

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS A  
PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT  
IN RHODESIA**

**THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT  
AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT**



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## BACKGROUND BRIEFING: ATTITUDES TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA—THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT

### INTRODUCTION

This paper serves as a follow-up to an earlier Background Briefing, prepared in August 1978, on the subject of the Transitional Government and the American conditions for the lifting of sanctions against Rhodesia. Accordingly, this paper will look at recent developments in certain aspects concerning the Rhodesian constitutional dispute, particularly:

- (a) The proposed all-party conference.
- (b) The good faith of the Patriotic Front with particular reference to Robert Mugabe's ideology and connections with Communist countries.
- (c) The progress of the Transitional Government.

### PART I

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE

The attitude of the Transitional Government towards an all-party conference was made quite clear on 21 October 1978, after a meeting in Washington between members of the Executive Council and British and American officials. After the meeting the Prime Minister, Mr. Ian Smith, said that he and his three colleagues had agreed on a plan for an all-party conference. He said, "We have agreed at this meeting (with British and American officials) to five basic points with which the conference will be associated."

At the same time Bishop Muzorewa, who had previously expressed reservations about an all-party conference, said, "We are now willing to go to an all-parties conference to see if we can help our situation."

The following official statement was released by the U.S. State Department:

*"The members of the Rhodesian Executive Council confirmed their willingness to attend a well-prepared all-parties conference without pre-conditions.*

*"The British and American Governments now plan to hold discussions with the other parties before proceeding further."*

It is clear, therefore, and confirmed by the U.S. State Department, that the Transitional Government is willing to attend an all-party conference without pre-conditions at any time. *Nobody can deny that the Transi-*

*tional Government has already fulfilled one of the conditions imposed on 11 August 1978, by the U.S. Congress for the lifting of sanctions by the American Government—namely, that the Government of Rhodesia must demonstrate its willingness to negotiate in good faith at an all-parties conference held under international auspices on all relevant issues.*

It is worth comparing this attitude of the Transitional Government with recent statements by the Patriotic Front, such as the following:

*"I have said the all-parties conference is dead and I have no reason to say anything different now"—Joshua Nkomo speaking in Lusaka, reported by SAPA-Reuter on 29 September, 1978.*

A ZANU (Mugabe) statement issued in Lusaka on 23 October 1978, and reported by SAPA-Reuter, said that *Mugabe, with Nkomo, was prepared to meet only with Britain "to work out the process of total transfer of power to the people of Zimbabwe"*.

*AFP on 24 October reported Mugabe, in Luanda, Angola, as re-iterating his determination to "talk only with Britain"*. According to the report Mugabe said that America's agreeing to let Mr. Ian Smith visit the U.S. meant that the Carter Administration recognized the "Smith regime".

The ZAPU representative at the U.N., Dr. Callistus Ndlovu, told a Press conference in New York on 27 October that *an all-party conference was "an exercise in futility"*. He reiterated ZAPU's determination not to attend such a conference. Regarding Western efforts to arrange an all-party conference, Dr. Ndlovu said, *"This is the last time this kind of circus will be allowed to confuse the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe."* (SAPA)

*"... there is no such thing as an all-party conference at this time."* Joshua Nkomo quoted in the *Sunday Mail* (Salisbury) on 26 November, 1978.

It is clear from the above that the Patriotic Front has little or no intention of attending an all-party conference without pre-conditions, just as it has always been clear from previous statements and demands (recorded in the Background Briefings and Fact Papers prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Information Section), that they have always had little or no interest in a negotiated settlement that does not guarantee them immediate power.

