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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

28 March 1980

NRPA

Handwritten signature
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The Rt. Hon. The Lord Carrington KCMG, MC.

Dear Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary,

MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZIMBABWE

Thank you for your minute of 26th March.

I have considered your proposal very carefully, but I am afraid it will not run. Pre-payment in one year for largely unspecific purposes in the next is contrary to the fundamental principles of government accounting, viz. that there must be no payment in advance of need, and that expenditure must be entirely consistent with the purposes for which Parliament voted the money. Moreover, your proposal would breach a further principle that shortfall in one year cannot be carried over to augment approved provision in the next.

I accept that MOD practice is to bill in advance for particular individuals accepted for specific courses. But, in this case, we do not know what courses may be set up or how many candidates may be accepted. I think it is stretching the interpretation of Parliament's intentions too far to suggest that monies voted to meet HMG's own costs of implementing the interim arrangements could be used to meet the training expenses of the post-independence government of Zimbabwe.

/ If necessary,

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If necessary, I would be willing to consider this again when the MOD have produced a costed assessment of what might be needed and what they are capable of providing. But, I am bound to say that I shall have to be convinced that you cannot find the necessary funds from within the £7 million now provided for military training assistance in 1980-81.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and Francis Pym.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Hall (Private Secretary)

P.P. GEOFFREY HOWE

[approved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and signed in his absence]

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