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Defence.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-938XXXX 218 2111/3

MO 26/11/5

31st July 1980

John Paul,

AV8B

for Paul, 1/8

/ I attach a letter from my Secretary of State to
Dr Harold Brown, the United States Secretary of Defense.
I should be grateful if I could take you up on your offer
to send the letter to our Embassy in Washington. I should
also be grateful if you could arrange for it to be
telegraphed ahead today, so that HM Ambassador in Washington
can present it, as I believe he had suggested, to Dr Brown.
// I enclose two copies of the letter, one for your records
and one for HM Ambassador Washington.

I am copying this letter, with one copy of my
Secretary of State's letter to Michael Alexander (No 10),
the Private Secretaries to other members of OD, Ian Ellison
(Industry) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

John Paul
John Paul

(J D S DAWSON)

P Lever Esq
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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

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31st July 1980

Dear Harold,

Earlier this year we exchanged letters about the AV8B Harrier and I undertook to let you know the outcome of our further studies as soon as possible. I have recently reviewed the situation. I should first like to thank you for all the help which we have received from those concerned in the United States.

On the technical and operational sides good progress has been made and I was particularly grateful for the arrangements made for us to evaluate the AV8B pre-prototype. You will be aware that the United Kingdom has always attached great importance to your continuing with the AV8B programme. Moreover it provides a substantial and significant example of interdependence among NATO Allies.

As you know, I have been considering whether there might be advantage for us if the RAF's requirement for an advanced Harrier were met through a joint US Marine Corps/RAF AV8B programme. An important factor which I must weigh is the likely reaction here to such a programme since it would mean giving up not only our own improved Harrier programme, but also the continuation of national VSTOL, which we pioneered. I would in particular need to be able to demonstrate clearly to Parliament and to our Industry advantages of a joint programme.

The Honorable Dr Harold Brown



In these respects I would clearly need to be able to show that the essential interests of UK industry were met. For example, we would need to be able to agree acceptable industrial and third party sales arrangements. I would also need to be able to demonstrate clearly the stability of any joint AV8B programme and to give assurance that the aircraft would be developed, produced and delivered to the RAF. There is the problem that whilst Congress appears to continue to support the AV8B, you are known to have expressed doubts about it. The current RAF requirement is for 60 aircraft; there would also be good prospects of sales in the export market. Would a joint programme on that basis have your support and would it obtain continuing Congressional approval through to completion?

For the time being I have agreed that the UK should fund and complete Project Definition on Harrier Mk 5 and continue our PD on AV8B. I hope that you too will be able to continue with your AV8B programme. I am concerned to decide as quickly as possible on the way ahead. It would be very useful to know your views on the questions which I have raised. If it would help I should be happy for David Cardwell, Chief of Defence Procurement, and Sir Douglas Lowe, Controller Aircraft to fly to Washington to explain our position further.

Jan 2/82

Jan 2/82

Francis Pym