

SUBJECT

cc Mervin  
Ops

T message

GRS 170  
CONFIDENTIAL  
DESKBY 010630Z  
FM F C O 312050Z AUG 83  
TO IMMEDIATE HARARE  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 428 OF 31 AUGUST  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. 123A/83

MIPT

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER TO  
MUGABE  
BEGINS

I HAVE HEARD THAT THE ~~RAF~~ OFFICERS ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT  
WITH THE SABOTAGE OF ZIMBABWE AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT AT THORNHILL  
AIR BASE HAVE BEEN ACQUITTED BY THE COURT. WHEN WE MET IN  
JUNE WE DISCUSSED THIS MATTER ON AN ENTIRELY PERSONAL AND  
CONFIDENTIAL BASIS. BECAUSE A NUMBER OF THE DEFENDANTS HOLD  
JOINT BRITISH AND ZIMBABWEAN NATIONALITY WE HAVE A SPECIAL  
INTEREST IN THEIR FATE. I RECOGNISE THAT THE DECISION ABOUT  
WHAT SHOULD NOW BE DONE IS ONE FOR YOU ALONE, BUT I URGE YOU,  
IN THE INTERESTS OF ZIMBABWE'S REPUTATION FOR UPHOLDING THE  
PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE THAT THE VERDICT OF THE COURT SHOULD BE  
ACCEPTED AND THAT THE OFFICERS SHOULD NOW BE RELEASED. ANY  
OTHER COURSE WOULD NOT ONLY HARM THE REPUTATION OF ZIMBABWE  
BUT COULD HAVE VERY DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES  
AND FOR THE IDEALS WHICH I BELIEVE WE BOTH SHARE.  
ENDS

HOWE

LIMITED

CAFD

NEWS

ECD (E)

EAD

WAD

NAD

RID

SAFD

LEGAL ADVISERS (MR. ANDERSON)

PUSD

PS

PS/PUS

PS/MR RIFKIND

SIR J BULLARD

SIR J LEAHY

MR SQUIRE

COPIES SENT TO  
No. 10 DOWNING STREET

CONFIDENTIAL

(031) 225 2433  
Rev. SOZ

to Mr. Mugabe  
Message approved by the  
Prime Minister

31.8

I HAVE HEARD THAT THE ~~RAF~~<sup>AIR FORCE</sup> OFFICERS ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SABOTAGE OF ZIMBABWE AIRFORCE AIRCRAFT AT THORNHILL AIRBASE HAVE BEEN ACQUITTED BY THE COURT. WHEN WE MET IN JUNE WE DISCUSSED THIS MATTER ON AN ENTIRELY PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL BASIS. BECAUSE A NUMBER OF THE DEFENDANTS HOLD JOINT BRITISH AND ZIMBABWEAN NATIONALITY WE HAVE A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THEIR FATE. I RECOGNISE THAT THE DECISION ABOUT WHAT SHOULD NOW BE DONE IS ONE FOR YOU ALONE, BUT I URGE YOU, IN THE INTERESTS OF ZIMBABWE'S REPUTATION FOR UPHOLDING THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, THAT THE VERDICT OF THE COURT SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AND THAT THE OFFICERS SHOULD NOW BE RELEASED. ANY OTHER COURSE WOULD NOT ONLY HARM THE REPUTATION OF ZIMBABWE BUT COULD HAVE VERY DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND FOR THE IDEALS WHICH I BELIEVE WE BOTH SHARE.

P/A

CONFIDENTIAL

14964 - 1

DD 010630Z HARARE  
GRS 124  
CONFIDENTIAL  
DESKBY 010630Z  
FM FCO 312045Z AUG 83  
TO IMMEDIATE HARARE  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 427 OF 31 AUGUST  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

YOUR TELNO 727: AFZ TRIAL

1. MIFT CONTAINS THE TEXT OF A MESSAGE TO MUGABE APPROVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER.
2. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ZIMBABWEANS MAY DRAW THE WRONG CONCLUSIONS IF WE DO NOT MAKE REPRESENTATIONS PROMPTLY. UNLESS THERE ARE MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS OVERNIGHT WHICH DICTATE A RE-THINK, YOU SHOULD DELIVER THE MESSAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF THERE IS UNDUE DELAY IN OBTAINING A CALL ON MUGABE YOU SHOULD SEEK ANOTHER CHANNEL.
3. AS SOON AS YOU CONFIRM DELIVERY MR RIFKIND WILL SUMMON THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER AND GIVE HIM A COPY.
4. FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION, WE MAY HAVE TO ANNOUNCE SOON THAT A MESSAGE HAS BEEN SENT.

HOWE

COPIES SENT TO  
No. 10 DOWNING STREET

NNNN

DISTRIBUTION

LIMITED

CAFD

NEWS

ECD (E)

EAD

WAD

NAD

RID

SAFD

LEGAL ADVS (MR. ANDERSON)

PUSD

PS

PS/PUS

PS/MR. RIFKIND

SIR J. BULLARD

SIR J. LEAHY

MR. SQUIRE

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*Note for file*  
*Prime Minister was not content*  
*with attached message and*  
*a shorter message was sent*  
*instead.*

*Stop*  
*5/18/83*

31 August 1983

*Dear Tim,*

Zimbabwe: Air Force Officers' Trial

Thank you for your letter of 30 August about the trial of the Air Force officers in Zimbabwe.

We have now heard the outcome of the trial. Judge Dumbutshena ruled that the statements by the accused were inadmissible and the proceedings to confirm them invalid; and he found all the accused not guilty. They were then all served with detention orders under Section 17 of the Emergency Powers Regulations.

We do not have any indication of Mugabe's thinking. Redention may, at least at this stage, be of a temporary nature while Mugabe reaches a final decision.

I attach a draft message which the Prime Minister may wish to send to Mugabe. We have attempted to reflect the guidance in your letter of 30 August. As soon as it has been despatched to Harare, the Zimbabwean Acting High Commissioner will be asked to call on Mr Rifkind to be given a copy.

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

Tim Flesher Esq  
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

DSP-11 (Revised)

**DRAFT:** minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

**TYPE:** Draft/Final 1+

**FROM:**

Reference

Prime Minister

**DEPARTMENT:**

**TEL. NO:**

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

**TO:**

Your Reference

Top Secret

Mr Mugabe

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

**SUBJECT:**

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

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 detain 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 do now.

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 the subject with you again.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

/Particularly

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 admiration the scrupulously fair way in which the trial was conducted. <sup>I have however been very concerned</sup> ~~Should its outcome not be allowed to stand,~~ <sup>to learn of the subsequent re-detention of the men</sup> ~~I believe that this would be seen as a set-back for those~~ <sup>I believe that should any of these</sup> ~~principles of justice and the rule of law to which I~~ <sup>in detention, this would be seen</sup> know you attach so much importance. Zimbabwe's high reputation in this area would suffer. 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.

*only  
A sure  
sig death  
m.*

*Considering whether right  
to hold back until know  
what happens. HC trusts*

*There is  
a message  
from my  
cousin  
- prefer  
detention asap.*

*So — indirect via  
Americans — rapid diplomatic  
action*