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Harold Wilson, Television Broadcast, 11 November 1965, in Harold Wilson, <i>Purpose in Power, Selected Speeches</i> , London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.	Code Sujet	CCV
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Every Minister with whom the Rhodesians have had to deal in these past three years, our predecessors, and we ourselves, have warned Mr Smith and his colleagues that independence, illegally taken, would be an act of revolt against the Crown. And we have warned them against the consequences that would follow.

5 Within minutes of Mr Smith's intentions being known, the Governor of Rhodesia, a distinguished Rhodesian himself, under the authority vested in him by Her Majesty the Queen, dismissed Mr Smith and his other Ministers from office. They now have no authority to act, internally or externally, in the name of the Rhodesian people. And tonight, all over the world, Governments are announcing their refusal to recognise this illegal Rhodesian regime or to have any dealings with it.

10 I described this action this afternoon as a tragedy and the whole House of Commons agreed. And what saddens me is that this action was so unnecessary. The Rhodesian people have been deceived into thinking that there was no alternative between this illegal society and being ruled by an unprepared African majority tomorrow. When I was in Salisbury I told them this simply was not true; there were alternatives and I told them what they were.

15 At six o'clock this morning agreement was within our grasp, but they would not have it. I do not know what the dark consequences of this action will be. The Foreign Secretary has flown to New York this evening to represent Britain in the discussions which must follow at the United Nations. None of us will underrate the difficulties he faces. Passions have been raised, not only by this action, but by all that went before, and we shall need the wisest counsels to ensure that those measures are taken,  
20 and only those measures are taken, which can best bring about a peaceful return to the rule of law and to democratic development in Rhodesia.

The measures we ourselves have had to take have not been taken in any punitive sense, not in any spirit of resentment or bitterness over the course of events of the past few months, but because we cannot have dealing with an illegal Government; because this country stands and has always stood  
25 for something in the world; for legality and the rule of law; for democracy and the rights of the individual.

One of the most ominous developments in the few days that preceded this illegal action, and in the repressive actions taken even since this morning, has been the progressive creation of a police State, the suppression of news, censorship of Rhodesia's free press, and the sickeningly familiar apparatus  
30 and attitudes of authoritarian rule.

In Parliament today I announced the first measures that must necessarily follow this illegal use of power. By a series of Orders signed today, Rhodesia loses the privileges that she had enjoyed as a member of the Commonwealth and the Sterling Area; the financial privileges of being linked with the London capital market in the Sterling Area; Commonwealth preference. And a whole series of wider  
35 economic measures have been taken.

But one thing I want to make clear. This has been asserted in the House of Commons today, and next week we shall ask Parliament to agree to a statutory declaration emphasising this, that come what may Britain will not give up her responsibilities for Rhodesia. Whatever may have happened today, they, like ourselves, are subjects of the Queen. They are rightly proud of their wartime contribution –  
40 nine thousand Europeans, fifteen thousand Africans took up arms to fight against the Nazi tyranny. It is a terrible commentary that men with a heroic record, proclaimed throughout the free world, are now in the process of destroying, in their own country, the very values they fought for.

The world has taken a step backwards today, by the action of a group of small and frightened men. And it is now our task, without rancour, to take those measures which will bring the Rhodesian  
45 people back from this dangerous path into which they have been led.

When I was in Rhodesia, I pleaded for time. Time, I told them, was more precious to Rhodesia than all their gold and all their emeralds, and, heaven knows, I have fought to enable time to work its healing process. But now we have to create the conditions in which we can begin again, in vastly more difficult circumstances, to restore the rule of law; painfully to build up the conditions in which  
50 the distrust and bitterness and racial conflict of these past years and all that is going to come in the months that follow – to see that all these things will give place, as rapidly as possible, to trust and racial co-operation.

At this anxious time, I hope that no one in Rhodesia will feel that Britain has forgotten them, or that we are prepared to yield up the trusteeship which is ours; trusteeship for the welfare of all the  
55 peoples of Rhodesia. Well, whatever the cost to us, we shall honour that trusteeship, until we can bring the people of Rhodesia under God, once again, back to their true allegiance, back to the rule of law, and forward to their true destiny in the family of nations.