



10 DOWNING STREET

cc: D/Trade  
Mr. Lukies,

Correspondence in GR  
Aerospace

CF to note

THE PRIME MINISTER

5 February 1980

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January enclosing the attached copy of a letter dated 14 January addressed to me by the Chairman of the North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association, John Lukies.

I do understand the feelings of many people in the Stansted area. However, I must be plain and say that on the evidence that has been presented to the Government so far, it seems to us that expansion at Stansted airport offers the most flexible solution to the problem of meeting demand for air transport in the South East in the future. If the continued growth in demand does not materialise then we will not have wasted large sums of taxpayers' money on a new airport elsewhere. Instead, Stansted airport will simply have acquired a new terminal.

I say that "it seems" that Stansted offers the best solution because until the Public Inquiry has sat we will not have a full assessment of the proposal. Committees such as the Study Group on South East airports cannot do more than collect the facts about such matters as surface access routes, effects on defence installations, costs of building a terminal and so forth. The assessment they have made is based on the contributions of a wide range of organisations,  
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including the local authorities, all of which provided advice on matters within their sphere of responsibility, but a full examination of the suitability of Stansted for expansion will come at the Public Inquiry.

I know, of course, of the two previous inquiries, but circumstances change and our proposals bear little resemblance to those examined on these earlier occasions. We are not looking for a vast four-runway airport of Roskill proportions, or even for a two-runway airport of the size that the Study Group was looking at.

The Inquiry is to look into whether Stansted airport would be a suitable place for the construction in the late 1980s of a single terminal building based on the existing runway, and also whether we should provide room for possible future expansion if this proves to be necessary in the 1990s. I should make it clear, however, that the precise terms of reference have not yet been decided.

The Inspector's report will be vital to the Government in reaching its final decisions and although I can give no undertaking as to what those decisions will be, Mr. Lukies may be sure that the Government will pay the closest possible attention to any recommendations which the Inspector makes in his report.

Alan Haselhurst, Esq., M.P.

