



JESSE HELMS
UNITED STATES SENATE
September 12, 1979

Dear Mrs. Thatcher:

Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your handling of the Commonwealth Conference, and the securing of the accession of the Front Lines states to the Constitutional Conference now in progress. When we spoke in July, I did not think that it would be possible to get their consent; but the spectre of bankruptcy and famine that now stalks their lands has apparently added its persuasive arguments to yours.

Yet I remain deeply concerned that the pressures on the Muzorewa government might become too great for the frail structure of Rhodesian morale to bear. My assistants, Dr. James Lucier and Mr. John Carbaugh, have just returned from Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. They reported to me that the Rhodesians are prepared to carry on indefinitely if they get the helping hand of recognition or even of allowing sanctions to die; but if one more rebuff -- even one more indefinite delay -- should be the outcome of the London meeting, then there will be a dangerous erosion of the key decision-making citizens in the white community. The expertise in Rhodesia is assembled in a relatively small group; and if that group gives up, then the whole social structure, black and white, will disintegrate.

In mid-August, I took the lead in the House-Senate Conference on the State Department authorization bill to have the

deadline of the Rhodesian sanctions amendment extended from October 15 to November 15. I did this as a result of my conversations with you and President Carter in order to give the British Government time to secure a consensus for the lifting of sanctions. But if the lifting of sanctions is delayed beyond that date for any reason, the consequences will be disastrous not only for Rhodesia, but for all of southern Africa.

The Foreign Minister of South Africa, Mr. R.W. Botha, has sent me a most disturbing personal message via my assistants -- a message too sensitive to put on paper -- which absolutely convinces me that any further delay is fatal to the survival of Rhodesian democracy, and indeed, of all the western democracies. I hope that it is possible that you could find a very few minutes for my assistants to transmit this message directly to you in person.

Next week, the House and Senate will be considering a second Rhodesian sanctions amendment, which I cosponsored with Senator Harry Byrd, calling for the immediate lifting of sanctions without Presidential option. I have a favorable report of votes in the conference committee which strongly suggests this provision will become law by October 1. At the very minimum, the conference is sure to provide for the lifting of sanctions on strategic materials. Once the finger is pulled out of the dyke even to that extent, the whole edifice of sanctions will come falling down. It is therefore urgent that the Constitutional conference extend some hope to the Muzorewa government immediately, without alienating the white community. Only a decisive move by the West to support the government will

stop the killing.

Sincerely,

Jesse Helms

The Right Honorable Margaret Thatcher
House of Commons
Westminster
London SW1, England

I remain very proud of you!