arrival of this envoy signalled a great change in British and Zambian relations, and was greatly appreciated by Kaunda who said that the meeting was very useful and agreed to remain in constant diplomatic contact until the start of the Conference.<sup>330</sup> At this meeting, British representatives outlined 'the step by step approach we shall be adopting at the Conference', and assurances that 'a Commonwealth force or some other neutral force' would not be discounted as a way to 'police an arrangement'.<sup>331</sup> This meeting convinced Kaunda to work closer with the British government, in which he agreed to 'exert his influence with the Patriotic Front to participate in elections' and that he would accept 'genuinely impartial elections' and that if the PF lost these, 'Zambia would no longer support them'.<sup>332</sup> This was after these discussions managed to relieve some of his fears about the ceasefire and the security at the elections, and close talks

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324 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 55.

325 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 283.

326 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 54.

327 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 154.

328 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 102.

329 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 92.

330 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 54.

331 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 33.

332 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 33.

with British representatives convinced him of their plans.<sup>333</sup> After being reassured of the British government's intention to announce its responsibility for these issues at the start of the conference, he agreed that Zambia would use its power at the non-aligned conference and in the OAU to prevent any more disagreements over Rhodesia until after Lancaster House.<sup>334</sup> Through this diplomacy, the key force in the Frontline States was convinced of Britain's ability to lead talks, at least in the short term. This helped put pressure on Nkomo, who was as such made more likely to enter the Conference with a positive mindset.

From a British government perspective, convincing Mugabe and Nkomo directly was not an easy task due to lacking a history of diplomatic contact between them and the government. Due to this, the task of convincing them to attend was largely done through the Frontline States, with minimal British government contact. The main way in which Mugabe was convinced was via the ordering of discussion at the conference with a basis for independence taking precedence, as he had previously shown a preference for.<sup>335</sup> Aside from this, the fact that the British government was taking control over the situation meant a great deal for Mugabe, who insisted that he would only negotiate with Britain as the constitutional authority, and voiced a wish for his opinions on the matter to be heard at the conference.<sup>336</sup> The main action that could be taken by the British government at this point was to continue to ensure that Mugabe understood that the conference would be a platform at which he could discuss his grievances, should he attend. As such, British government policy towards ZANU during this time could only hope that pressure from the Frontline States and the thorough nature of government plans for Rhodesia would be enough to tempt Mugabe to attend. This was ultimately successful due to the widening split between Mugabe and the Frontline States, with this culminating at the Non-Aligned summit in Havana, at which they insisted that the PF not only attend Lancaster House, but also that Mugabe should not walk out of it.<sup>337</sup>

Nkomo was slightly easier to convince, due to his close links with the Frontline States. Once they were agreed to be involved, he stated that he trusted them and would take

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333 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 35-6.

334 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 39.

335 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 293.

336 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 60.

337 Gregory, Martyn, 'Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House'. 15.

part in the talks, although at this early point he remained sceptical as to their likelihood of success.<sup>338</sup> In a meeting at the end of August between Nkomo and a newspaper which was later forwarded to the Prime Minister, Nkomo was said to be confident in attending talks as he expected to win any future election,<sup>339</sup> and whilst suspicious of the British government he was said to be respectful of the Prime Minister, and weary of fighting the ongoing war.<sup>340</sup> Previously mentioned British government policy with Zambia during this time largely determined the success with Nkomo, who saw this as an opportunity to end the war and to potentially use the Conference to split with Mugabe in favour of an alignment with Sithole.<sup>341</sup>

By convincing the attendees of Lancaster House that were most critical of the British government, the success of the conference itself were increased. Ensuring that the most powerful and influential figures at the conference were at least receptive to British ideas and needs was to be useful in ensuring a balanced and moderate settlement. Gaining influence and trust with the Frontline States over the course of months was vital in ensuring that crises could not immediately cause collapse and bought the British government time and flexibility when these situations did occur.

### **The Lancaster House Conference**

Policy at the Lancaster House Conference itself focused on ensuring that all parties remained around the negotiating table, and that the eventual constitutional changes were acceptable to all parties, including international observers. Gregory argues that government policy revolved around using the progress made at Lusaka to achieve Rhodesian independence with Britain at the helm, and that this was achieved largely due to government diligence in ensuring international support for every step of the conference.<sup>342</sup> This was the main policy for the British government to implement at the Conference, as Britain was attending as a mediator and all changes to the constitution were directly debated between the Rhodesian parties. Talks progressed relatively smoothly for the first month. Despite this, there were points at which an impasse was

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338 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 265.

339 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 27.

340 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 31.

341 (TNA): PREM 19/110. 31.

342 Gregory, Martyn, 'Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House'. 15.

reached, and the British government had to implement policy and use diplomacy in tandem in order to ensure the continuation of talks. This following example from October shows the fragility of the British position at this point, and the limits to the effectiveness of policy during this period due to the turbulent nature of the PF and the lack of time that this afforded the government to form and implement policy.

This key crisis in October regarded agricultural and land policy in Rhodesia after independence and occurred around a month into discussions. Whilst both African delegations had begun to agree on the British draft constitution and on issues such as preventing whites from being able to block parliament and the number of white seats in parliament, there were still areas of contention for the PF.<sup>343</sup> This first issue was that the PF held a preference for ‘confiscation of commercial farms without compensation’<sup>344</sup>, whilst the British draft constitution followed a largely continued form of the ‘existing white-dominated system for land ownership’.<sup>345</sup> The draft constitution included protections for white farmers from the ‘expropriation of land without compensation’,<sup>346</sup> whilst making ‘fully adequate provision for the government to acquire land for settlement’.<sup>347</sup> The PF was concerned that excessive protections would be given to white farmers in terms of land ownership, and that government reclamation of land would be impossible due to a lack of funds for this purpose. Due to the potential cost of funding this, the British government was unwilling to ‘establish a specific amount to financially support the purchase of land from white farmers’,<sup>348</sup> and could only offer ‘initial capital’ and ‘support (to) the efforts of the government of independent Zimbabwe to obtain international assistance’.<sup>349</sup>

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343 Gregory, Martyn, ‘Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House’. 16.

344 Bratton, M., 2014. *Power politics in Zimbabwe*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 2014. 52.

345 Gregory, Martyn, ‘Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House’. 16.

346 Mervyn Brown, High Commissioner to Nigeria, speaking to Carrington on 15th of October, 1979. From Scarnecchia, T., ‘Proposed Large-Scale Compensation for White Farmers as an Anglo-American Negotiating Strategy for Zimbabwe’, 1976–1979. *State, Land and Democracy in Southern Africa*, (2016) p.105-123. p. 118.

347 Scarnecchia, T., ‘Proposed Large-Scale Compensation for White Farmers as an Anglo-American Negotiating Strategy for Zimbabwe, 1976–1979’. p.118.

348 Scarnecchia, T., ‘Proposed Large-Scale Compensation for White Farmers as an Anglo-American Negotiating Strategy for Zimbabwe, 1976–1979’. *State, Land and Democracy in Southern Africa*. 118.

349 Lord Carrington’s statement on land and compensation, 11th October 1979. From Scarnecchia, T., Proposed Large-Scale Compensation for White Farmers as an Anglo-American Negotiating Strategy for Zimbabwe, 1976–1979.118.

Due to these concerns, the PF initially refused to accept the draft constitution and attempted to keep open the possibility of reverting their stance at a later date. This was seen to be unacceptable and on the 11th October the British government requested that the PF decide one way or the other before talks could proceed, suggesting that failure to do so would represent 'that our discussions over nearly five weeks had been inconclusive' and would throw the future of the Conference into doubt.<sup>350</sup> This impasse caused Carrington to warn the PF that discussions going forward would proceed without them if they failed to accept the draft constitution in the near future.<sup>351</sup> The possibility of this occurrence raised a host of problems for the British government as it was feared that this would lead to the 'remaining stages (being) much more difficult' and could expose some allies (particularly within Africa) as being 'fair weather ones only'.<sup>352</sup> This worry was confirmed as Kaunda began to petition the British government to change land rights to include a fund for compensation for white landowners affected by land redistribution, and whilst less severe than PF plans did show the potential difficulties facing the British government over this issue.<sup>353</sup>

The government response to this was to highlight the struggles faced in securing the Salisbury delegation's acceptance of the constitution, and the effect that further changes may have on this,<sup>354</sup> whilst accepting that it would be necessary to provide some financial assistance for agricultural development, but only if other nations could assist Britain in providing funds.<sup>355</sup> Carrington announced this on the 11th of October, warning that discussions could not continue until the PF accepted this along with the new constitution.<sup>356</sup> Talks reached a stalemate for around a week, during which time the British and PF camps worked with their allies to reach an agreement. The PF worked with the Frontline States, who attempted to convince them to find a solution, and assisted in introducing a solution by which the PF could accept the constitution whilst

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350 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 317.

351 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/17'. 18 October 1979. 3.

352 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/17'. 18 October 1979. 3.

353 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/112, 'Situation in Rhodesia: Constitutional conference, Lancaster House, London, September-December 1979; part 7'. 10.

354 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/113, 'Situation in Rhodesia: Constitutional conference, Lancaster House, London, September-December 1979; part 8'. 295.

355 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 288.

356 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 259.

registering their unhappiness about certain aspects.<sup>357</sup> This was necessary as the British government were beginning to tire of having to move deadlines for agreements, and were worried that further delay could cause Muzorewa to simply leave the conference.<sup>358</sup> For this reason the British government moved to bilateral talks with Muzorewa until the PF could accept the constitution, with the threat of this being that if the Frontline States were to side with Britain, the PF would find itself excluded from talks with no allies.<sup>359</sup>

On the 13th, a Foreign Office representative spoke with Kaunda to clarify this proposal, with Kaunda initially stating ‘flatly that he supported the PF position over land’ requisition.<sup>360</sup> Kaunda and Mark Chona<sup>361</sup> outlined their position on Rhodesia, with Chona taking a harder line and stating that ‘the British had taken land by force. The PF had now liberated areas, including areas from which farmers had fled. Why should they pay compensation to departed owners?’.<sup>362</sup> This showed the potential for Kaunda to cause problems for the government in negotiations, but he did say that for the meantime he would ‘tell (Mrs Thatcher) privately what he thought... but would not touch on them in public as that would rock the boat’.<sup>363</sup> This came as a result of Allinson arguing in favour of allowing whites to retain some land rights in Rhodesia as this would be ‘very important for smooth transfer and creating confidence’.<sup>364</sup> Kaunda ended this meeting by reiterating that ‘if (Britain) agreed to go on as the PF wished we would fine them more accommodating’, but also that there was ‘now an exceptional chance to solve the Rhodesian problem and it would be a great pity if we failed through great rigidity’.<sup>365</sup> This suggested a level of understanding from Kaunda that both sides at Lancaster House would need to be more flexible in order to reach a satisfying solution.

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357 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 226.

358 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 226-7.

359 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 227-8.

360 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 248.

361 Mark Chona was one of Kenneth Kaunda’s foremost foreign policy advisors. From DeRoche, A., *Kenneth Kaunda, the United States and Southern Africa*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2016. 126

362 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 248.

363 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 248.

364 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 248.

365 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 249.

The same day, Carrington sent a letter to Nyerere promising that 'we would help... with technical assistance for land settlement schemes and capital aid... we shall also be ready to help the new government obtain international assistance for these'.<sup>366</sup> This letter concluded with Carrington asking that Nyerere use his 'support and influence to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion' by gaining the 'Patriotic Front's acceptance'.<sup>367</sup> This was in the wake of a previous discussion on the 10th, during which Nyerere had urged the British government to consider more flexibility on the issue and had preceded the suspension of the conference.<sup>368</sup> During this meeting, he also sympathised with the British stance on land and stated that he realised 'no constitution without such provisions would get through the British parliament', but that the British government 'must however understand how important this issue was to the PF' and should 'try to help them'.<sup>369</sup> On the 14th, another discussion occurred, at which the government presented their basic proposals. Nyerere reacted well to this, and stated that he 'welcomed the fact that it had come down to the land question and compensation, because he thought this was solvable'.<sup>370</sup> Eventually, Nyerere agreed to persuade the PF based on the preliminary suggestions made by the British government on the 11th should a definite statement be made on the agricultural fund.<sup>371</sup> Nkomo had put a figure of £55m for dealing with the land question; Nyerere 'considered this was very reasonable (and)... wanted to suggest (the British government) should take Nkomo up on his figure'.<sup>372</sup>

Despite the successes of these talks, they would not have progressed so smoothly without US intervention and assistance. On the 14th, in the wake of these preliminary discussions with Kaunda and Nyerere, the US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance agreed to privately contact the Frontline States in order to agree on a US-backed multi donor effort to assist agricultural compensation and development in Zimbabwe, contingent on the success of the constitutional conference.<sup>373</sup> The US spoke directly to the PF as well as the Frontline States, and this direct contact combined with the promises of a fund

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366 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 256.

