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From the Minister of State  
for Industry and Information Technology

14 March 1984

David Barclay Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

Prime Minister.

The response to the U.S. offer to us to send an astronaut on a future shuttle has not been well coordinated in Whitehall. The Americans confused the situation by making the offer twice, first in a letter to Mr. Heseltine last year, then in a message to you from the President.

Dear David

Mr. Heseltine proposes to make public our acceptance in a press conference tomorrow. Before he does so you ought to reply to the President. Agree attached message?

In my letter of 5 March I promised to let you have a reply for the Prime Minister to send to President Reagan's letter of 2 March on the US proposals for a space station project costing \$8bn.

A.D.C. 1/3

2 The Prime Minister will wish to know that the US were very pleased by the reception Mr Beggs had in Britain when he was in London on 5 March, to invite Britain and other European countries to participate in the project.

Yes - have used to add a letter w/ Heseltine not

3 The letter which Mr Beggs gave Mr Baker for the Prime Minister not only invites the UK to involve itself in the space station project, but also offers a place on a future shuttle flight for a British astronaut, either in connection with the launch of the Skynet defence satellites already ordered for the shuttle, or perhaps an earlier flight on a joint scientific mission.

4 This last offer has now been clarified with the Americans, who confirm that they maintain their offer to have UK defence astronauts fly with the Skynet satellites, but who have also expressed themselves open to discussions on the flying of a further astronaut for a science or other mission.

5 The offer in connection with the Skynet launch was already made to Mr Heseltine by Mr Beggs last year, and the Secretary of State for Defence has already replied accepting this offer.

6 As agreed, I attach a draft message for the Prime Minister to send to President Reagan, the outline of which I have cleared with the MOD and Foreign Office.



7 I am copying this to the Private Secretaries to the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, Defence, Foreign Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours  
Naïl

N M McMILLAN  
Private Secretary