It is equally clear that it is this intransigence, encouraged by the appeasement policies of the British and American Governments, which has caused the long delay in calling the all-party conference to which the Transitional Government agreed in October, 1978. The specious reasoning of U.S. State Department spokesman Mr. Hodding Carter, who

said on 20 November 1978, that the conference should be shelved because of Rhodesian attacks on terrorist camps in Zambia and because of the postponement of elections in Rhodesia, becomes obviously transparent when the following factors are considered:

- (a) The demonstrated intransigence of the Patriotic Front, and the demonstrated willingness of the Transitional Government to attend a conference.
- (b) The fact that the first Rhodesian strike on terrorist camps outside Lusaka took place *before* the meeting in Washington at which the Transitional Government agreed to attend a conference.
- (c) The fact that the date of the election has never been discussed in relation to an all-party conference.

A statement issued by the Executive Council on 21 November 1978, summed up the matter by saying:

*"What is abundantly clear is that the current Anglo-American policy on Rhodesia has collapsed and as usual the two Governments are seeking to blame the Executive Council for their own failure."*

The Executive Council statement was rapidly followed on 23 November, 1978, by an announcement by the British Government that Mr. Cledwyn Hughes, a British Labour MP and former Minister, and U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, Mr. Stephen Low, would start another Southern African "shuttle" to see whether an all-party conference could be arranged early next year. It is perhaps significant that Mr. Hughes would report direct to Mr. Callaghan. This would seem to be a rebuff to the British Foreign Secretary, Dr. David Owen, and an implication that his influence on developments in the Rhodesian issue has declined. Certainly he has been heavily criticized by members of the Transitional Government and by the Patriotic Front, as well as by the Conservative Opposition in Britain.

Somewhat contradicting Mr. Hodding Carter, the U.S. State Department announced on 23 November, 1978, that the new initiative had the full support of President Carter.

## PART II

### *THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S GOOD FAITH AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE ZANU (MUGABE) DEATH LIST*

Mugabe has, on a number of occasions, threatened members of the Transitional Government and their supporters with "people's courts" and "execution". These threats were supported by the release on 15 November 1978, of a document prepared by ZANU (Mugabe), threatening prominent members of black parties inside Rhodesia, and black members of the security forces, with death should they not—

- (a) in the case of politicians, "resign and sever all ties with puppet political party (sic) as well as with your puppet criminal leadership";
- (b) in the case of security forces, "resign or abscond with immediate effect".

The document's opening paragraph is a classic of Marxist-Leninist diatribe:

"As the revolutionary war being waged by the Patriotic Front against the Smith-Sithole-Muzorewa-Chirau fascist regime enters its final phase, reports reaching ZANU Headquarters in Maputo, Mozambique, indicate that there is now a crisis among the *Zimbabwean black bourgeoisie, traitors, fellow travellers and puppets of the Ian Smith regime, opportunistic running-dogs and other capitalist vultures*. These black reactionary and feudal elements in Salisbury, Bulawayo, Gwelo, Umtali, Fort Victoria, Gatooma and Que Que, now know that the treacherous Internal Settlement of March 3, 1978, has collapsed under the heavy blows of the Patriotic Front Forces, firmly and resolutely supported by the broad masses of Zimbabwe. They now know that the Patriotic Front will soon be ruling Zimbabwe and are wondering (sic) what may be in store for them."

Apart from members of the Ministerial Council and Executive Council, and members of the security forces, the document lists 44 black politicians and party officials inside Rhodesia. All are described in derogatory terms such as "Puppet traitor", "Criminal" or "Baffon" (sic) and "Puppet". The document is signed by Eddison J. M. Zvobgo, Deputy Secretary for Information and Publicity of ZANU (Mugabe), and carries an official ZANU (Mugabe) date stamp.

A final touch of macabre humour is added by the announcement that "*The above is the Patriotic Front's first list. A second list is under preparation and will be broadcast at the end of December as a Special Christmas Bulletin.*"

In an almost comical statement, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesman in London was quoted by *The Herald* (Salisbury) on 21 November 1978, as saying that the FCO were checking with Mugabe "to see if the reported list represented official ZANU (Mugabe) policy".

*The Times* (London), in an editorial on 17 November 1978, went so far as to suggest that Mugabe might be a terrorist.