367 (TNA): PREM 19/112. 356.

368 (TNA): PREM 19/112. 48.

369 (TNA): PREM 19/112. 48.

370 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 243.

371 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 243-4.

372 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 244.

373 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 241.

greatly helped to quicken negotiations on the issue.<sup>374</sup> This US involvement almost fully alleviated Nyerere's apprehensions on the issue, with him suggesting on the 16th that the issue could be fully resolved with his help if the government were to make clear to the PF the British government position on the land issue, with the confirmed backing of the US, further accepting that it was 'not yet necessary to put a definite figure on the sum'.<sup>375</sup> Similarly, US involvement caused Kaunda to become more flexible on the issue. The meeting between him and the British government on 13 January was followed by another on 15 January. During this meeting Kaunda agreed to use his influence at a meeting with the Frontline States in order to put pressure on the PF, but only if he could agree with British proposals for land reform and if the British government could 'be more specific over land and make a definite statement, preferably forming part of the agreement'.<sup>376</sup> He also said at the meeting that 'the US statement was more helpful'<sup>377</sup>, and that 'land was the sticking point... (and asked for) a definite and specific undertaking which he could use to lever the PF to agree a constitution'<sup>378</sup> and reiterated his wish for the British government 'to help him on this one point so that he in turn can help (in return)'.<sup>379</sup> Richard Luce<sup>380</sup> visited Kaunda on 25 October, at which he presented 'assurances by the British government and that of the United States on the vital question of land, common ground was found'.<sup>381</sup> These assurances resulted in Kaunda agreeing to work in tandem with Nyerere at the Frontline States meeting later that week and 'enabled the Patriotic front to continue with the talks'.<sup>382</sup>

These eventually restarted on 18 October, and the crisis was averted. The constitution was agreed and the next issues to be discussed involved its implementation and the conduct of the forthcoming elections. British diplomatic policy had worked quickly here, and over the course of less than a week had been able to solve the first major crisis at the Conference. However, this episode does show the delicate balance at the

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374 Gregory, Martyn, 'Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House'. 16.

375 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 220.

376 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 234.

377 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 234.

378 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 234.

379 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 235.

380 Richard Luce, Baron Luce- Conservative Politician and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1979 to 1981.

381 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 137.

382 (TNA): PREM 19/113. 133.



Conference, and the fragility of the British position regarding Rhodesia in general. Had talks collapsed at this point, there was no promise that Nyerere and Kaunda would have supported the British position over the PF due to the nature of the disagreements, and this shows the limits of diplomacy for the British government. They needed to be increasingly careful as Britain's involvement would transition from advisory and distant to that of a colonial power overseeing the transition to majority rule of one of its colonies on both an international and local level.

## **Chapter 2: From the Lancaster House Agreement to the 1980 election**

The British government's efforts throughout 1979 had largely been effective in moving Rhodesia away from a white minority dominated government towards a process of free and fair elections under an internationally acceptable constitution. The ability of the British government to effectively utilise diplomacy as a tool for allowing the implementation of longer term policy had been shown at the Lusaka Conference and during Lancaster House, at which major stalling points in discussions had to be navigated with care. Whilst the Lancaster House Conference signalled a turning point in the history of Rhodesia and had allowed both the PF and Rhodesian government to meet at the same table, the British government's job was far from complete. Long-term policy goals still had to be met, and this was to be achieved through careful planning and the use of constant diplomacy with parties and actors within and outside Rhodesia. Lancaster House symbolised the best level of cooperation between the governments of Britain, Rhodesia, the Frontline States, African members of the Commonwealth, and the Patriotic Front. Young described Lancaster House as being 'a triumph for the major parties involved'<sup>383</sup>, whilst Dunn highlighted Thatcher's admission that 'the Lancaster House proposals could not have got through without the support of the presidents of the Front Line States',<sup>384</sup> suggesting that close cooperation between Britain and these nations was of great importance as 'these tactics underlined the importance of the commonwealth 'family' connection'<sup>385</sup> that had been built up over the past year. Dunn

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383 Young, A., 'The United States and Africa: victory for diplomacy'. *Foreign Affairs*, 59(3) (1980) pp.648-666. 650.

384 Thatcher, M., 1994. *The Downing Street Years*. Easton Press, p.77 in Dunn, D.H. ed., *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: The evolution of international summitry*. New York: Springer. 2016. 14

385 Dunn, D.H. ed., *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: The evolution of international summitry*. New York: Springer. 2016. 213.

further argued that the British government's use of these nations as diplomatic partners was 'a cogent example of how timing, and the build-up of domestic pressures upon interested parties could significantly influence the processes and resolution of international summits'.<sup>386</sup> The arguable success of the Lancaster House Conference allowed for the British government to continue diplomacy with those involved in a manner similar to prior to the Conference, with the goal being shifted from that of a successful agreement in December 1979 to a successful and legitimate election in Spring 1980. For this reason, and to show the evolution and progress of British government policy implementation and diplomatic contact, the events are most effectively explored chronologically and through a British government perspective. This allows for a close view of how and why the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Prime Minister formulated and implemented diplomatic strategies and policy in the months leading up to the 1980 election.

Following the Lancaster House Conference, the Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) was settled between the parties attending that laid out the foundations for a new Constitution in Rhodesia, and the route that would be taken to achieve independence through elections in the country. This agreement was made on the 21 December 1979 and would be used throughout the coming months to plan British government involvement and policy towards Rhodesia. The main two sections of the LHA were the new Constitution and proposals for pre-independence arrangements. The Constitution has been discussed in the previous chapter and included solutions to issues of white dominance in government and the exclusion of the PF, whilst the pre-independence arrangements outlined British involvement in Rhodesia until the elections. This involvement included Rhodesia remaining 'part of Her Majesty's dominions'<sup>387</sup> until power could be transferred to 'whatever leaders are chosen by the people of Rhodesia in elections... supervised under British authority'.<sup>388</sup> These arrangements also stated that 'a direct British involvement'<sup>389</sup> was necessary to create conditions conducive to successful elections, and gave the Governor powers 'to make laws by Ordinance for

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386 Dunn, D.H. ed., *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: The evolution of international summitry*. New York: Springer. 2016. 214.

387 Lancaster House Agreement, page 34. From [http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/5847/5/1979\\_Lancaster\\_House\\_Agreement.pdf](http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/5847/5/1979_Lancaster_House_Agreement.pdf)

388 Lancaster House Agreement, page 35.

389 Lancaster House Agreement, page 35.

the peace, order and good governance of the country', further giving this role 'legislative... (and) executive authority'<sup>390</sup>. The governor was to 'proceed to Rhodesia as soon as possible' and would 'assume responsibility for the government of Rhodesia (with) all political leaders (committing) themselves to the election campaign.'<sup>391</sup>

This was important as it gave the British government a mandate to remain strongly involved in Rhodesia until achieving independence which was internationally recognised, something that had been impossible under Smith and without the participation of both internal and 'external' (such as the PF) Rhodesian political groups. By agreeing on 'the principle of British authority'<sup>392</sup> in Rhodesia, the British government had received an internationally-backed allowance for their involvement in overseeing the Rhodesian elections. The placement of Lord Soames as governor of Rhodesia for 'a nine week transitional period'<sup>393</sup> allowed the British government to have an agent allied directly to them and holding a place of great power in Rhodesia for the first time since 1965's UDI. Carrington was key to achieving this degree of control over the destiny of Rhodesia through careful mediation at Lancaster House, with Novak arguing that Carrington helped 'the two negotiating sides close the gap between them and come to an acceptable agreement' by committing 'Britain to providing substantial assistance to the transitional regime'.<sup>394</sup> Whilst there were risks to the British government committing to the future of Rhodesia, it did allow policy makers to better target ongoing diplomacy and policy implementation from a position of authority in Rhodesia.

The other important area that was identified in the pre-independence arrangements was the running of the elections themselves. This short term policy was largely formed as a reaction to the criticisms of the previous election such as widespread intimidation, voter manipulation, and the ongoing effects of the war in Rhodesia. By doing so, it was hoped that using the new British presence in Rhodesia would ensure that these policies

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390 Lancaster House Agreement, page 35.

391 Lancaster House Agreement, page 36.

392 Gregory, Martyn, 'Rhodesia: From Lusaka to Lancaster House'. 17.

393 Preston, M., 'Stalemate and the termination of civil war: Rhodesia reassessed'. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(1) (2004) 65-83. 67.

394 Novak, A., 'Face-Saving Maneuvers and Strong Third-Party Mediation: The Lancaster House Conference on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia'. *International Negotiation*, 14(1) (2009) 149-174. 171.

were implemented effectively. The LHA stipulated a number of conditions that needed to be fulfilled in order for the elections to be legitimate, such as free political activity, freedom of movement and assembly, free access to media for parties and security being used only to protect political activity.<sup>395</sup> The LHA also included two provisions to ensure the highest level of recognition internationally that was possible, with these provisions being that Commonwealth Governments would observe the elections, and that all political parties would be allowed to campaign and register for the elections.<sup>396</sup> These were important points as exclusion of parties was a key issue that many both in Rhodesia and internationally found with the previous elections, whilst the use of an internationally organised observer group entirely independent of the British government and that included a number of African opinions would allow for recognition of the election's successes and failings to be a less controversial prospect when compared to the reports published in 1979.

In general, the appointment of a governor was used as a way to ensure that the election and the period leading up to it to be seen as fair and free, as it was no longer a white minority government controlling areas such as security, policing and transport.<sup>397</sup> This allowed for the provision of these services during the election to be less controversial in comparison to the 1979 election as it placed these responsibilities under an appointed colonial Governor instead of Ian Smith's rogue government. The pre-independence arrangements were a continuation of British government policy up until this point being aimed at correcting the failings of the 1979 election, and to build upon the diplomacy of the last year. In order to achieve this it was agreed to be necessary to allow the British government to have a greater degree of control over Rhodesian independence than before. This was in order to avoid the criticisms of the Internal Settlement, such as the exclusion of the PF and continuation of disproportionate political power for whites, from being repeated in 1980. These pre-independence arrangements were presented to the attendees at the Lancaster House Conference after the new Constitution had been agreed upon, with the UN Security Council calling upon the British government as the 'administering power... to bring to

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395 Lancaster House Agreement, page 37.

396 Lancaster House Agreement, page 37.

397 Lancaster House Agreement, page 38.

an end the rebellion in Southern Rhodesia<sup>398</sup>, further agreeing that the 'United Kingdom... should ensure that no settlement is reached without taking into account the views of the people of Southern Rhodesia... and that it is acceptable to the people... as a whole'.<sup>399</sup>

This public statement enforcing compliance under the Lancaster House Agreement was useful in showing the British government's commitment to overseeing elections, and willingness to utilise the authority of Lord Soames in order to ensure that the election would proceed without significant issues that could cause the result to be questioned internationally. Whilst the British government would need to continue reactionary diplomacy and policy depending on the shifting nature of the situation in Rhodesia and Southern Africa as a whole, the government had achieved a new focus. From the 21 December 1979 and the establishment of Lord Soames as Governor of Rhodesia, the main policy goal would be to implement the LHA on the back of progress made during 1979, and to ultimately oversee a successful election that would bring Rhodesia to legitimate majority rule. After signing the LHA, it was agreed in a cabinet meeting that 'the main scene of action would now shift from London to Salisbury'<sup>400</sup>, and that the British government needed to ensure 'the strict compliance with these agreements' by using Soames as an 'impartial' force in Rhodesia to combat 'behaviour... inconsistent with the agreements'.<sup>401</sup> Long term planning needed to be combined with short-term contingency measures in order to implement the results of the progress made at Lancaster House. This was to be achieved through continued conversation with important political actors and a commitment to responding to emerging crises quickly and effectively.

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398 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/116, 'Situation in Rhodesia: Constitutional conference, Lancaster House, London, September-December 1979; appointment of Lord Soames as governor; part 11'. 10.

399 (TNA): PREM 19/116. 12.

400 The National Archives (TNA): 'CAB 128/66/26'. 20 December 1980. 4.

401 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/342, 'Situation in Rhodesia; return of Patriotic Front; part 12'. 52.

