



MO 5/6

Prime Minister

In the light of this, are you
content with Mr. Heald's proposal
in his earlier minutes (attached)?

A. & L. 8/7

PRIME MINISTER

Presumably agreed - but
hope that B. MATTS' role in
Zimbabwe will soon have a

ZIMBABWE: BRITISH MILITARY ADVISORY AND TRAINING TEAM

extended
date: 11-
in large
extended to
much.
not

Your Private Secretary's letter of 6th July asked what action we should take and what line we should use in public if, following our agreement to train more people from 5 Brigade, the unit committed further excesses.

2. Self-evidently, much would depend on circumstances, not least on whether we were providing any training for individuals from 5 Brigade at the time of the trouble. Another important factor would be the extent to which we judged any further excesses were an act of deliberate policy by the Zimbabwe Government, or at least if the Government appeared to be turning a blind eye to them. But our first reaction, whatever the circumstances, would presumably be to seek to use the additional leverage we should have acquired, with the Zimbabwean Government and military authorities in general and with 5 Brigade in particular, to get the excesses stopped. The Zimbabweans, of course, are not keen to be seen to be bowing to outside pressure; yet the signs are that the weight of international opinion brought to bear earlier this year did have its effect in bringing the troubles in Matabeleland to an end. Indeed, the Zimbabwean decision now to reintegrate 5 Brigade into the rest of the army may well itself owe something to the pressure we and others applied at that time.

3. Our public line would also be influenced by the extent to which a link was being made by the media between BMATT and 5 Brigade. We should no doubt wish to make plain our concern at what was happening.



In response to direct criticism of UK involvement we would need to make clear that operations of units of the Zimbabwean Army was a matter solely for the Zimbabwean Government, and that our involvement had been with training only individual members of the Brigade. We could also point out that the unit training of the Brigade had been carried out by the North Koreans, a circumstance which distinguished 5 Brigade from the rest of the Zimbabwean Army.

✓ 4. Such a line would not, of course, be entirely without embarrassment to us. But I feel that the slight risks of becoming involved with 5 Brigade training are decisively outweighed by the advantages summarised in my minute of 5th July, not least the opportunity to improve the Brigade's command and control arrangements. As you know it was the breakdown of discipline which largely resulted in the excesses earlier this year. A refusal to respond to this Zimbabwean request for help would also carry the risk that they would turn again to the North Koreans or other undesirable sources for assistance.

5. I am copying this to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

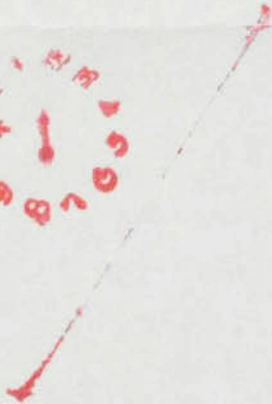
WMA

Ministry of Defence
8th July 1983



28 JUL 1988

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 July 1983

Zimbabwe: British Military Advisory and
Training Team

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 8 July describing the action we should take and the line we should use in public if, following our agreement to train more people from 5 Brigade, the unit committed further excesses.

In the light of Mr. Heseltine's comments the Prime Minister has agreed, with some reluctance, that BMATT's role should be modified as proposed in paragraph 2 of your Secretary of State's minute of 5 July and that BMATT should train more 5 Brigade personnel as proposed in paragraph 3 of that minute. But Mrs. Thatcher has commented that she hopes that BMATT's role in Zimbabwe will soon have a terminal date. She feels that its role is being extended too far. Mrs. Thatcher has no doubt that if, 5 Brigade committed further excesses, the media would make a link with the training given to the Brigade by BMATT and that this would cause embarrassment to HMG.

I am copying this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Richard Mottram Esq
Ministry of Defence.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 July 1983

*See my letter of 6 July
to Rod.
N. B. P. R.*

A.S.C. 11-7

Dear John,

Zimbabwe: British Military Advisory and Training
Team

In your letter to Richard Mottram of 6 July you record the Prime Minister's wish for comments on what action we should take and what line we should use in public following our agreement to train more people from 5 Brigade should this unit commit further excesses.

Sir Geoffrey Howe agrees with Mr Heseltine's reply of 8 July. He thinks that we should take particular care to ensure that in any one course the number of participants from other brigades is sufficient to allow us to demonstrate that the course is drawn from the Army as a whole. He also thinks it important, as the Secretary of State for Defence noted in his minute of 5 July, that we should continue to watch the situation closely to ensure that this condition is strictly adhered to.

If there are further excesses, Sir Geoffrey Howe thinks that our public line should bring out very clearly:

- that the training for 5 Brigade, like that for other units in the Zimbabwe National Army, was provided in response to a specific request from the Zimbabwe authorities themselves, and following their decision that members of 5 Brigade should attend all Army courses as part of a plan to integrate them with the rest of the Army in order to improve discipline in the Brigade;
- that only individuals from the Brigade (not the Brigade as a unit) took part in the courses, and that the courses were made up of participants drawn from the Army as a whole;

/that our


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- that our primary intention in responding to the Zimbabwean request had been to do our best to ensure that the chances of further brutality in Matabeleland were reduced to the minimum.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,


(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Relativum, Pt 3

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 July, 1983

Zimbabwe: British Military Advisory and Training Team

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 5 July in which Mr. Heseltine seeks Mrs. Thatcher's agreement to a modification of BMATT's role and to the proposal that BMATT should train more personnel from 5 Brigade.

The Prime Minister has asked what action we should take and what line we should use in public if, following our agreement to train more people from 5 Brigade, this unit committed further excesses.

She would be grateful for comments from your Secretary of State on this point.

I am copying this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

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