

# Todd: Britain must act

Garfield Todd tells James Fox of his fears for Rhodesia

GARFIELD TODD, former prime minister of Southern Rhodesia, said yesterday that the Rhodesia talks in Geneva will "disintegrate" in the coming week unless Britain assumes the powers to choose and set up an interim government by itself. He described the position of the conference chairman, Ivor Richard, as "hopeless" for dealing with this next stage of the negotiations, due to start tomorrow, and urged Britain to appoint a Minister for Rhodesia to impose its will on the conference.

The make-up and powers of the interim government is at present a matter for negotiation between the five parties at the talks. The Kissinger plan aims to set up a two-tier system comprising a Council of State and a Council of Ministers with an African majority in which the defence and law-and-order portfolios remain in the hands of whites. This is one major obstacle. In addition, the method of electing these bodies and the power each side would have in the interim government will undoubtedly lead to

bitter wrangling. American officials privately admit that the US over-estimated the degree of commitment on both sides to the Kissinger plan.

Todd said that, if Britain allowed the talks to deadlock again (as happened over the target date for independence), there would be a conference breakdown, a widening of the guerrilla war and an eventual military takeover in Rhodesia.

Todd, who came to London on Friday from Geneva, where he is an adviser to Joshua Nkomo's delegation in the Patriotic Front, said: "When I think of the problems that are going to come up, and the natural rivalry between the various groups, and a chairman with no power trying to straighten it out, it is just hopeless. And it all stems from the Kissinger document for which Britain accepts responsibility, because it called a conference using the document as the basis for negotiation, and this has made it impossible. The Kissinger document is so bad it looks as if it's been done hurriedly on the back of an

envelope with a blunt pencil. It raises a mass of new questions."

The African nationalists, he said, were criticised for not getting on with the work, but the plan was unworkable. "But something's got to work. It will have to be approached from a different angle. If Geneva is not a success, it will be the finish for the whites in Rhodesia.

"We had our 4,000 days of the [Central African] Federation. Now we've got our 4,000 days of UDI. But towards the end of the Federation, Britain thought the situation serious and important enough to give us Rab Butler as minister in charge of the Central African Office, and that was his only job. We should have a Minister for Rhodesia, going flat out, consulting with Vorster, Kissinger, the five 'front-line' presidents and the people at Geneva, and determining what role Britain should play. It might be a good idea to say what they mean by 'majority rule,' and whether they agree this means one-man, one-vote. We haven't even started discussing this yet."