## **The British government's preparations for the 1980 Rhodesian election**

As stated by the Carrington soon after the conclusion of the Lancaster House Conference, the British government had 'no wish to prolong (its) role', and that it would be necessary for 'all parties (to)... act in accordance with these commitments'.<sup>402</sup> A long or messy route to majority rule would have at this point been directly attributed to Britain as the colonial administration and would have drawn further criticism from organisations such as the OAU and the UN. Some of the next targets of government policy were also alluded to: to utilise Lord Soames'<sup>403</sup> role as Governor<sup>404</sup> in order to enforce the LHA,<sup>405</sup> to begin a ceasefire by 28 December<sup>406</sup>, to assemble rebel forces at agreed points for disengagement, and to use these conditions to oversee a successful election.<sup>407</sup> Government policy in Britain focused over the coming month on assisting Lord Soames in achieving these goals, and on overcoming the issues faced in Rhodesia related to the return of the PF to the country in the weeks following ceasefire. Convincing ZANLA and ZIPRA soldiers to return to the country, and then enforcing the ceasefire without tensions between PF and Rhodesian soldiers flaring up into widespread violence was a difficult prospect.

Onslow has described the role of Soames as 'the man on the spot'<sup>408</sup> who was placed to 'make a marked contribution to the process and tone of political transition through a combination of political realism, individual quirks, and personal charm', highlighting the use of Soames as 'a vital adjunct to big decisions made in Whitehall on the basis of geopolitical imperatives'.<sup>409</sup> Soames was given a remit in Rhodesia based upon long-term British government plans and the processes outlined in the Lancaster House Agreement, and used his status as someone who did not attend the Lancaster House

402 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 241.

403 Lord Soames had a long history as a member of the Conservative party, having served as MP for Bedford from 1950-1966, Ambassador to France from 1968-1972, and Vice-President of the European Commission from 1973-6. He was created a life peer in April 1978, and was leader of the House of Lords from 1979-81 alongside his duties in Rhodesia.

404 The role being described by the BBC as having 'full authority for a transitional period', from 'Lord Soames to govern Rhodesia', 7 December 1979.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/7/newsid\\_2535000/2535763.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/7/newsid_2535000/2535763.stm). Accessed 17 September 2016

405 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 241.

406 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 242.

407 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 243.

408 Onslow, Sue, 'The Man on the Spot: Christopher Soames and Decolonisation of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia'. *Britain and the World*, 6(1) (2013) 68-100. 68.

409 Onslow, Sue, 'The Man on the Spot: Christopher Soames and Decolonisation of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia'. 68.

talks in order to avoid being 'seen to be partial'.<sup>410</sup> His goal was to use these tools to bring Rhodesia to a suitable independence through the long-term planning of the government. Whilst the overall long-term goals of the Prime Minister, cabinet and Foreign and Commonwealth Office were to remain the same throughout this post-Lancaster House period, the focus leading up to the election was flexibility in the face of mounting logistical and political challenges in the region. In January, Soames faced the task of facilitating the return of Robert Mugabe and other high ranking ZANU officials to Rhodesia. This was a vital policy, as without their public return and reintegration into political society, ZANLA guerillas had little motivation to proceed to assembly points and lay down their weapons in anticipation of the election. Due largely to the security situation in Rhodesia, this was not as straightforward as simply allowing Mugabe to fly into Salisbury whenever he wished. In a discussion with Mugabe, Achilles Papadopoulos<sup>411</sup> stated that Mugabe's return had to be conducted in a 'sensible and mutually satisfactory manner'<sup>412</sup> and that his return could not clash with 'political manifestations' by other candidates.<sup>413</sup> Political concerns were equally as important as safety concerns regarding the return of Mugabe and the difficult situation in the nation was highlighted shortly after his return by an assassination attempt on Mugabe in early February.<sup>414</sup>

Issues surrounding Mugabe's return began around Christmas day in 1979. The British government was made aware by sources within Salisbury that Mugabe's intention when returning to Rhodesia was to cross the Mozambique border and to 'march on Salisbury', gathering support as he did so.<sup>415</sup> Soames could not allow this to happen as 'it would be regarded as highly provocative... and would certainly lead to... trouble'<sup>416</sup> and would be impossible for the security forces to safely oversee. In this discussion, the Foreign Office told Mugabe and Nkomo that they 'would be expected to arrive in Salisbury by air' as large crowds were expected and that 'the police would not interfere

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410 Onslow, Sue, 'The Man on the Spot: Christopher Soames and Decolonisation of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia'. 71.

411 British ambassador to Maputo during 1979 and 1980.

412 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/343, 'Situation in Rhodesia; part 13'. 136.

413 (TNA): PREM 19/343.137.

414 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/144, 'Situation in Rhodesia; part 14'. 85.

415 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 212.

416 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 212.

except insofar as necessary to keep the peace'.<sup>417</sup> Following this, Mugabe did agree to return via air, but announced on 2 January that he would be doing so on the 5th of the month.<sup>418</sup> Three days was seen by Papadopoulos as too little notice as it left only '11 hours notice'<sup>419</sup> for Soames to organise security and conflicted with political rallies planned by Muzorewa for that weekend.<sup>420</sup> Nkomo was willing to concede on this timing as he too had planned to arrive in Rhodesia on 5 January. He therefore willingly changed his date of return to 13 January,<sup>421</sup> but Mugabe took greater issue with this, questioning if 'Muzorewa... holding his rallies' was a valid excuse for the delay.<sup>422</sup> This forced Carrington to release a statement answering whether 'the Governor/the British government (were) biased towards Bishop Muzorewa', arguing that Soames had been 'flexible' and had 'gone out of his way to help the Patriotic Front'.<sup>423</sup>

### **Beitbridge**

Altercations between Mugabe and the British government began with this delayed return to Rhodesia, and eventually grew into a fully-fledged crisis as he extended his grievances to include the positioning of South African troops on the Rhodesian border and the use of violence by auxiliary forces provided partially by Bishop Muzorewa to the Governor in Rhodesia.<sup>424</sup> Mugabe criticised the continued position of South African troops at Beitbridge, a southern border town with a bridge spanning from Rhodesia to South Africa. Mugabe argued that these troops should have been withdrawn as soon as Soames had arrived and that, in addition, the deployment of Rhodesian army forces and auxiliaries for 'law and order purposes' was a direct violation of the Lancaster House Agreement.<sup>425</sup> On the other side of this disagreement was General Peter Walls, head of the Rhodesian armed forces and a vital asset in maintaining order in the country for Lord Soames. Walls felt that removing protection on Beitbridge would be a tactical mistake, and that South African troops should be allowed to reside in Rhodesia

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417 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 213.

418 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 167.

419 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 106.

420 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 157.

421 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 130, 83.

422 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 49.

423 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 66.

424 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 102.

425 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 102-3.



as long as they did not intervene in the political process. Lord Soames recognised this, and suggested that a complete withdrawal from Beitbridge would 'seriously imperil... relations with Walls'.<sup>426</sup> This division on Beitbridge between Walls and Mugabe had the potential to spark disaster, as both men controlled large numbers of men and arms, with Walls himself noting the 'very great pressure from within his own forces and from the white community generally'.<sup>427</sup>

This disagreement was difficult to resolve, as the Lancaster House Agreement stated that the British government would 'request the governments of countries bordering on Rhodesia to make arrangements to ensure that externally based forces do not enter Rhodesia'.<sup>428</sup> Despite this, Carrington stated that 'the Governor's decision to allow a small South African force to protect Beitbridge does not represent intervention' and that the protection of Beitbridge was necessary 'in the light of continuing breaches of ceasefire in the area'.<sup>429</sup> Whilst Mugabe did have valid concerns regarding the legitimacy of the placement of these forces, the British government had genuine concerns regarding the removal of these troops, and the potential to 'imperil... relations with Walls'.<sup>430</sup> Walls was the link between the British government and Rhodesia's armed forces and the loss of Walls' loyalty had the potential to rapidly cause a crisis situation with intensified violence becoming a real possibility from both the PF and Rhodesian forces. The British government needed to utilise Soames' crisis management abilities in order to ensure that the ceasefire in the nation could be fully implemented in time for the election.

The problem of South African troops being used at Beitbridge was, to Mugabe, proof that the LHA was not being upheld by the British government. This was evidenced by the fact that observations by members of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office showed that 'a significant proportion of (ZANLA) forces' were instructed to remain outside the ceasefire.<sup>431</sup> Policy was rapidly focused on placating Mugabe, and an internal government response was formulated by Carrington that addressed these

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426 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 47.

427 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 60.

428 Lancaster House Agreement, page 39.

429 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 51.

430 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 47.

431 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 75.

issues.<sup>432</sup> This response stated that external intervention would not be allowed in Rhodesia, but that the South African forces would be allowed to remain due to tactical reasons, and that the use of foreign soldiers was not a phenomenon unique to the Rhodesian forces in this conflict.<sup>433</sup> This was announced on the same day via Lord Soames, and it appeared that government policy was content at this point to stall Mugabe with these promises of non-engagement by South African forces in Rhodesia until he re-entered Rhodesia.<sup>434</sup> This was emphasised in an internal statement from Soames on the same day in which he stated that Mugabe should be reminded of ZANLA's non-compliance of the LHA in response to his criticisms,<sup>435</sup> a sentiment supported by a Rhodesia Department notice stating that it was necessary to bring Mugabe and Nkomo to Rhodesia as soon as possible to discuss these issues.<sup>436</sup>

The British government's hope was that bringing Mugabe to Rhodesia would force his hand, regardless of the placement of South Africans at Beitbridge. Unfortunately, this was impossible for two main reasons. First, Mugabe quickly reiterated his opposition in a public statement used as propaganda to pressurise the British government by bringing international scrutiny upon their policy. He stated that if further breaches of the LHA would prevent him from using his influence over ZANLA forces to implement his side of the ceasefire, and that the use of auxiliaries also signified a misuse of the powers vested in Lord Soames.<sup>437</sup> This public statement brought the Frontline States into the debate, and despite government reassurance of the successes under Soames so far,<sup>438</sup> a meeting of these states on the 11 January resulted in a condemnation of the use of South African forces at Beitbridge, along with an endorsement of the ZANU and ZAPU's ability to 'scrupulously observe the letter and the spirit of the agreements'.<sup>439</sup> At this meeting, the Frontline States agreed to call upon the UN Security Council in order to force the British government to remove these troops.<sup>440</sup> In a memo the following day,

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432 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 82.

433 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 83.

434 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 71.

435 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 67.

436 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 58.

437 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 49.

438 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 69.

439 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 22-23.

440 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 23.

the undesirability of UN involvement was emphasised, with it stating that it would be a disaster should '(Britain) be drawn into a series of wrangles in the Security Council during the transitional period in Rhodesia'.<sup>441</sup> By taking these issues to the UN, the Frontline States could place pressure on the British government to remove the South African troops from Beitbridge. Whilst the extent of the eventual Resolution was to 'keep the situation in Southern Rhodesia under control',<sup>442</sup> the powers available to the UN included the ability to implement 'complete or partial interruption of economic relations... and the severance of diplomatic relations'.<sup>443</sup> The introduction of such measures would have been disastrous to British government relations with the Frontline States and could have led to these states supporting ZANU and ZAPU in further armed struggle against the Rhodesian authorities.

It was at this point that the issue diverged, and policy focused on satisfying Mugabe and the Frontline States as well as General Walls. By removing South African troops and curtailing the auxiliaries, Walls was liable to become displeased with the British government and potentially lead the Rhodesian military establishment in 'deliberately causing bloody incidents which would lead to the PF beginning to leave the assembly areas'.<sup>444</sup> Government relations with Walls were said at this point by D.M. Day<sup>445</sup> to have been 'balanced on a knife-edge (with)... serious risk of putting the Governor's position in Rhodesia in jeopardy'.<sup>446</sup> On the 10 January, a letter from the Frontline States to the British government openly stated their grievances, citing concerns that there may have even been South African troops in Rhodesia other than those at Beitbridge,<sup>447</sup> and the use of auxiliaries in Rhodesia<sup>448</sup> that culminated in an incident in which Smith/Muzorewa forces deployed by the governor killed a group of PF soldiers.<sup>449</sup>

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441 (TNA): PREM 19/342. 21.

442 United Nations Security Council Resolution 463, 2 February 1980.  
[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/463\(1980\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/463(1980)). Accessed 15 October 2016

443 'United Nations Charter' from <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>. Accessed 16 October 2016 p.9.

444 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 226.

445 Sir Derek M. Day, Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office .

446 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 88.

447 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 237.

