

MO 5/6



*fa. Am*

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*Prime Minister*

*ms*

*Am - 21/7*

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

ZIMBABWE: COMMAND OF THE ARMED FORCES

Thank you for your minute of 15th July, which I have discussed this morning with the Chief of the General Staff.

2. I am clear that the appointment of a British officer to succeed General Walls would carry with it considerable risks for us but the dangers which would be posed by some alternative appointments, to the successful integration of the three armies in Zimbabwe, are perhaps even more important. I am content, therefore, that our High Commissioner in Salisbury should indicate to Mr Mugabe our willingness to help. However, it would be crucial to the success of such an appointment that it was acceptable to all the parties concerned in Zimbabwe, and I think we should make our agreement conditional on there being evidence of this.

3. The CGS is confident that a suitable senior British officer could be made available for this appointment, but he would prefer not to offer a particular candidate until he visits Zimbabwe shortly. The question of his exact rank and whether he should be serving or retired still needs careful consideration. I suggest, therefore, that the High Commissioner should put it to Mr Mugabe that the nature of, and terms of reference of, such an appointment should be discussed with General Bramall early next week.

I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister and to the Lord President of the Council.

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Ministry of Defence

21st July 1980

*Both the Foreign Secretary & the Defence Secretary are aware of your mins.*