



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Dean Charles,

Commonwealth Secretary Generalship, and Mr Hawke's Visit

As you know, after the last round of Nigerian lobbying on behalf of Chief Anyaoku, we undertook a survey of intentions in Commonwealth capitals on the Ramphal succession. Our primary objective was to identify "firm commitments". The picture of intentions that emerged was that less than half of the Commonwealth described its position as firmly committed to either Anyaoku or Fraser: these commitments were almost equally divided. Significantly more Commonwealth countries, however, showed a willingness to support Fraser than Anyaoku at this stage.

In response to an expression of concern about the risk of a deadlock, there was very little visible support for a continuation by Ramphal. Ten member countries were strongly opposed to any extension, and there was certainly no evidence, in spite of reports about Mr Manley's activities on his behalf, of any emergence of a Caribbean or Canadian move to draft him.

Our tentative conclusions are:

- both the Nigerians and the Australians are overstating the support for their candidates;
- the African group (with the exception of Zambia) tend to support Anyaoku and do not favour a Ramphal extension;
- the Caribbean group, while showing more support for Fraser, are (with the exception of Manley) strongly opposed to a further term for Ramphal.

All this suggests that, if our primary aim remains to stop Malcolm Fraser (as we think it should be), then the best hope at present of achieving that goal is for Anyaoku to run more strongly. It is still possible that Anyaoku can overtake Fraser now that the Nigerians have started to promote his candidature. It does not look as if a Ramphal compromise candidature will run seriously at this stage.

The Australians are well aware of our doubts about Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke may not try very hard to convert us. But the Foreign Secretary advises against showing too

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much of our own hand. It may be sufficient to say that:

- we have taken no decision;
- we want effective management of the Commonwealth and the Secretariat;
- we are keen to avoid a stalemate, leading to a split at Kuala Lumpur.

Yours,
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