448 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 239.

449 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 238.

Soames reported in his role as governor to Thatcher stating his fears that Walls 'greatly exaggerates the security situation' and that he would resist removal of South African forces from Rhodesia for this very reason, along with concerns that this removal would prevent South African support in an emergency.<sup>450</sup> Soames also worried in this letter that 'Walls and some of his colleagues are getting into a frame of mind in which they would prefer a resumption of war and... a return to UDI to... a government under PF influence.'<sup>451</sup> To prevent this, he suggested discussions with the South Africans to convince them to mix their troops into Rhodesian units to ameliorate PF concerns whilst preventing Walls from becoming disillusioned as was a feared result in the case of total withdrawal.<sup>452</sup>

The next day, an Foreign and Commonwealth Office telegram suggested sending Walls to South Africa to discuss the situation, and that this should be done after attempting to convince both Walls and the South Africans that 'it is in their own immediate and long term interests... (for) the future security and stability of Southern Africa.' Sending Walls was used to prevent him from feeling that the government were 'going behind (his) back'.<sup>453</sup> That same day, Thatcher had a conversation with the Lord Privy Seal<sup>454</sup> on the issue, in which she suggested that withdrawing troops from the Rhodesian side of the bridge was necessary, but that the South African side of the bridge was unrelated to the Lancaster House Agreement.<sup>455</sup> This was because these troops were South African and on South African soil, meaning that any agreements binding in Rhodesia or relating to Rhodesian forces were inapplicable. In order to achieve these goals, the Rhodesia Department suggested that assurances must be made to Walls regarding the prevention of PF insurgency, whilst simultaneously negotiating the withdrawal of all South African forces in the Rhodesia.<sup>456</sup> This would alleviate both Walls' and Mugabe's complaints as the South African forces would be allowed to remain protecting Beitbridge whilst not being seen as an international force interfering in Rhodesia. From

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450 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 226.

451 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 227.

452 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 228.

453 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 220.

454 Ian Gilmour, Baron Gilmour of Craigmillar- Conservative Politician and Lord Privy Seal from 1979 to 1981. In this role he was the chief government spokesman in the House of Commons for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

455 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 206.

456 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 198.

this point, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office began working to reassure all parties that the problems regarding troops at Beitbridge would be solved. Mugabe was told that the South Africans would not act unprovoked and that most were integrated into the Rhodesian army,<sup>457</sup> and that auxiliaries were only being used as peacekeepers in response to ZANLA violence.<sup>458</sup> Nyerere was similarly reassured of this the same day,<sup>459</sup> and also reminded that the Rhodesian forces should be allowed to incorporate foreign soldiers as ZANLA and ZIPRA continued to do.<sup>460</sup> Diplomacy was used here in order to buy time in which Walls could be convinced that changes needed to be made with the South African troops. This was because his cooperation was necessary for maintaining control over the Rhodesian forces, as public insubordination by Walls may have led to the Rhodesian Army as a whole doing the same.

On 19 January, Robin Renwick<sup>461</sup> of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office met with General Walls, who stated his concerns. Walls spoke honestly and candidly about his concerns that the PF was being given too many concessions, and that he feared pressure put on him from within his own forces and from the white community as a whole.<sup>462</sup> Walls felt that Mugabe was able to use violence without proper recourse, and it was for that reason that he was unable to back down on issues regarding security at Beitbridge, as it would set a precedent for his control being weakened. Both men agreed with concerns over ZANU and ZAPU, and agreed that this intimidation was a major concern.<sup>463</sup> Renwick recognised Walls' attempts to moderate the actions of the auxiliaries<sup>464</sup> and agreed that their use was acceptable to the British, but would only be possible without international backlash if concessions were made to the Frontline States regarding Beitbridge and South African troops. Renwick clarified that the government had taken a large amount of international criticism for the troops at Beitbridge and that this problem had to be addressed as soon as possible to avoid further action - the Kenyans, for example, had threatened to withdraw from the

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457 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 190.

458 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 191.

459 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 169.

460 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 170.

461 Robin Renwick, Baron Renwick of Clifton- Rhodesia Department, 1978 to 1980. Political advisor to Governor of Rhodesia during 1980.

462 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 60.

463 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 61-3.

464 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 61.

monitoring force.<sup>465</sup> Following 'a long argument' between the two men, with Walls arguing that he had been promised that South African forces could stay in Rhodesia at Lancaster House, he finally conceded that Renwick's demands needed to be met.<sup>466</sup> Soames acknowledged that the government had demanded a lot of Walls considering his 'distraught frame of mind', and that pushing him further would be a poor idea if the government expected continued cooperation from him.<sup>467</sup> For this reason promises were made that ZANLA infractions against the LHA would not go unpunished.<sup>468</sup> In this situation, immediate crisis management by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was used in tandem with Soames' position on the ground in order to ascertain the situation in Rhodesia and the feelings of its major actors.

From this point onwards, the crisis was solved without a great deal of further British government intervention. Walls was sent to South Africa to discuss the future of their troops in the nation soon after his meeting with Renwick,<sup>469</sup> and by 25 January this common goal<sup>470</sup> between the two men allowed for the British and South African governments to agree on a full withdrawal of troops on the Rhodesian side of Beitbridge.<sup>471</sup> On the 31st, the UN Security Council criticised the conduct of the British government in Rhodesia, but accepted the removal of the troops,<sup>472</sup> and soon after Nyerere wrote accepting the outcome.<sup>473</sup> Despite these criticisms, the British government had somewhat succeeded in resolving the worst of this crisis in time for preparations leading up to the election in February. The 'somewhat grisly performance' regarding Frontline States and ZANU criticism had been weathered, and the British government had successfully avoided these groups being able to 'build a case for rejection of the electoral result (should it not) suit the OAU'.<sup>474</sup> The key government policy of overseeing a legitimate election was still attainable, despite the damage done to British reputation due to this crisis. The tentative acceptance of most African nations,

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465 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 63.

466 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 64.

467 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 64-5.

468 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 64.

469 (TNA): PREM 19/343. 45.

470 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 291.

471 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 287.

472 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 240.

473 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 202.

474 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 216.

along with the continued support of the Commonwealth ensured that Beitbridge did not signal the collapse of the Lancaster House Agreement.<sup>475</sup>

The use of careful diplomacy during moments of crisis whilst working towards an overall goal allowed the British government to act reactively during the impasse at Beitbridge, knowing that maintaining control of the situation was vital to the fulfilment of the long-term plans set out at Lancaster House. Whilst the events at Beitbridge did not conclude with complete success and showed the weaknesses of the British government's position, the ability to use influence with key actors on both sides in Nyerere and Walls showed dexterity and competency in the government's crisis management strategy. The events at Beitbridge held the potential to cause complete collapse of the LHA and a return to full-scale warfare due to Walls' position in the army. The ability of the British government to negotiate these events and placate multiple parties, each with differing demands and motivations, showed the successes of both its short term and long term implementation of diplomacy.

### **Upholding the ceasefire**

Despite the resolution of the crisis at Beitbridge and the uneasy alliance forged with Walls by the British government during this time, upholding the ceasefire mandated at Lancaster House was difficult. Preventing violence, intimidation and coercion was key to British government policy during this time, particularly due to the increased number of political actors present in Rhodesia following legitimisation of ZANU and ZAPU. The careful upholding of the ceasefire between the PF forces, the Rhodesian Army and the auxiliaries was paramount to the success of the election, as any widespread or highly visible violence would allow losing parties cause for complaint which could have delegitimised the election.

As a result, the imposition of the ceasefire was a necessary and rather urgent policy goal for the British government in late January and February as the election date loomed. Due to the problems regarding Beitbridge and the late entry of Mugabe into Rhodesia following his criticisms of the crisis, the ceasefire was unable to be implemented with full efficiency until this point as Nkomo and Mugabe only returned to  
475 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 84.

Rhodesia on 13 and 27 January, respectively. This meant that whilst a number of guerillas had made their way to the assembly points by the January 7 deadline, there were some who were still reluctant to give up arms before the return of their leaders to Rhodesia. With the re-entry of the leadership of ZANU and ZAPU into Rhodesia, British government policy directives needed to focus on making sure that the majority of remaining guerilla forces made their way to the assembly points, that political leaders were safe, and that the Rhodesian forces were not using unnecessary violence. By this point, the greatest threat to a lasting settlement in Rhodesia was the international reaction to an election fraught with the problems of intimidation and coercion as had been the case in 1979. As a result, the goal of the British government had to be to use reactive policy and diplomacy in order to prevent ZANLA intimidation by use of the Rhodesian forces without inviting international criticism due to their conduct. It was necessary, in light of the events of 1979, for the British government to become involved in the ultimate outcome of the election as little as possible, as any drastic action would have been viewed as favouritism by Mugabe's allies within Africa. Soames was forced to utilise 'political and psychological pressure' to attempt to 'cut Mugabe down to size', rather than being able to explicitly act against Mugabe and ZANU through a single effective action.<sup>476</sup>

On the side of Nkomo and ZIPRA the ceasefire was said to be 'holding well' and that Nkomo was 'pursuing a moderate and cooperative line'.<sup>477</sup> The return of Mugabe had helped with the security situation and the goals of the British government were to be focused on maintaining this improved situation until the election so that a free and fair vote could be conducted. Whilst PF guerillas were beginning to return to Rhodesia and make their way to assembly points,<sup>478</sup> this was only the first step of the ceasefire. Upholding the ceasefire to create the 'atmosphere of confidence' described in the Lancaster House Agreement and preparations to allow the future 'of all forces' under a new government was still necessary.<sup>479</sup> Carrington stated in a discussion with South African representatives that Soames had successfully 'been very firm with ZANU' and when 'allowing the security forces to deal with incidents'.<sup>480</sup> This showed the direction of

476 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 158.

477 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 296.

478 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 280.

479 Lancaster House Agreement, page 42.

480 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 280.



British government policy as being focused on allowing these forces under General Walls to act in a within reason to maintain the conditions of widespread ceasefire.

Whilst Nkomo and the security forces were relatively orderly and compliant at this point, Mugabe and ZANLA were not. Thatcher stated that 'the activities of the former military wing of ZANU caused particular concern to the other parties'<sup>481</sup> and that 'areas dominated by Mr. Mugabe's supporters and by members of his forces who have not yet assembled' made campaigning difficult for other groups.<sup>482</sup> The widespread nature of these breaches was shown through meetings of the Ceasefire Commission, where 'the commanders of the Rhodesian forces and of the Patriotic Front forces (were) represented and (met) under the chairmanship of the Governor's Military Adviser' in order to 'provide a forum'<sup>483</sup> for both sides to ensure compliance to the ceasefire. In a meeting of 12 February, out of a total thirty breaches twenty-one were either by ZANLA or in a former area of ZANLA operation, with a further four being attributed to bandits armed with PF weapons.<sup>484</sup> These breaches, when combined with the overwhelming amount of support they continued to receive from other Southern African nations, posed a problem for Soames and the British government. This problem had to be approached carefully on both a domestic and international level. Soames was tasked with using his powers as governor to prevent further ZANLA breaches, whilst the British government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Prime Minister used international diplomacy to ensure that any actions against Mugabe did not anger his allies in the region. In Rhodesia, Soames balanced threats and action against ZANU with the consideration that any dramatic recourse against the party would surely lead to the collapse of the Lancaster House Agreement. In late January Soames wrote to Thatcher stating that he was 'satisfied by Nkomo's attitude and compliance with the cease-fire agreement by ZIPRA'<sup>485</sup> but that he needed to 'consider what action, short of banning a party, could be most effectively taken to deal with... the persistence and incidents of intimidation by ZANLA'.<sup>486</sup> Soames outlined the concern that banning ZANU outright would be

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481 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 38.

482 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 38.

483 Lancaster House Agreement, page 43.

484 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 74.

485 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 263.