It is perhaps significant that the FCO spokesman revealed that the question of an amnesty in Rhodesia had been an issue of "major disagreement" between Mugabe and the British Foreign Secretary, Dr. David Owen, at their meetings in Malta and Dar-es-Salaam early in 1978.

Apart from the belated British realization that Mugabe might not be a Christian pacifist driven to desperation, the action of ZANU (Mugabe) in producing the list at this time is yet another indicator that optimism about the success of an all-party conference involving Mugabe is indeed an exercise in futility.

#### THE IDEOLOGY OF ZANU (MUGABE)

The attitudes of Mugabe, and his actions in publishing such death lists and issuing blood-thirsty threats, can perhaps be explained (without being condoned) through a study of the ideology of ZANU (Mugabe).

Mugabe himself is on record on a number of occasions as admitting that he is a Marxist. One such occasion was during an interview with *Newsweek*, the American magazine, on 20 March 1978, when in reply to the question, "Do you consider yourself a Marxist?" Mugabe replied, "Yes I do."

Documents captured during Rhodesian security force raids against ZANU (Mugabe) terrorist camps in Mozambique further confirm that the ideology of Mugabe and his party is firmly aligned with Maoist thought, and totally committed to the creation of such a political and economic system in an independent Zimbabwe under ZANU (Mugabe) control.

The following extract is taken from a ZANU (Mugabe) document captured at Mororo Camp in Mozambique on 30/31 July 1978:

#### "What is ZANU's Ideology?"

"*The ZANU is guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism. It aims at achieving a Socialist Revolution. However, before the achievement of such a revolution, a transitional stage of the National Democratic revolution is necessary. The National Democratic revolution is a necessary preparation stage for the Socialist Revolution and the Socialist Revolution is the inevitable sequel to the National Democratic Revolution. The deeper the conditions for the National Democratic Revolution the better the conditions for the Socialist Revolution.*"

That this ideology is firmly tied to Maoist thought is clearly shown by the following extract from the Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung:

"Taken as a whole, the Chinese revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party embraces the two stages, i.e. the democratic and the socialist revolutions, which are two essentially different revolutionary processes, and the second process can be carried through only after the first has been completed. The democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the Socialist revolution, and the

socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the democratic revolution." ("The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, Vol. II, pp. 330-31.)

Captured ZANU (Mugabe) lecture notes stress that independence will never be obtained by peaceful means as Zimbabwe's ultimate objective under ZANU, a truly socialist state, runs contrary to Western imperialist and capitalist ambitions. There can be no compromise, according to the documents, as total war and the complete destruction of old values and systems are the only means by which Zimbabwe can eliminate the international force of imperialism. This is fully in accordance with Maoist thought, which states that:

"... *the basic principles of Marxism must never be violated, or otherwise mistakes will be made.*" (From a speech made by Mao Tse-Tung at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work—March 12, 1957.)

"Yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolutionary war, that is good, not bad, it is Marxist. The guns of the Russian Communist Party created socialism . . . Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that it is only by the power of the gun that the working class and the labouring masses can defeat the armed bourgeoisie and landlords; *in this sense we may say that only with guns can the whole world be transformed.*" ("Problems of War and Strategy," Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, Vol. II, p. 225.)

It is in this context that one can view Mugabe's unyielding demand for the Rhodesian Security Forces to be dismantled and replaced by the PF "army". Writing on war and strategy, Mao said:

"According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the chief component of state power. *Whoever wants to seize and retain state power must have a strong army.*" (Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 225.)

Similarly, Mugabe's "death list" can also be seen in the context of Maoist thought:

"Counter-revolutionaries may be dealt with in these ways: execution, imprisonment, supervision and leaving at large. Execution—everybody knows what that means. By imprisonment we mean putting counter-revolutionaries in jail and reforming them through labour. By supervision we mean leaving them in society to be reformed under the supervision of the masses . . ."

