Not had been some switched to some switc In my letter of 5 August, I warned that, once the verdict had been announced, we might need to submit urgently a recommendation that the Prime Minister should send a message to Mr Mugabe. The verdict is now expected on 31 August. No new light has been shed on the likely outcome. The most probable is that some, perhaps all, will be acquitted and that some of these will be redetained, at least temporarily. Some or all may be asked to leave Zimbabwe. As part of our contingency planning we have prepared two possible alternative texts for a message from the Prime Minister. I enclose these together with an explanatory note. We shall probably have to amend them to take account of the verdict and subsequent developments. However it would be helpful to have an initial view on whether the drafts are on the right lines, before 31 August if at all possible. I should perhaps make clear that Mr Rifkind has seen these drafts but Sir Geoffrey Howe has not done so yet. Your eve (J E Holmes) Private Secretary Tim Flesher Esq 10 Downing Street

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CAVEAT	
7,715	

Enclosures—flag(s).....

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note TYPE: Draft/Final 1+ FROM: Reference Prime Minister DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO: TO: Your Reference

Mr Mugabe

Copies to:

SUBJECT:

- i) All acquitted: All or some redetained or
- ii) Some acquitted and redetained: satisfactory ruling on torture, light sentences on those found guilty

When I had the pleasure of meeting you here in June we discussed among other things the question of the trial of those accused of involvement with the sabotage of Zimbabwe Air Force aircraft at Thornhill Air Base in July last year. I remember well that you told me you would have to consider all the evidence available to you before agreeing to the release of the accused as you believed it would be wrong to set free anyone who had had a role in the sabotage. You also told me that Zimbabwe did not detail people arbitrarily and that the accused would be treated as fairly as possible. I know, therefore, that you must be thinking carefully about what you should now do.

It goes without saying that the trial, verdict and subsequent developments are entirely a matter for Zimbabwe - and when we spoke of this matter in June we did so on a

personal and informal basis. It is in the same spirit that

/I raise

I raise the subject with you again. Particularly since a number of the defendants hold British (in addition to Zimbabwean) nationality, the trial has attracted considerable public interest in Britain. We have noted with approval the scrupulously fair way in which the trial was conducted and the highest standards of the Commonwealth system of justice maintained. However I feel I must ask you to bear in mind the damage that a prolonged redetention of [some of] these men will do to Zimbabwe's justifiably high reputation in this field. I fear that this might have quite disproportionate consequences, in other countries as well as here.

May I therefore, for the sake of our shared interests, which I believe are profound, express the hope that after considering all the implications you will feel able to release those presently in detention.

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DSR 11 (Revised)	DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note	TYPE: Draft/Final 1+
	FROM:	Reference
	Prime Minister	
	DEPARTMENT: TEL. NO:	
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	то:	Your Reference
Top Secret	Mr Mugabe	
Secret Confidential		Copies to:
Restricted		
Unclassified		
PRIVACY MARKING	SUBJECT:	
In Confidence	Some acquitted and redetained: Heavy sentences on those	
CAVEAT	found guilty	
	When I had the pleasure of meeting you here in June we discussed among other things the question of the trial of those accused of involvement with the sabotage of Zimbabwe Air Force aircraft at Thornhill Air Base in July last year. I remember you told me that you would have to consider all the evidence available to you before reaching a final decision, and that the accused	
	would be treated as fairly as possible. I know therefore	
	that you must be thinking carefully about what you should	
	now do.	
	It goes without saying that the trial, verdict and	
	subsequent developments are entirely a	matter for
	Zimbabwe - and when we spoke of this m	natter in June
Enclosures—flag(s)	we did so on a personal and informal b	easis. It is in
	the same spirit that I raise the subject with you again.	

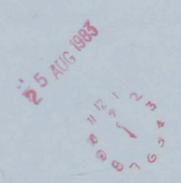
British (in addition to Zimbabwean) nationality, the /trial

Particularly since a number of the defendants hold

relations,

trial has attracted considerable public interest in Britain. I do not question the impartiality of the trial hearings. However I feel I must ask you to bear in mind the damage that could be inflicted on Zimbabwe's justifiably high reputation in this field should matters be left as they are now. I fear that this might have quite disproportionate consequences, in other countries as well as here.

It would be wrong for me to comment further on the sentence(s) at this stage. However, for the sake of our shared interests, which I believe are profound, may I express the hope that after considering all the implications you will feel able to exercise clemency and as a first step agree to the early release of those who have been acquitted and redetained.



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FIE SH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 August, 1983

Thank you for your letter of 25 August with which you enclosed draft messages for the Prime Minister to send to the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in the light of the possible outcomes of the air force officers' trial. As you know, the Prime Minister spoke to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary about these messages at the weekend but, for the records, the Prime Minister felt that the messages were not quite right. She thought that the points were in the wrong order and that our representations were not quite strong enough. Mrs. Thatcher would like the messages to make the point that the redetention of the officers would not only damage Zimbabwe but would also be a miscarriage of justice.

TIMOTHY FLESHER

John Holmes, Esq., Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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