486 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 263.

impossible and would 'fly in the face of the Frontline States', but that some action needed to be taken in order to deal with ZANLA transgressions.<sup>487</sup>

This plan signalled the beginning of Lord Soames being fully utilised by the British government as a conduit through which policy in Rhodesia would be implemented, with Soames reporting to members of the Foreign Office and Thatcher. The connection between longer term calculated foreign policy and Soames' position as the 'man on the ground' was to allow for agile and flexible reactions to emerging crises in the region. This policy developed by Soames included punishments which could be meted out to offending parties, and was combined with publicising examples of ZANLA breaches as a way of convincing the Rhodesian public and international observers that action needed to be taken. This was necessary as a response to the growing concerns of ZAPU, Muzorewa and the white community regarding the use of violence by ZANLA.<sup>488</sup> Soames decided that in the face of this, it would be necessary for the credibility of his administration to be able to 'demonstrate that (he was) prepared to take action to deal with systematic intimidation'.<sup>489</sup> Soames outlined that the police would be instructed to take stronger action to deal with intimidation, and that he would also request an extension of his powers as governor.<sup>490</sup> These new powers allowed Soames to 'be able to impose limited penalties on a party that systematically breaches the Lancaster House Agreement about peaceful campaigning and so on'.<sup>491</sup>

Soames continued on by suggesting that it may be necessary to act on this ordinance, giving the example of prohibiting ZANU meetings in areas in which they had refused to permit other political groups from holding meetings, and that this action could work to unite the other parties against Mugabe. Soames stated that this ordinance would also allow him to 'prohibit... speakers guilty of inciting violence', 'in the last resort (to) disqualify from the elections a party guilty of systematic breaches of the ceasefire'.<sup>492</sup> Whilst releasing this ordinance, he also reiterated that the auxiliaries were to remain deployed as a 'home guard' in affected rural areas, and that their role was solely for the

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487 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 262-3.

488 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 211.

489 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 212.

490 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 212.

491 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 212.

492 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 198.

protection of local people and any auxiliaries acting otherwise would be dealt with 'severely'. The aim of publicly releasing the details of this ordinance was so that the administration could openly act on ZANU breaches, whilst working to alienate the party amongst other political groups and the general public through raising awareness of their transgressions. This policy was defended by Thatcher against P.W. Botha<sup>493</sup>, who wished for immediate and harsh action against Mugabe. Thatcher stated that the publication of this ordinance would 'in itself exert greater pressure on all parties, and particularly ZANU' and that the governor would have full control over when and how to use these powers.<sup>494</sup> Lord Soames was working with autonomy within Rhodesia, but was working closely with the British government, and his regular correspondence with the Prime Minister and Foreign Office shows that policy in Rhodesia was being formed with government supervision. This was the point where long-term policy planning and short term reactionary actions were being combined in full, with Soames' localised and immediate authority used as an extension of the British government's broader but more distant and abstract authority as Rhodesia's colonial power.

These new powers were widely supported by the other parties, with Muzorewa quickly suggesting that the prohibition of ZANU was the only way to ensure a free and fair election, and that the banning of the party for its actions was supported under the Lancaster House agreement.<sup>495</sup> Clearly, there was a precedent for the removal of ZANU, but doing so would not be simple due to the amount of support for ZANU both within Rhodesia and internationally. Alongside the use of these powers, Soames attempted to convince Mugabe that ZANLA intimidation needed to be stopped by him. In order to do so, Soames used threats and the release of details regarding ZANU breaches in order to harm ZANU standing. Evidence was gathered by Soames' administration of ZANLA transgressions, including that they were acting 'under deliberate instructions from commanders (and presumably their political leaders) to withhold a significant proportion of personnel from the assembly process in order to teach people how to vote'.<sup>496</sup> Soames proposed releasing this information to the public with a statement indicating the areas most affected and the impact of this on the

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493 P.W. Botha- Leader of South Africa from 1978 to 1989.

494 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 147.

495 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 188.

496 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 196.

legitimacy of the election,<sup>497</sup> hoping that this would 'put considerable pressure on... ZANU, to reduce the level of ZANLA activity and intimidation... in the two weeks remaining before the election'.<sup>498</sup> Soames understood the volatility of the situation and hoped that the success of this ordinance would prevent him from having to ban certain districts from voting, or expel ZANU. This was hoped to encourage the other parties whilst deterring ZANLA.<sup>499</sup> Through these ordinances, Soames wanted to rapidly put measurable pressure on Mugabe without having to resort to such drastic actions as a blanket ban of the party. Despite this hope, Mugabe felt that he could continue fighting if banned and was not dissuaded from allowing ZANU to continue acting as before. In a speech at Fort Victoria, Mugabe promised that he 'would not be intimidated by anyone, including Lord Soames, (ZANU would) not just stand by and let him back his own horse... and create obstructions for us'.<sup>500</sup> Mugabe felt that ZANU was the clear 'favourite' and that the auxiliaries were far more guilty than ZANLA and ZIPRA in terms of violence and intimidation. He finished this speech by promising to return to war 'if forced'.<sup>501</sup>

In light of Mugabe's statement promising to resist these new powers, Soames and the British government also attempted to use this evidence as a way to open diplomatic channels and improve relations with the other parties in Rhodesia. The hope was that uniting the majority in Zimbabwe against ZANLA would force its leaders to take a stance against intimidation where direct punitive measures had failed. In private, Nkomo 'argued that... it (would) not be possible to hold elections' after being 'prevented by Mugabe's supporters from holding a meeting at Umali'.<sup>502</sup> Similarly, the UANC were 'having difficulties' and felt that 'they (had) no real chance... if action (was) not taken to deal with intimidation by ZANLA', according to Soames.<sup>503</sup> The release of figures showing the use of intimidation by ZANLA was also a way to convince the public that not all ZANLA violence was a reaction to attacks by the auxiliaries, as had previously

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497 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 135.

498 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 136.

499 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 135.

500 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 85-86.

501 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 86.

502 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 211.

503 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 211.

been believed.<sup>504</sup> These figures were released along with affidavits given in the presence of witnesses questioned by the police which confirmed that ZANLA commanders were ordering some troops to avoid the assembly places and to continue to intimidate the population.<sup>505</sup> The release of these figures and the new powers invested in Soames was successful in part in uniting the parties against ZANU. Nkomo agreed that he would work with Soames and the internal parties, that he would support any action by Soames, and that he saw 'the problems facing the country in much the same way (the British government and Soames) did'.<sup>506</sup> This was highly significant, as Nkomo's previous allegiance to the PF as a whole was being eroded by the actions of Mugabe and ZANLA. The ability of Soames to win some support from Nkomo showed the effectiveness of short-term British crisis management and of reactive policy as a way of dealing with continued ZANLA transgressions.

Similarly, Muzorewa would continue to comply with the Lancaster House Agreement and the cease-fire as his party was militarily neutered due to the LHA taking control of the security forces away from him. This was a point of great contention for Muzorewa, as he felt that Soames was constraining the security forces too much and preventing them from fully preventing ZANLA intimidation.<sup>507</sup> He and Nkomo both felt that forcing Mugabe to reaffirm the LHA which ZANU had been violating was an ineffective way of dealing with the problem,<sup>508</sup> as Mugabe had previously told ZANLA members to ignore any public statements that he made, and to continue their activities against the local population regardless.<sup>509</sup> Both Muzorewa and Nkomo demanded that Soames ban ZANU, but were told that this would only serve to restart armed conflict backed by Mozambique and Tanzania.<sup>510</sup> At that time, Soames could not afford a full ban of ZANU, whilst Nkomo and Muzorewa were unable to use violence to sabotage the legitimacy of the election. For this reason, attempting to convince ZANU to stop or curtail intimidation was a less risky tactic to the overall legitimacy of the election than an outright ban. Symbolic actions such as the renewal of pledges made at Lancaster House by all

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504 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 201.

505 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 197.

506 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 190.

507 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 187.

508 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 188.

509 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 191.

510 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 188.

internal parties and 'limited penalties' were unable to prevent ZANLA intimidation, but posed less of a risk to the survival of long-term plans made by the British government at Lusaka and Lancaster House.<sup>511</sup> An election tainted by issues of violence was more likely to garner sympathetic reactions internationally than a total collapse of the settlement as appeared likely in the event of a complete ban on ZANU.

### **The British government and international diplomacy leading up to the 1980 Rhodesian election**

Whilst Soames was acting within Rhodesia to attempt to prevent ZANLA intimidation, Thatcher and members of the Foreign Office attempted to convince Frontline State leaders that the resumption of war was unnecessary. The goal of the British government was still to hold free and fair elections, and the intervention of Tanzania and Mozambique was preventing this as they refused to accept claims of widespread ZANU intimidation. In particular, Carrington felt that Nyerere was determined to wreck the Lancaster House Agreement, and that 'by free and fair elections, Nyerere meant a victory for ZANU'.<sup>512</sup> Evidence of this was the fact that Tanzania and Mozambique had colluded to send 'large numbers of ZANLA cadres to Mozambique after the cease-fire had come into effect' through Tanzania Airways.<sup>513</sup> A chief concern was the power that Tanzania and Mozambique held in the UN Security Council and the fact that Tanzania in particular had been 'in the forefront in sponsoring unbalanced and highly critical resolutions at both the UN and OAU'.<sup>514</sup> A Security Council Resolution that was strongly influenced by these nations had the ability to place great pressure on the British government, with this being acknowledged by Thatcher at the end of January. She explained that there was 'an attempt by some African countries to take the issue... to the Security Council... (risking) serious damage to what has been achieved, particularly if the outcome (was) a wildly unbalanced resolution'.<sup>515</sup> A decision by the Security Council to sanction or internationally condemn the British government's actions in Rhodesia would have been disastrous, as it would have dissuaded further action to prevent intimidation. Thatcher asked Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark that the

511 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 106.

512 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 204.

513 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 204.

514 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 17.

515 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 267.

Canadian government act as support at the UN, and that whilst discussion at the Security Council was inevitable, the assistance of Britain's allies was useful in 'trying to keep the temperature down'.<sup>516</sup> Similarly, Thatcher appealed to the Liberian president, William R. Tolbert Jr., to allow for the 'machinery provided for in the Lancaster House Agreements' to resolve any problems in the ceasefire and elections.<sup>517</sup>

On 30 January the Security Council convened, with British, American, Chinese and Soviet representatives voting as permanent members, and East German and Zambian representatives voting as Non-permanent members. Also in attendance but unable to vote were Tanzanian, Liberian, Mozambican and Botswanan representatives. The British government, unlikely to achieve the five votes needed for a veto, required careful diplomacy in order to convince allies at the meeting that a mildly worded Resolution was needed, and that Tanzania had to be prevented from taking the issue further to the Assembly.<sup>518</sup> This would have at the least further harmed British government control over the situation in Rhodesia as their authority was challenged at the highest level of international politics. Additionally, the larger nature of the assembly had the potential for Britain to be outnumbered by African states sympathetic to the liberation movement in Rhodesia with comparatively fewer allies to offer support. Convincing non-partisan Africans that it was not worth following Nyerere's line on Rhodesia was vital to avoiding the Assembly, with this being particularly necessary after the first day of the meeting as the representatives from the USSR, Liberia and Tanzania opened with 'virulence and offensiveness'<sup>519</sup>. Parsons, of the Rhodesia Department, noted the moderate tone of the Zambian representative,<sup>520</sup> and the potential for convincing the African attendees aside from Liberia and Tanzania.<sup>521</sup> These developments made it clear that the British representatives would need to bring some African nations around to the idea of a moderate resolution that would be unanimously passed, as this would 'avoid the assembly' and the escalation of the situation.<sup>522</sup> Such an escalation would have been disastrous in the short term, as the British government

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516 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 267-8.

517 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 261.

518 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 236.

519 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 247.

520 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 249.

521 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 248.

522 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 244.

would need to control incredibly public and delicate situations both within Rhodesia and on the international stage.

Parsons made this clear on the 31 January, explaining that whilst a Resolution directly criticising the British government or rewriting the Lancaster House Agreement would be unacceptable, a moderate Resolution would be best for all parties. Parsons reminded this group that a harsh resolution showing favour towards ZANLA would anger South Africa, whilst a resolution harshly against ZANLA would anger Mugabe; these parties, Parsons argued, 'had it within their power to wreck the whole agreement'.<sup>523</sup> Parsons argued that these reactions could not be ignored, and that a moderate Resolution would also allow for it to be passed quickly and without a British veto. This discussion with less partisan African representatives was successful, and a gentleman's agreement was set that the British government would cooperate with the UN Secretary General in maintaining a flow of information about the implementation of Lancaster House.<sup>524</sup> In light of these discussions, Tanzania emerged as the 'main advocate of going the whole hog (to the Assembly)' and that the general mood by the evening of 31 January was 'in favour of securing a British abstention' and showed that 'the Africans (had) come a fair way in the direction of our amendments'.<sup>525</sup> A British veto of the revised text would have been viewed as disrespectful in light of these accommodations, and would have led to at least Tanzania and Algeria, supported by the Russians, taking the issue to the Assembly.<sup>526</sup> The inclusion of Russia in this situation would have been a deeply worrying development, as it would have added a clear Cold-War aspect to the crisis in Rhodesia that had thus far remained largely implicit through ideology and the general climate in Southern Africa. Preventing African nations from 'continuing the battle with (the British government) over Rhodesia'<sup>527</sup> was seen as a worthwhile goal to sacrifice some concessions in the Resolution, and that allowing the FLS to be 'constantly kept informed by the administering power (Britain)' would prevent them from being 'inclined to badger (the British government) publicly in the UN'.<sup>528</sup>

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523 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 242.

