



FCS/80/34

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

Rhodesia: Supervision of Elections

1. Your officials will have told you of the request which I have received from Christopher Soames to provide up to 500 men to allow a British presence at polling stations in rural areas during the forthcoming elections in Rhodesia. Because of the incidence of intimidation of voters in rural areas, Christopher has decided that it is essential to have independent observers in the polling stations to ensure against any subsequent allegations of malpractice by election officials. The role is largely presentational, in terms of ensuring the acceptability both in Rhodesia and internationally, of the election results. There is no question of any responsibility for the security of polling stations: this will be the task of the Rhodesian police.
2. The request comes at very short notice, with polling due to start on 25 February and lasting three days. Christopher's recommendation, which I support, is that we should if possible find volunteers from the police for this task. It will need men who are used to responsibility and accustomed to working alone. The conditions in some of the rural areas will mean that they have to live quite rough. Given the short notice, I doubt that we can find sufficient men from any other source. I should be very grateful therefore if you and George Younger could support a request to the Chief Constables to release volunteers for this task. They are likely to be absent for only eight days in all. If you agree, the administrative arrangements can be discussed between officials.
3. If sufficient volunteers do not come forward, we shall have to consider whether the Services can provide a number of NCOs. I

/should be

CONFIDENTIAL

*Analysis report*  
*LB*  
*B/MS*  
*B/Mr Luce*  
*B/As*  
*Mr Byatt*

*Assumed with P.V.*

*H. Andrews 13/2*





I should be grateful if Francis Pym could consider how far he might be able to help. It could also be necessary to send a number of civil servants. My department could no doubt provide some, but we may have to look to the Home Civil Services for volunteers as well. Paul Channon may wish to consider this contingency.

4. I am sending copies of this minute to Francis Pym, George Younger, Paul Channon and Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature consisting of a large, stylized letter 'C' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

12 February 1980





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