"*Now let's take execution in particular. True, we executed a number of people . . . But what sort of people were they? They were counter-revolutionaries who owed the masses many blood debts and were bitterly hated by them.*" (Mao Tse-Tung—"On the Ten Major Relationships", p. 21, Chapter VIII.)

Mao defined a counter-revolutionary as simply:

"*Whoever sides with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism.*" (Closing speech at the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference—23 June 1950.)

Mugabe's statements give little room for doubt that he considers the leaders of the Transitional Government to be counter-revolutionaries of the first order—their deaths, and the publication of death lists, are therefore ideologically justified.

It can be concluded from a study of captured ZANU (Mugabe) documents, from Mugabe's statements, and from Maoist ideology that—

- (a) in a Zimbabwe under Mugabe's rule, the teachings of Mao will set the political and economic course the country will follow;
- (b) in order to achieve complete power and establish a socialist state, ZANU (Mugabe) can allow no compromise of any description; *independence achieved through peaceful means will preclude the emergence of a socialist state, therefore total power must be obtained through war;*
- (c) indoctrination of civilians will be given priority rating, and in order to protect the embryonic socialist state, *it will be an immediate requirement to eliminate and/or purge elements considered to be "counter-revolutionary" in Maoist terms.*

#### MUGABE'S RUSSIAN CONNECTIONS

It should perhaps be made clear that the Maoist, or Marxist-Leninist, ideology of ZANU (Mugabe) does not automatically imply an alliance between the party and the People's Republic of China. Although such an alliance has been obvious in the past, and a considerable proportion of the party's arms supply has come from the PRC, there are now strong indications that—

- (a) The foreign and internal policies of the PRC are changing and the PRC is no longer interested in actively supporting radical "guerrilla" groups in the Third World.
- (b) That ZANU (Mugabe) has become ideologically disillusioned with Peking since the demise of the "Gang of Four", the radical group led by Mrs. Mao which opposed the present Chinese leadership.
- (c) That Russia has become interested in establishing closer links with Mugabe to counter-balance their influence with ZAPU. Nkomo may well now be suspect in Russian eyes because of his secret meeting with Mr. Ian Smith in August, 1978.

Mugabe has sought, and gained, support in Cuba and Ethiopia, and has recently been visiting Rumania and Yugoslavia. Although these latter two countries can hardly be described as strict Soviet "clients", it may only be a matter of time before Mugabe gains active Russian political encouragement along the same lines as that which has been given to Nkomo.

This does not necessarily alter Mugabe's commitment to a Maoist-type ideology, but would rather seem to indicate a degree of pragmatism on Mugabe's part in seeking support, and arms, from a powerful and reliable source, and on Russia's part in ensuring that, *vis-à-vis* the Patriotic Front, their eggs are not all in the ZAPU basket.

### PART III

#### THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IN COMPARISON TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT

Perhaps the most striking comparison between the Patriotic Front and the Transitional Government is in their respective attitudes towards the all-party conference—intransigence, threats of violence and extremist rhetoric as opposed to reasonableness and a willingness to talk to the other side despite the obvious hostility and difficulties.

It is also possible to look at the achievements of the Transitional Government in recent months, and perhaps its failures as well, and compare them with the achievements of the Patriotic Front.

The Transitional Government has had its setbacks, particularly with regard to the necessity of proscribing ZAPU and ZANU (Mugabe) within Rhodesia, and with regard to the delay in the election—now put off until 20 April 1979. The delay, however, does not alter the principle that the Rhodesian Government has accepted the necessity and desirability of introducing a Constitution based upon universal suffrage. A new timetable leading to the introduction of this Constitution and the establishment of a black Government has been announced, and all four parties to the Transitional Government have expressed their determination to make this timetable succeed.

Although the security situation remains undeniably serious, and it has been necessary to introduce martial law in large areas of the country, some 2 000 former terrorists are now serving the Transitional Government as auxiliary forces, indicating a considerable degree of success in the Government's ceasefire programme. In addition, it is anticipated that this number will swell further as majority rule approaches and more and more terrorists come to realize that what they have been fighting has been achieved, and that to continue fighting will serve only personal and ideological ambitions.