524 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 243.

525 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 236.

526 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 237.

527 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 237.

528 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 238.



This meeting was largely a success for the British government, but did not conclude without presenting new challenges. Whilst the revised text was certainly less harsh and removed direct critiques of the British government, the moderate nature of the text made it impossible to solicit allied support of a veto or further refusals to vote. The final version of the Resolution was written to not supersede the LHA in any way, and included some changes in language in order to accommodate this. The phrase 'ensure *all* Zimbabwe nationals freely participate in the forthcoming electoral process'<sup>529</sup> was changed to 'ensure *eligible*...'.<sup>530</sup> This allowed the British government scope for banning individuals from the electoral process, if not a whole party. Likewise, a section on the confinement of the security forces and auxiliaries to their bases in conformity with the Lancaster House Agreement<sup>531</sup> was changed to be preceded with a statement that 'the strict compliance by all forces with the terms of the Agreement' was required.<sup>532</sup> This prevented these forces from being confined to their bases but ensured that they were not viewed as immune from reproach.

The meaning of the aforementioned changes was to prevent direct blame of the British government and Soames' administration<sup>533</sup> whilst ensuring that the terms and machinery of the LHA were not overruled or bypassed.<sup>534</sup> This was because non-compliance of any new terms set by the Resolution would have given critics of the British administration reason to condemn the election results.<sup>535</sup> The only significant downside to the moderate voice of the Resolution was that it was impossible for the British diplomats to secure allied non-participation in the vote. Contrary to expectations, the American and French representatives felt that 'the Africans, after coming so far... to meet us, would take it extremely amiss if their resolution received favourable votes from only non-aligned and communist members of the Council and was cold-shouldered by the West'.<sup>536</sup> Initially Thatcher and Carrington had contacted US President Jimmy Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, respectively, during the earlier stages of the

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529 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 227.

530 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 219.

531 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 227.

532 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 219.

533 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 242.

534 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 255-6.

535 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 216.

536 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 223.

meeting when a more severe draft Resolution was posed. In these messages, along with one sent to President of France Valery Giscard, the threat put forward by Nyerere and his 'uncertain... commitment to the settlement' was emphasised.<sup>537</sup> Alongside this, the possibility of the Soviet Union 'encouraging the more extreme Africans' to pass a highly critical Resolution that would 'seriously undermine the Governor's authority in Rhodesia' was noted.<sup>538</sup> In the letter to Carter, Thatcher asked that the US and France vote against or veto the original draft Resolution, and that a 'solid' showing of support would be necessary to prevent the African attendees taking a failed Resolution to the UN General Assembly.<sup>539</sup>

The US and French responses were non-committal, with the French agreeing to support Britain if the US did, and the US refusing to vote against a Resolution in which 'the Africans had met (Britain) on every point'.<sup>540</sup> As the final Resolution met British requirements, the USA and France ended up voting in favour which was a slight contradiction of usual diplomatic protocol between these allies and showed the British government to be somewhat isolated in the UN. Despite this, the USA, France, Norway and Portugal made 'helpful statements' after the passing of the Resolution.<sup>541</sup> Whilst the British government had failed to convince US and French representatives to veto or vote against the bill, they had succeeded in whittling down less partisan African representatives to a point where the passing of the Resolution was not a long-term danger to the integrity of the Lancaster House Agreement. By allowing concessions, the British government was able to follow the spirit of the LHA whilst remaining open to future crises or changes in the situation in Rhodesia. The allowance for Soames to ban individuals from being involved in the election and to keep security forces outside their bases presented a greater opportunity for flexibility in the face of future developments.

The goal of the British government during the Security Council meeting was to 'minimise the risk of further recourse by the Africans to the UN as the elections (drew) closer', particularly in light of a planned meeting of the OAU in the following week.<sup>542</sup>

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537 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 231.

538 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 232.

539 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 233.

540 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 228.

541 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 224.

542 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 217.

This Resolution was seen as a chance to allow African nations to air their grievances about Beitbridge and claimed electoral intimidation by the security forces in an environment that the British diplomatic services could control, to a degree.<sup>543</sup> Allowing these grievances to continue unaired until the OAU conference would have prevented the British government from defending their actions in Rhodesia. The passing of this amended resolution was seen as a fair sacrifice to prevent an OAU meeting where the 'pure malevolence' of some of the more extreme Africans could have been displayed unchecked by a British presence.<sup>544</sup> This too, was a concern for the US attendees, who felt that maintaining a positive atmosphere at the OAU meeting in February by allowing the more moderate Resolution was a significant result, and that a 'poisoned atmosphere' would lead to 'more trouble at the UN from Africans'.<sup>545</sup> Allowing some concessions, and establishing a clear line of communication, was seen as necessary in order to 'clear up misunderstanding and misconceptions' about the cease-fire and pre-election period.<sup>546</sup> Moon, of the Foreign Office, suggested that Tanzanian extremism may have been 'encouraged by what they (saw) as a degree of sympathy on the part of the Americans and (other British allies)'.<sup>547</sup> This was confirmed by Nyerere himself in a later meeting with Moon and demonstrated a level of disparity between the British government's position and that of its allies.<sup>548</sup> Nonetheless, a moderate but unanimous Resolution was less damaging to British relations with the internal parties, unaligned Africans and the South African government in comparison with a harsher but contested Resolution.

The use of diplomacy and compromise at the meeting showed that the British government needed support, not condemnation, in the prelude to the OAU meeting in February. The split between Nyerere and these moderates was useful in allowing the British government to remain critical of ZANU without risking an outpouring of criticism from within Africa. The OAU meeting, held in mid-February, was vital to ensuring that the general feeling within Africa was not so anti-British that the settlement was in danger of collapsing, either before the election or in the case of a Mugabe loss at the

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543 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 216.

544 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 216.

545 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 223.

546 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 217.

547 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 168.

548 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 156.

polls. Nyerere of Tanzania and Machel of Mozambique were the main actors working against the British government to achieve this. The British government considered that convincing Machel to condemn Mugabe's tactics was 'maybe unattainable',<sup>549</sup> and that he was more than likely to support Mugabe in the case of the collapse of the settlement and resumption of war.<sup>550</sup> In advance of the OAU summit in early-mid February, the British government approached African leaders, diplomats and members of the OAU in order to convince them that it was necessary to resist Nyerere in his attempts to sabotage the settlement.

Convincing these was important as Nyerere in particular had 'taken his position and (was) not going to admit to being shifted from it'.<sup>551</sup> Nyerere continued to refuse that unmonitored and unchecked ZANLA intimidation existed as more than just a response to similar conduct by the 'closely monitored' Auxiliaries.<sup>552</sup> This meant that allies within the OAU needed to be sought quickly and a policy to '(urge) moderate African governments to resist pressures from radical members of the OAU for further action at the United Nations'.<sup>553</sup> President Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast met with Daly<sup>554</sup>, from the Foreign Office, early in February and was convinced to speak on behalf of the British government at the OAU meeting.<sup>555</sup> He agreed to speak at the conference in order to express the need for no further intervention in Rhodesia by outside powers, and to reiterate the need for Britain, as the administering power, to be supported from within Africa.<sup>556</sup> Simeon Ake, Foreign Minister of the Ivory Coast, also agreed to provide statistics detailing ZANLA transgressions in Rhodesia, in the hope that the reiteration of these from African voices would serve to convince those at the OAU who were still sceptical.<sup>557</sup>

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549 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 161.

550 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 159.

551 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 153.

552 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 155.

553 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 181.

554 Michael F. Daly- British Ambassador to Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Niger from 1978 to 1983.

555 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 169-70.

556 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 169.

557 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 170.

Similarly, diplomatic relations between the British government and Kenneth Kaunda were resumed after a break of several months due to Zambian anger over Rhodesian raids on roads and bridges.<sup>558</sup> Assistant to the Foreign Secretary Roderic Lyne wrote in early February that a 'message to Kaunda (should) be dispatched very soon, in the hope that it might have some effect on Zambia's role at the OAU meeting'.<sup>559</sup> These ties were resumed when Thatcher asked Kaunda ensure that he 'use (his) influence... to ensure that no encouragement (was) given to those who practise intimidation and violence to believe that they will receive the support of responsible African governments'.<sup>560</sup> She also urged Kaunda to 'avoid further confrontation at the UN and OAU', and that the election could not be fought 'in New York or Addis Ababa', promising to stay in touch over the following weeks as a 'determined stand... against the real dangers to the goal of free elections... by the governments whose interests (were) at stake'.<sup>561</sup> Alongside this, in-depth details of intimidation in Rhodesia and the scope of Soames' powers to combat it<sup>562</sup> were presented to Kaunda. Nkomo was also contacted and asked to assist the British government in convincing African leaders to behave reasonably at the OAU. It was suggested to Nkomo that he 'work on'<sup>563</sup> Kaunda and other Frontline leaders as his criticisms of Mugabe were often unable to be aired publicly.<sup>564</sup> This was to be used alongside official Foreign Office channels in providing African governments with 'a better understanding... of the problems Mugabe's behaviour (caused)'.<sup>565</sup> Nkomo spoke to Zambia and Nigeria first and foremost, also telling all observers that visited him in Rhodesia of Mugabe's actions in the hope that this would make more members of the OAU aware of the situation.<sup>566</sup>

This combination of diplomacy through both official and unofficial channels showed the ability of Thatcher and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to respond to anticipated problems through diplomacy. In response to these attempts at diplomacy, Kaunda

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558 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 179.

559 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 181.

560 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 184.

561 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 185.

562 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 148.

563 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 121.

564 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 139.

565 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 122.

566 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 119.

spoke for the first time on foreign policy in a month.<sup>567</sup> Whilst his statements still rode the line between critical and supportive of Soames and the British government, *The Times of Zambia* wrote that 'violence and intimidation (were) beginning to raise their ugly heads even between the former two wings of the PF', showing that at least Nkomo's efforts had reached Zambian ears.<sup>568</sup> This led to subsequent meetings with Zambian representatives seeming 'less critical' of the British position as reports from Nkomo and the Zambian mission in Salisbury came to 'independently support (the British government's) briefing'.<sup>569</sup> Whilst Kaunda was to remain the non-aligned figure of African liberation in the region, he stated his willingness to 'support any realistic measures to achieve the desired goal',<sup>570</sup> and that Zambia would 'accept the outcome of a free and fair election regardless of who (won)' as long as the British government could ensure that the Rhodesian authorities and South Africa did so as well.<sup>571</sup> The utilisation of direct contact with Kaunda as head of state and through Nkomo as a Zambian ally helped to ensure that Kaunda remained impartial. As an African leader of influence in the OAU, the support of Kaunda was useful to the British government as it represented a member of the Frontline States not wholly critical to its conduct.

Kaunda's ability to remain impartial when compared to Nyerere and Machel was key to the sustenance of a settlement. The normalisation of relations with Zambia provided an important, non-aligned and respected mediator within both the Frontline States and the OAU. Whilst the OAU meeting still produced a 'wildly one-sided resolution',<sup>572</sup> the British government avoided calls by the OAU to return to the UN. The split between Nkomo and Mugabe led to the OAU no longer being 'by and large unite(d)' on the topic of Rhodesia, meaning that the meeting saw the 'mischief makers' of Tanzania and Mozambique resisted by the likes of Zambia, Nigeria and 'moderate Francophones'.<sup>573</sup> At the summit itself, the presence of moderates allowed British delegates to hold 'lengthy sessions' with the senior delegates of a range of African nations.<sup>574</sup> Whilst the

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567 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 87.

568 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 88.

569 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 37.

570 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 11.

571 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 10.

572 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 67.

573 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 68.

574 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 69.

adopted Resolution was ultimately incredibly critical of the British government<sup>575</sup> and in favour of the PF,<sup>576</sup> the lack of official calls to return to the UN to further pursue the issue was a great success of British diplomatic policy regardless of how 'one sided and damaging' the Resolution was.<sup>577</sup> The British delegates did warn moderates at the OAU that putting all the blame on the British government and Soames was damaging, but this was still preferable to a Resolution calling for further action.<sup>578</sup> Renewed diplomacy with the non-aligned and moderate factions of African politics allowed for the British government to escape direct action by the UN and OAU, at a time where such would have greatly harmed the chance for a satisfactory settlement. Short term flexibility and constant communication with current and potential allies was incredibly important to this, as it allowed for the British government to respond to challenging situations as and when needed.

