



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

Lg. [Signature] 2/x

31 October 1979

Dear Brian,

[Signature]

Rhodesia: Constitutional Conference

As you will know, we have now reached a stage in the Rhodesia Constitutional Conference at which we have put forward a full description of the independence constitution which has been accepted by Bishop Muzorewa's delegation and by the Patriotic Front, subject to a satisfactory agreement on the arrangements for bringing it into effect.

Our objective now is to get both delegations to agree, in accordance with the declaration of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Lusaka, that elections should be supervised under our authority. We have indicated that we envisage a brief return to legal dependent status for Rhodesia for the period of the elections. During this period legislative and executive authority would be vested in a British Governor, who would however operate to a very large extent through the existing authorities. I enclose a copy of the paper on the pre-independence arrangements which was circulated to the Conference on 22 October. Bishop Muzorewa indicated acceptance of these proposals on 27 October; the Patriotic Front are still questioning them.

Planning for the appointment of a British Governor is now being carried forward on a contingency basis. The Governor would be assisted by a small British staff, including a Political Adviser and a Police Adviser, candidates for which posts have now been identified and designated.

We have proposed that the Rhodesian security forces will be responsible to the Governor during the interim period. It will be an essential feature of this arrangement to make provision for the Governor to have a British Military Adviser for purposes of liaison with the Rhodesian forces, for the limited period necessary to enable an election campaign to be conducted. (We envisage that this would be no more than two months.) Our provisional conclusions are that a senior officer would be required for the post of Military Adviser. (The Rhodesian commanders, who are of Lieutenant-General rank, will attach importance to his not being senior to them.) The Adviser would need a supporting staff to assist him in carrying out his role; another senior officer would be required to act as Liaison Officer with the Rhodesian National Joint Operations Command (NJOC) and additional officers, perhaps a further 15 to 20, would have to act as liaison officers with the JOCs at local level in Rhodesia. In addition the Military Adviser would require some secretarial and clerical support.

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The general object of these arrangements would not be to interfere with or direct the operations of the Rhodesian security forces, who would be operating within whatever arrangements had been agreed for a ceasefire and who would in any case have agreed to cease to conduct operations outside Rhodesia for the duration of the interim period. But it will be desirable to demonstrate that the Governor has a means of exercising effective liaison with the security forces through his Military Adviser, in the event of a ceasefire and if the Patriotic Front agree to participate in elections under our supervision. In these circumstances, the Military Adviser would also need to maintain contact with the commanders of the Patriotic Front forces in relation to the ceasefire.

We shall be taking the line in the Conference that negotiations on military aspects of the interim cannot usefully start until there is agreement on the political aspects. But if the Patriotic Front continue in the negotiations, we shall need to be ready to demonstrate that we are prepared to make proposals for the inception and maintenance of a ceasefire which, whether or not they satisfy the Patriotic Front, will carry some conviction with wider international opinion and thus help to carry international support with us if we are obliged to bring Rhodesia to independence without Patriotic Front participation. Our consideration of this question so far suggests that some provision, however modest, for impartial monitoring of the ceasefire will be an essential feature of such a plan. I enclose a copy of a paper prepared in this Department which sets out the background to this question in more detail.

As you will see from this paper, General Walls, the Rhodesian Combined Operations Commander, is himself convinced that some provision for a monitoring group (ie in addition to the British Military Adviser and his assistants) will be a necessary feature of credible proposals for a ceasefire. Independently of this, the Australian Prime Minister has also indicated that his government 'would be ready to consider Australian involvement in tasks additional to election observation as part of a joint Commonwealth effort', and we should like to pursue this offer with him. But General Walls would prefer any monitoring group to be under British auspices. The role of such a group would be essentially to observe the way in which the ceasefire was maintained and to report to the Ceasefire Commission. In no circumstances would it conduct peace-keeping operations or intervene between the opposing forces.

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In the light of all these considerations, Lord Carrington would be grateful if Mr Pym would be prepared to authorise the Ministry of Defence to take the following action:-

- (a) to make proposals for the appointment of a Military Adviser and supporting military staff to assist the Governor of Rhodesia during the pre-independence period; and
- (b) to undertake a study of what would be required in order to establish a Monitoring Group, on the lines suggested in the enclosed papers, on the assumption that the Australians and possibly a few other Commonwealth countries not committed to support the Patriotic Front might participate in it.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Alexander (No 10).

*yours ever*  
*Roderic Lyne*

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