



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 March 1980

*Dear Michael,*Rhodesia: Message from General Walls

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary discussed with the Prime Minister yesterday evening the message from General Walls. Lord Carrington recommends that instructions should be sent as soon as possible today for the Governor or Sir A Duff to reply to Walls on the Prime Minister's behalf. The purpose will be to calm and reassure Walls, without giving hostages to fortune about the precise composition of the government, or our own role after the election results are known.

The implied threats in Walls' letter are worrying and no doubt reflect the strong pressure which Walls is under from within the armed forces. But he has played a helpful role over the past week or so both in bringing together the forces of the two sides and in establishing the foundation for a coalition between Mr Nkomo, Bishop Muzorewa and the Whites. He will be aware of the grave consequences of any action to overturn the election results; and it is unlikely that he has any firm assurances of South African support. While the risk of hasty action in the event of a Mugabe landslide undoubtedly exists and there is evidence of contingency plans in the Rhodesian forces to deal with the PF in the assembly places, we have no grounds to think that any action is imminent.

Lord Carrington considers that the Prime Minister's reply should so far as possible seek to reassure Walls and to recognise the vital part he has played in recent days. Clearly he cannot be given any specific commitment about the formation of a government. But provided Mugabe gets less than 40 seats (ie short of a majority of the African seats), the sort of coalition between Nkomo, Muzorewa and the Whites which Walls is seeking to promote would be a perfectly legitimate objective, though it might be possible to take some elements of ZANU(PF) into it. Walls should therefore be reassured that we share the goal of a broad, moderate and stable government which contributes to national unity and reconciliation.

/If Mugabe

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street



SECRET



If Mugabe gets more than 40 seats, the situation will be much more difficult; and it will be hard to avoid a situation in which he does not have a leading role in the government. Walls and the Whites could probably be brought to accept some form of national government, though their suspicion of Mugabe is such that we should have to approach it carefully, emphasising the need for unity and reconciliation after the elections and for a broadly based government which reflected all viewpoints in the country.

If Mugabe wins an absolute majority, then our aim will again have to be a national government in which all parties are represented, and Mugabe's influence thus diluted. It will be very difficult to bring the Whites to accept such a government in which Mugabe would inevitably have a very prominent role, and the risks of a White reaction would be strongest in these circumstances. But it is probably the best outcome we could hope for. Our role in such a case would be difficult. But to reassure the Whites we would have to indicate that we stood ready to help with the problems involved in the transition to independence (though we would not envisage extending the Governor's stay by more than a matter of days and certainly not beyond independence).

/ I enclose a draft telegram of instructions for the Prime Minister's approval.

*Yours ever*  
*Roderic Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

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# OUT TELEGRAM

		Classification and Caveats <b>SECRET</b>	Precedence/Deskby <b>FLASH</b>
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ZCZC  
GRS  
CLASS  
CAVEATS  
DESKBY  
FM FCO  
PRE/ADD  
TEL NO

1	ZCZC
2	GRS
3	SECRET
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6	FM FCO 031400Z
7	TO FLASH SALISBURY
8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
9	
10	MY TELNO : RHODESIA: MESSAGE FROM GENERAL WALLS
11	1. The Prime Minister does not intend to reply to Walls'
12	message in writing, but would be grateful if you or Sir A Duff
13	could speak to Walls on the following lines, making clear that
14	you are doing so on her personal instructions. (In the light
15	of some of the comments in Walls' message, you may prefer to
16	ask Sir A Duff to do so).
17	2. The Prime Minister was glad that Walls felt able to get in
18	touch with her personally to explain his concerns. She fully
19	understands what a difficult time this is and in particular
20	the uncertainty and tension which inevitably exists between
21	the elections and the declaration of results. She has greatly
22	admired the lead taken by walls in bringing together the forces
23	of the two sides and in encouraging co-operation between Nkomo,
24	Muzorewa and the Whites, and these efforts have her full support.
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NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword  /The prospects
File number	Dept Rhodesia Dept	Distribution Files PS PS/LPS PS/Mr Luce PS/PUS Mr Day Head, Rhodesia Dept
Drafted by (Block capitals) C D POWELL		
Telephone number 3466		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	



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 2 The prospects for a peaceful and stable outcome will depend  
 3 upon others being willing to show the same spirit of  
 4 reconciliation. The Prime Minister is very grateful to Walls  
 5 for his outstanding contribution, and hopes that he will  
 6 continue to do his best to keep all the parties calm during  
 7 the difficult period ahead.  
 8 3. It should be made clear to Walls that the Prime Minister  
 9 regards his criticisms of you as entirely unjustified. The  
 10 RSF have been deployed fully throughout the interim period and  
 11 in a way which has enabled them to maintain full control over  
 12 the military situation. No attempt has been made to interfere  
 13 with the NJOC's military judgment. The admission of observers  
 14 to the elections was agreed at Lancaster House. It is also  
 15 vital to securing international acceptance for Rhodesia.  
 16 4. You should leave Walls in no doubt that, in the light of  
 17 the reports from our own supervisors and observers (as well as  
 18 international groups, the Prime Minister does not share his  
 19 view that massive intimidation has frustrated the free choice  
 20 of the people (although she realises that there has been some  
 21 intimidation). There are no grounds, in the Prime Minister's  
 22 view, on which the election could be declared null and void.  
 23 The task now is to make the best of the outcome to ensure a  
 24 stable government.  
 25 5. The composition of the future government must, in the  
 26 Prime Minister's view, reflect the need for unity and  
 27 reconciliation. It remains her objective, as explained to  
 28 Walls during Lancaster House, <sup>the</sup> to see Rhodesia brought to  
 29 independence with as stable and moderate a government as possible  
 30 which fairly reflects the wishes of the people. The Prime  
 31 Minister has heard with interest and approval of the  
 32 discussions which have been taking place between Bishop  
 33 Muzorewa, Mr Nkomo and the Rhodesian Front, with the  
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OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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1 <<<<  
 2 encouragement of the NJOC, and hopes that these can establish  
 3 the foundations for successful collaboration in the post-  
 4 election period. Depending on the election results, it may  
 5 also be necessary to accommodate other parties who are equally  
 6 prepared to commit themselves to the goals of unity and  
 7 reconciliation. The Prime Minister has asked the Governor to  
 8 keep her closely informed of his discussions with the political  
 9 leaders following the announcement of the election results  
 10 and will be in touch further with Walls to consider how our  
 11 common objective of a stable future for Rhodesia can best be  
 12 achieved. We intend to assist in any way we can with the  
 13 problems involved in the transition to independence. In the  
 14 meantime the Prime Minister urges Walls, in the strongest  
 15 terms, to counsel his colleagues to show calm and restraint;  
 16 it is only on that basis that we can work successfully together  
 17 for a government with broad support under which all the people  
 18 of Rhodesia will continue to feel secure in their future.  
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