### **The 1980 election**

The success of the 1980 election and the formation of an internationally legitimate government was paramount to the success of the British government's long term plans for Rhodesia that had been formed at Lancaster House. Whilst these plans had been used as a framework for independence in Rhodesia, the shifting nature of diplomatic ties and the volatile political status of the nation and region as a whole had threatened the ability of Lord Soames to oversee a legitimate election in the country. The issue of intimidation and coercion by ZANU and the Rhodesian forces remained controversial, and an election outcome seen to have been unduly influenced by this would have risked being internationally scrutinised or even rejected. The failure of this election to reach a widely accepted conclusion would have been in danger of igniting the already tumultuous and volatile situation in a region increasingly influenced by the rising heat of Cold War tensions in Africa.

As such, by the eve of the election the British government and Lord Soames could do little but attempt to maintain as much calm as possible in Rhodesia, and to act against

575 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 64-5.

576 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 64.

577 The National Archives (TNA): PREM 19/345, 'Situation in Rhodesia; security issues in countryside; intimidation allegations during elections; part 15'. 192.

578 (TNA): PREM 19/344. 69.

the worst offending individuals rather than against political groups as a whole. Long term policy had given way to crisis management following Lancaster House and the international reaction to the election was to demonstrate the success of this. The inclusion of PF groups in the election was an immediate boost to the legitimacy of the election in the eyes of many, and showed the success of long term planning and policy by the British government. Despite this, an election invalidated by widespread intimidation and coercion could have reversed these successes and sent the nation back into a state of war. This would have been dangerous to Britain's reputation in the region as the failures of the 1979 election were still fresh in the minds of many, and a repeat of these issues would have been an embarrassing indictment of the British government's inability to control and remedy the situation. With Southern Africa in a state of transition, achieving influence in the region was key to the Cold War superpowers. The collapse of Rhodesia into open war, with the USSR and China funding black independence movements, would have threatened the ability of the British government to foster diplomatic and economic links in the region.

This threat of instability had been looming since the Lancaster House Conference had concluded, and may have been a factor in initial reactions to the 1980 election results, which were cautiously positive. The Rhodesian Front once again won all white roll seats (twenty), with only 16,402 votes being cast in the white roll across the entire country.<sup>579</sup> For the common roll, ZANU won by a large margin, taking fifty seven of the one hundred seats in the Assembly to ZAPU and the UANC's twenty and three seats, respectively.<sup>580</sup> Turnout was once again high, with over 2.7 million black Rhodesians voting in the election.<sup>581</sup> Voting mechanics remained relatively similar to the 1979 election, with the country split into eight electoral districts, containing between six and

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579 'Results of the 1980 House of Assembly election in Rhodesia'  
[http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1980\\_House\\_of\\_Assembly\\_Election](http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1980_House_of_Assembly_Election). Accessed 10 November 2016

580 'Results of the 1980 House of Assembly election in Rhodesia'  
[http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1980\\_House\\_of\\_Assembly\\_Election](http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1980_House_of_Assembly_Election).

581 'Results of the 1980 House of Assembly election in Rhodesia'  
[http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1980\\_House\\_of\\_Assembly\\_Election](http://africanelections.tripod.com/zw.html#1980_House_of_Assembly_Election). Official number of votes; 2,702,275.



twelve seats.<sup>582583</sup> The voting process itself was largely identical to that of the 1979 election, with those who had voted marked as doing so using ultraviolet dye, as in the previous election.<sup>584</sup>

Despite the minimal nature of mechanical changes to the voting process in the country, the international reactions to the 1980 election could not have been further from the general reaction in 1979. The Commonwealth Observers report was the key report released in the aftermath of the election. As a representative of the Commonwealth as a whole, and consisting of a diverse group of people from eleven countries and four continents, the observer group's report was most likely to be able to legitimise or condemn the election through its analysis.<sup>585</sup> The key issues raised in the wake of the 1979 election had been the exclusion of the PF, and the use of intimidation and coercion by all parties. As the issue of the PF's inclusion had been resolved by 1980, the main focus of international scrutiny was the use of intimidation by the PF, and the use of emergency powers by Soames and the Security Forces. The Commonwealth group handled this issue head-on, opening their section on intimidation by stating that the issue was 'too often viewed in isolation from the society in which it was taking place' and that 'the phenomenon appeared... to be more complex than the authorities were either prepared to accept or admit'.<sup>586</sup> The report argued that whilst this intimidation was certainly an issue, that it did not have a significant effect on the result of the election in comparison to what was widely believed by the internal parties and the British administration. The overwhelming landslide victory for ZANU, combined with the inability of the Rhodesian and British administrations to understand and connect with the electorate (an early prediction poll had Muzorewa to win thirty four, not three,

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582 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 9.

583 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 59.

584 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 61.

585 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 3.

586 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 28.

seats), suggested that claims of intimidation being a deciding factor in the election were unfounded.<sup>587</sup>

Overall, the report found that taking the circumstances into account, the degree to which the election approached the levels required for a democratic election was remarkable.<sup>588</sup> The report found that whilst intimidation and a climate of fear was prevalent, the pattern of voting and the successes of ZANU meant that even taking intimidation into account they had won by a wide margin.<sup>589</sup> This margin was increased by the fact that proportional representation meant that 28,000 votes were required, on average, for a single seat; intimidation practised on such a scale, across multiple seats and regions was unfeasible.<sup>590</sup> The report summarised and closed by stating that whilst criticism of the governor and Rhodesian parties was necessary, most had followed the spirit and law of the election. This finding was supported by the British Election Commissioner, Sir John Boynton, who concluded that the election was 'in general a reflection of the wishes of the people, though in no sense free from intimidation and pressure'.<sup>591</sup>

The general agreement of these two reports was key to the legitimacy of the election; the acceptance of results by the governing power in Britain and by the Commonwealth meant that the election had received both internal and external legitimacy, something that the 1979 election lacked despite the findings of Boyd and Drinkwater. Likewise, the international media found the process to be significantly more acceptable than in 1979, largely due to the participation of all parties and the landslide victory of Mugabe and ZANU preventing ambiguity regarding the scope of intimidation. Initial reports were

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587 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 37.

588 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 73.

589 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 74.

590 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 42.

591 Commonwealth Observer Group, *Southern Rhodesia Elections February, 1980: The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections leading to independent Zimbabwe* (1980) 71.

overwhelmingly positive, with *The Guardian* proclaiming a ZANU landslide victory to be 'the clearest and best outcome' for Rhodesia, and that any other decision would have lead to 'long and damaging in-fighting or worse'.<sup>592</sup> *The Guardian* further praised the initial make-up of the cabinet, and noted the largely university-educated, 'technocratic rather than military background' of the majority of cabinet ministers.<sup>593</sup> Nkomo's inclusion as Minister of Home Affairs showed Mugabe's initial commitment to diversifying the party make-up of the cabinet, and represented attempts to give 'Rhodesia a broad-based government', following Mugabe's promise that he would not 'seek a monopoly of Cabinet posts'.<sup>594</sup> Whilst *The Guardian* was known for somewhat of a left-wing view, these conclusions regarding the 1980 election were largely mirrored by the less-partisan *Times*. Whilst editorials in this publication did question the political leanings of Mugabe, with one report admitting that '(Mugabe was) certainly no Liberal'<sup>595</sup>, in general critics from across the political spectrum were in agreement that the election result was not a 'victory for Moscow', arguing that to 'panic because Mr Mugabe chooses to flaunt the Marxist label (was) to risk promoting a self-fulfilling prophecy'.<sup>596</sup> Regardless of individual concerns regarding Mugabe's political philosophies, the election process itself was seldom criticised in the mainstream British press, with most commentators remaining focused on the future scope of Soviet influence in the region and the challenges facing Mugabe over the following months.

The election was supported by early statements made by members of government, which greatly allayed the concerns of many. Both Labour and Conservative MP's praised the conduct at polling stations as early as 28 February, with Tory MP for Hexham Geoffrey Rippon and Labour MP for Mansfield Dennis Concannon noted in *The Times* to have, contrary to the norm, 'found themselves in complete agreement'.<sup>597</sup> These MP's were part of a non-partisan observer group in Rhodesia, with this cross-party consensus legitimising the election and the report to a degree. These claims were

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592 'The clearest and the best outcome'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 5 March 1980. 12 .

593 McManus, James. 'Mugabe includes two white Ministers'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 12 March 1980. 1.

594 Ellman, Paul. 'Nkomo is given a job with power'. *The Guardian* (London: UK) 11 March 1980. 7.

595 Steel, David. 'I told you so from the Start'. *The Times* (London: UK) 6 March 1980. 16.

596 'Mr Mugabe's Marxism'. *The Times* (London: UK) 6 March 1980. 17.

597 Ashford, Nicholas. 'Tory and Labour MPs united in praise of orderly conduct at polling stations'. *The Times* (London: UK) 29 February 1980. 6.

later supplemented by statements in parliament by high-ranking members of government. Lord Privy Seal, Sir Ian Gilmour made a public announcement the day that Mugabe was invited to form a government that the elections were 'free and fair', and that concerns about Mugabe's ties to the USSR were unfounded.<sup>598</sup> This endorsement of the election was echoed by Dr David Owen, who congratulated Mugabe's 'statesmanship which he has shown in victory... (and) his wishes to see a united Zimbabwe'.<sup>599</sup> These early proclamations on 5 March were important in establishing the legitimacy of the election, and worked in tandem with more comprehensive reports. Perhaps the most useful of these was a statement made by Thatcher herself, stating that 'the arrangement of free and fair elections had been an outstanding achievement'.<sup>600</sup>

This endorsement by the Prime Minister was effective when used in the context of the Commonwealth report, and the general atmosphere in Rhodesia at the time. This was in contrast to the British government recognition of the 1979 election, which was not supported by reports outside the country or by the general feeling of the Rhodesian population. Whilst a Mugabe victory was potentially a difficult situation for the British government in the longer run, the original goal of involvement in Rhodesia had been a success. The nation of Southern Rhodesia was to become Zimbabwe on 18 April 1980, with Robert Mugabe heading a ZANU dominated House of Assembly in an election that was agreed internationally to be legitimate.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout 1979 and 1980, overall British governmental policy in Rhodesia remained relatively stable, with the goal of internationally recognised, black majority rule in the country. From the government's initial involvement following the controversies of April 1979, there was a clear long-term goal for British-overseen elections that could be viewed internationally as sufficiently free of intimidation, coercion, and political exclusion. Whilst these long term goals were identified by the Foreign and

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598 Brown, Colin. 'Gilmour endorses 'free and fair' election'. The Guardian (London: UK) 5 March 1980. 5.

599 Brown, Colin. 'Gilmour endorses 'free and fair' election'. The Guardian (London: UK) 5 March 1980. 5.

600 'Mrs Thatcher's good wishes for Zimbabwe'. The Times (London: UK) 5 March 1980. 14.

Commonwealth Office and Thatcher early in 1979 and were made clear on an international level through the conferences at Lusaka and Lancaster House, the processes through which these goals would be attained were subject to an ever-shifting combination of events and relationships within Southern Africa. The overarching goals of the British government regarding the decolonisation of Southern Rhodesia remained in place as a framework, but at times of crisis the focus of government policy was narrowed in order to combat short-term problems that arose. This was particularly noticeable in dealings between the British government and the Frontline States, as these nations contained the political figures most critical of Britain's actions in the region.

The initial long-term goal of the British government was to obtain a mandate for involvement in Rhodesia, in order to remove Ian Smith's white minority government and to bring the nation towards successful decolonisation. Due to the inability of Rhodesia's economy and political leadership to continue to withstand continuous sanctions and guerilla warfare indefinitely, this mandate was easier to achieve in 1979 than at any point previously. The acceptance of Smith that some degree of majority rule was necessary presented the British government with a reason for involvement in the nation from April onwards. In addition to this, the widely criticised nature of the election on an international scale and promises from the regime's harshest critics to continue sanctions ensured that Smith was aware of the futility of attempting to justify the Internal Settlement and the April 1979 election as a route to legitimate majority rule.