On the domestic front, *the Transitional Government announced on 10 October 1978, that all remaining racial discrimination would finally be removed.* This announcement was made with particular reference to urban land, state-run education facilities and state-run health services.

It cannot be denied that the Transitional Government has had its setbacks. The postponement of the date for majority rule has been a blow to the Government's credibility in some quarters, and has certainly bitterly disappointed at least one party to the Government. The continuing security situation has also made necessary certain actions which conflict with the ideals of democracy and freedom contained in the Salisbury Agreement of 3 March 1978. This however, is more than balanced by the fact that *a coalition government has been formed in Rhodesia, of parties with widely diverging principles and interests, and it has survived despite all the pressures, both internal and external, which it has had to face. This, in itself, can be seen as an achievement of some degree.*

With regard to the Patriotic Front, all that can be said to its credit is that it too has survived as an alliance although in a fragile form and undoubtedly only under pressure by the "front-line" Presidents. The attitudes of ZANU (Mugabe) towards the continuing existence of the Patriotic Front have been made clear in documents captured by Rhodesian security forces at terrorist bases. One such ZANU (Mugabe) document, entitled "The Patriotic Front", states that:

"The Patriotic Front is a 'marriage of convenience' because the OAU insists on 'unity before aid'. We are prepared to tow (sic) the line and enter into a 'mock unity' if its the only way for us to obtain material aid, funds and logistic supplies. Here the word 'mock unity' is used because both ZANU and ZAPU are well aware that there is no real unity between the two parties . . .

"*The word Patriotic Front is a useful weapon in the diplomatic circles and ceases to exist once a fighter crosses the border into Zimbabwe.*"

(This subject is covered in detail in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Information Section's Fact Paper 3/78—"Unity within the Patriotic Front".)

On the military side the Patriotic Front, despite extravagant claims to the contrary, has still to display any sign of military superiority, or to achieve any military victory, however insignificant. Again despite extravagant claims to the contrary, the Patriotic Front has remained unable to establish permanent control of any parts of Rhodesia, in the sense of establishing a permanent administrative infrastructure.

*The achievements of the Patriotic Front, if such they can be described, remain in the sphere of shooting down a civilian air-liner, maiming and murdering civilians, murdering missionaries and spreading chaos and anarchy where formerly there was peace.*

Ideologically, the Transitional Government and the Patriotic Front offer alternatives of Western-orientated capitalism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a combination of little coherent ideology on the part of ZAPU and Marxism-Leninism on the part of ZANU (Mugabe).

#### PART IV

##### CONCLUSION

In its resolution of 11 August 1978, the U.S. Congress laid down two conditions which the Transitional Government must fulfil in order to gain the lifting of sanctions and recognition—

- (a) it must demonstrate its willingness to negotiate in good faith at an all-parties conference held under international auspices on all relevant issues;
- (b) a Government must have been installed by free elections in which all political and population groups have been allowed to participate freely, with observation by impartial observers.

The initiative in setting-up an all-party conference lies firmly with the British and American Governments. Should they fail, yet again, with this initiative, through their apparent policy of granting the Patriotic Front a veto, then the Transitional Government will remain determined to proceed with the full implementation of the Salisbury Agreement, fulfilling the second condition laid down by the U.S. Congress and seeking the lifting of sanctions and recognition.

In its statement issued on 21 November 1978, the Executive Council said:

“Once again we call on the United States and British Governments to re-think their policy on Rhodesia and to abandon the veto they have for so long accorded to the Patriotic Front.

“They should now lend their moral support, if nothing else, to the democratic solution based on universal suffrage which we are putting into effect.

*“In saying this we stress yet again that everybody who is prepared to participate in peace will be welcome to take part in free and fair elections. We are excluding nobody. Furthermore, as we have repeatedly said, we will welcome international observers to satisfy themselves that the elections are free and fair to all.”*

30 November 1978.

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