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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 March 1981

~~Prime Minister~~

A comment on Mr Ginsburg's letter (attached). We have read Mr Ginsburg's letter & he is not expecting a further reply.

Phd 2/3

Phd

Dear Michael,

Broadcasts in French to Canada

Thank you for your letter of 20 February in which you asked for comment on the suggestion made by a correspondent to the Prime Minister that we should be letting French listeners in Canada receive an account of British views on the patriation problem.

It is indeed the case that there are no BBC broadcasts in French directed to Canada. As you will know from my letter to Mike Pattison (copy attached) we are at the moment involved in trying to persuade the BBC to cut their vernacular services. It would thus look odd for us to suggest now to the BBC that they initiate an entirely new service in French to a limited audience in French-speaking Canada to cope with an immediate problem, ie getting our views across on patriation. It takes time to get new listeners to a new service, and by the time such a service gained a worthwhile audience, the immediate political need would probably have disappeared. The Federal Government might also consider the service's appearance as smacking of interference in their affairs.

For these reasons, therefore, we consider the suggestion made by the Prime Minister's correspondent to be a non-starter.

*Handwritten signature*

(G G H Walden)

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1A 2AH

5 February 1981



Dear Mike,

BBC External Services to Francophone Africa

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 2 February to John Halliday enclosing copies of Mr Howard's letter of 16 January to the Prime Minister and its enclosures.

Mr Ridley is holding regular discussions with the Managing Director of the BBC External Services, Douglas Muggerridge, on how to apply their reduced resources to priority areas. One of the economies we have discussed is stopping French language broadcasts to France. But we have not asked for any cuts in the separate French service to Francophone Africa, which we genuinely value. There has also been some general discussion about a relay station in Hong Kong mentioned in paragraph 1 of Mr Howard's note.

The talks are at a delicate stage; and we are likely to be suggesting discussion of the matter by Ministers before too long, and before any decisions are reached. In the circumstances we do not think that the Prime Minister should send Mr Howard more than a simple acknowledgement. Incidentally, you may like to know that Mr Howard will be visiting Peru and Brazil from 6-17 February.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office).

*[Handwritten signature]*

(G G H Walden)  
Private Secretary

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REGISTRY  
Action Taken

M A Pattison Esq  
Street