This reaffirmation of the Internal Settlement's illegality despite the majority-rule outcome of its elections gave the British government a vital mandate for overseeing the nation's transition to majority rule. The acceptance of Smith of majority rule and the promises of UN states to continue sanctions against any Rhodesian government brought about through internal agreements gave the British government ideological and practical reasons for political action in Rhodesia. This lack of legitimacy was the basis for long-term planning and policy, with the holding of a constitutional conference and eventual internationally-legitimate elections the two major fixed policy goals that would be carried out over the following year. The general manner in which this was to be achieved was through constant diplomatic contact with important political figures within key nations, with this being shown strongest in the turbulent relations between the British

government and political leaders in the Frontline States. By continually maintaining contact with these nations, the British government created contingency in the event of crises that threatened to impact the success of long term plans as strong relations with these nations had the potential to prevent short-term problems from spiralling out of control. This was most visible during the latter stages of British involvement, as by this point the long-term goals had been agreed by all the major actors in Rhodesia and Southern Africa as a whole. Whilst this was a position of some solidarity, it did mean that disagreements had the potential to lead to one or multiple actors straying away from the plans agreed at Lancaster House, which would have likely caused these to collapse.

Contingency and crisis management were to remain vital components of the overall British governmental policy in bringing legitimate majority rule to Southern Rhodesia. During the Nigerian embargo on British contract bids, the crisis at Beitbridge, and when discussions at Lancaster House stalled, the British government was forced to act quickly and effectively in order to navigate short-term problems. Only by successfully doing so could longer term diplomacy be used effectively, as this required a degree of stability in the British government's relationship with its allies and detractors. This ability to respond to crisis situations as anchoring longer term plans was shown best in the British government's response to early problems with Nigeria before the Lusaka Conference. Due to the visibility and importance of the Conference, the British government needed to ensure that relations with its most powerful attendees were strong. Whilst Australia and Canada, for example, were always likely to be relatively supportive of the British government, it was recognised that poor relations with African Commonwealth nations going into the conference would have likely spelled disaster for the British government's hopes of acquiring support for involvement in Rhodesia. Harlech's 'mission' to Africa was a prime example of this, as by doing so he was able to speak with Nigeria as a country that was posing a short-term threat to British plans, whilst also meeting with the Frontline State presidents in order to try and establish closer ties that would benefit the British government in the long-run. By utilising long-term diplomacy alongside shorter term crisis management, the British government managed to, for the most part, achieve positive relations with its critics during this time period.

A prime example of this ability to overcome short term obstacles in order to achieve the longer term goals of decolonisation was through the appointment of Lord Soames. By appointing a governor of Rhodesia who was to report directly to the Prime Minister, the British government ensured that they had an ally 'on the ground' in Rhodesia for the first time since UDI. Having this supportive ally in the nation allowed Soames to be used as a conduit for short-term policy fixes in times of crisis, whilst also understanding the overall policy goals of the British government. The establishment of this visible figure in Southern Africa provided the British government with an ally who was able to implement policies more effectively in the country, such as through punitive measures against those guilty of breaching the Lancaster House Agreement. This allowed for Soames to be used to implement solutions for short term crisis management in Rhodesia whilst understanding the longer term needs of the British government. Without the placement of a such a figure in Rhodesia at the highest level it may have been more difficult for the British government to respond with agility to events such as the crisis at Beitbridge or questions of ZANLA intimidation, as without Soames it would have been more difficult for the government to respond to changing situations and alliances with agility and precision on a short-term basis.

The British government's long-term plans for Southern Rhodesia were successful in that the February 1980 elections were widely recognised as legitimate on an international level. Alongside this, the overall goal of decolonisation was achieved as Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in April 1980 and passed from British control to majority rule. Whilst these achievements were not without new difficulties for the British government such as the radical nature of Mugabe and ZANU, short-term crises had been resolved for the most part in order to allow the overall goals of decolonisation to be reached. The issue of electoral and constitutional legitimacy had guided these long term goals from shortly after the 1979 election, to during the Lancaster House Conference and when overseeing the 1980 pre-election and election periods. By focusing on achieving these targets of legitimate majority rule, the British government was able to use crisis management in tandem with more abstract diplomacy over the course of the year in order to address current and future problems at the same time. Without this ability to quickly react to shifting situations and alliances in Southern Africa whilst maintaining an overall plan, the already difficult and troubled transition to legitimate majority rule in Southern Rhodesia may have been even harder to achieve.

## Glossary

### Important Locations

**Beitbridge-** Bridge and border town in the South of Rhodesia connecting the nation with South Africa.

**Frontline States-** A loose coalition of African countries surrounding the white minority states of South Africa and Rhodesia. This group included Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia.

**Lancaster House-** Location of meeting between the RF, PF, UANC and British government to form plans to achieve legitimate majority rule in Rhodesia.

**Lusaka-** Capital of Zambia. Location of the 1979 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

**Rhodesia-** The name for Southern Rhodesia from 1965-79 under Ian Smith's white minority government. This state was not internationally recognised.

**Salisbury-** Capital of Rhodesia (now called Harare).

**Southern Rhodesia-** The official name for the British Colony until April 1980, when it became known as Zimbabwe.

**Zimbabwe-** Name given to Rhodesia after its independence in 1980.

**Zimbabwe Rhodesia-** The name for Southern Rhodesia between June and December 1979 under Bishop Muzorewa's majority government. This state was not internationally recognised.

### Important Figures

**Achilles Papadopoulos-** British ambassador to Maputo during 1979 and 1980.



**Antonio Neto-** President of Angola from 1975 to 1979.

**Alan Lennox-Boyd, 1st Viscount Boyd of Merton (Lord Boyd)-** Travelled with an observer group to Rhodesia to report on the 1979 election for the British government.

**Bishop Abel Muzorewa-** Leader of the UANC and Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Rhodesia from June-December 1979.

**Cyrus Vance-** US Secretary of State from 1977 to 1980.

**David Ormsby-Gore, 5th Baron Harlech-** Conservative politician and diplomat. Tasked with visiting the Frontline States and Nigeria during 1979 on a diplomatic mission.

**Dr. Claire Palley-** Rhodesian constitutional lawyer who prepared two reports on the 1979 Rhodesian election.

**Felix Houphouet-Boigny-** President of the Ivory Coast from 1960 to 1993.

**General Peter Walls-** Head of the Rhodesian Armed Forces from 1977 to 1980.

**Herbert Chitepo-** Leader of ZANU until 1975, when he was assassinated in Zambia.

**Ian Smith-** Prime Minister of Rhodesia between 1964 and 1979.

**Joe Clark-** Prime Minister of Canada from 1979 to 1980.

**Jimmy Carter-** President of the USA from 1977 to 1981.

**John Drinkwater, QC-** Prepared a report on the 1979 Rhodesian election alongside Lord Boyd's.

**Jose Eduardo dos Santos-** Angolan President from 1979 to present.

**Joshua Nkomo-** Leader of ZAPU and ZIPRA since 1974. Minister of Home Affairs from the 1980 election until 1982. Vice-President of Zimbabwe from 1987 to 1999 after allowing ZAPU to merge with ZANU to create ZANU-PF.

**Julius Nyerere-** President of Tanzania from 1964 to 1985.

**Kenneth Kaunda-** President of Zambia from 1964 to 1991.

**Lord Christopher Soames-** Conservative politician and governor of Southern Rhodesia from December 1979 to April 1980.

**Lord Peter Carrington-** Conservative politician and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from 1979 to 1982.

**Ian Gilmour, Baron Gilmour of Craigmillar-** Conservative Politician and Lord Privy Seal from 1979 to 1981. In this role he was the chief government spokesman in the House of Commons for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

**Malcolm Fraser-** Prime Minister of Australia from 1975 to 1983.

**Margaret Thatcher-** Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from May 1979 to November 1990.

**Mark Chona-** One of Kenneth Kaunda's foremost foreign policy advisors during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Often present at meetings between Kaunda and British diplomats.

**Mervyn Brown-** High Commissioner to Nigeria 1979 to 1983.

**Michael F. Daly-** British Ambassador to Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Niger from 1978 to 1983.

**Ndabaningi Sithole-** Founder of ZANU alongside Robert Mugabe. Split from Mugabe's ZANU in 1975. Signed 1978 Internal Settlement and joined Muzorewa's government in 1979.

**Pratap Chitnis, Baron Chitnis-** Prepared a report on the 1979 Rhodesian election for the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

**P.W. Botha-** Leader of South Africa from 1978 to 1989.

**Richard Luce, Baron Luce-** Conservative Politician and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1979 to 1981.

**Robert Mugabe-** Leader of ZANLA from 1975. Leader of ZANU during the 1980 election. Prime Minister of Zimbabwe after winning the 1980 election until 1987. President of Zimbabwe from 1987 to present.

**Robin Renwick, Baron Renwick of Clifton-** Rhodesia Department, 1978 to 1980. Political advisor to Governor of Rhodesia during 1980.

**Roderic Lyne-** Assistant to the Foreign Secretary from 1979 to 1982.

**Samora Machel-** President of Mozambique from 1975 to 1986.

**Simeon Ake-** Foreign Minister of the Ivory Coast in 1980.

**Sir Anthony Duff-** British diplomat. Leader of the British delegation to Lancaster House and later Deputy Governor of Southern Rhodesia.

**Sir Derek M. Day-** Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during 1979 and 1980.

**Sir Peter J.S. Moon-** British High Commissioner to Tanzania from 1978 to 1980.

**Sir W. Leonard Allinson-** British High Commissioner to Zambia from 1978 to 1980.

**Valery Giscard-** President of France from 1974 until 1981.

**William R. Tolbert Jr.-** President of Liberia from 1971 to 1980.

### **Important Groups, Meetings and Organisations**

**Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (also known as the Commonwealth Conference or Lusaka Conference)-** Meeting between heads of Commonwealth governments every 2 years. Held in Lusaka in 1979.

**FRELIMO- (Mozambique Liberation Front)-** Military organisation supporting ZANU as a nationalist movement until 1975 and as the leading party in Mozambique from 1975.

**FROLIZI (Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe)-** Breakaway faction from ZANU and ZAPU formed in 1971. Mostly known for its armed infiltrations of Rhodesia across the Zambia border in 1972 and 1973. Disbanded in 1973 after the OAU supported ZANU and ZAPU over it.

**MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)-** Leading political party of Angola since 1975. Supported African nationalism in Rhodesia.

**OAU (Organisation of African Unity)-** Multinational group consisting of a number of African states, dedicated to eradication of white minority rule.

**Lancaster House Conference-** Constitutional conference between internal and external African parties in Rhodesia, the RF, and the British government. This meeting was organised in order to create a new constitution for the country that would form the basis for majority rule.

**Patriotic Front (PF)-** Political and Military coalition between ZANU and ZAPU between 1976 and 1980.

**Rhodesian Front-** Main white political party in Rhodesia, led by Ian Smith from 1964-1981. Controlled the House of Assembly until 1979.

**UANC (United African National Council)-** Political party led by Bishop Muzorewa from 1979 to 1994.

**UN Security Council-** Wing of the UN charged with maintaining international peace and security through sanctions and Resolutions.

**ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union)-** Political party led by Robert Mugabe from 1975. Outlawed until December 1979 and referred to as part of the PF alongside ZAPU. Officially known as ZANU-PF during the 1980 election to distinguish it from Ndabaningi Sithole's ZANU.

**ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army)-** Military wing of ZANU.

**ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union)-** Political party led by Joshua Nkomo. Outlawed until December 1979.

**ZIPRA (Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army)-** Military wing of ZAPU.

**ZUPO (Zimbabwe United People's Organisation)-** Political party in Rhodesia. Won 6.4 percent of the vote in the 1979 election.

### **Key Terms**

**CAB-** British government Cabinet Office files at the National Archives.

**Common Roll-** The electoral roll for black representatives in the Rhodesian House of Assembly.

**FCO-** British government Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**Internal Settlement-** 1978 agreement between Ian Smith and moderate African leaders Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole and Jeremiah Chirau. This agreement set terms for the country to hold elections leading to black majority rule.

**House of Assembly-** The parliament of Rhodesia. Contained fifty seats, all for white representatives until after the 1977 election. Contained seventy-two black and twenty-eight white constituency members who would then vote for eight white non-constituency members in 1979. Contained eighty black and twenty white members in 1980.

**PREM-** Prime Minister's Office files at the British National Archives.

**Rhodesian Bush War-** War fought from July 1964 to December 1979. Ian Smith's Rhodesian government fought militant Zimbabwean groups ZANLA and ZIPRA. These groups were primarily backed by China/Tanzania/Mozambique and the Soviet Union/Cuba/Zambia, respectively.

**UDI-** Ian Smith's 'Universal Declaration of Independence' from the British government, claimed in 1965.

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