

CC PC

Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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We are arranging a

London SW1A 2AH

DTI presentation.

 CC USA: US  
 Foreign Policy R42  
 15 May, 1984

A.P.C. 15/5

Dear John,

US Manned Space Station

Thank you for your letter of 4 May about Sir Oliver Wright's call on the Prime Minister the day before. The Prime Minister asked about the attitude we should take towards President Reagan's proposal that we, other European countries, Canada and Japan should participate in the US manned space station programme.

While the Americans certainly gained the initial impression that we were cooler than the other countries they approached, this seems to have been a matter of perception rather than substance. Later US contacts with the French and Germans, for example, seem to have convinced them that the UK is not the only country that wants to look at the idea with some care. So far as we know, no other country has yet made any commitment to participation.

The need to adopt a positive tone towards the Americans, as Sir Oliver Wright urged on the Prime Minister, is nevertheless something of which we are very conscious. Mr Whitney has made this point in correspondence with Mr Baker. There seems now to be general agreement within Whitehall that the course which Sir Oliver Wright advocates is the right one.

Whether the UK will in the event be able to participate in the programme is primarily of course for the DTI. The UK space budget is not in the same league as those of France and the FRG. Nevertheless, for our part we believe that if the other Europeans decide to participate, the Americans will find it difficult to understand if the UK does not do likewise, if only in a limited way. Non-participation would also carry implications for our relations with our partners in the European Space Agency (ESA), and for the UK's standing as a technologically-advanced nation. We also believe that the potential benefits of participation - scientific, technological and industrial - deserve very careful consideration.

The Americans have been told that we are examining the possibilities of participation through ESA. We understand that the DTI are looking into the practicalities of this and its implications for their own budget.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD) and, with a copy of yours, to Callum McCarthy (DTI) and

/Dr Nicholson

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Dr Nicholson in the Cabinet Office.

*Yours ever,*

*Len Appleyard*

(L V Appleyard)  
Private Secretary

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USA Pt 2  
Foreign Policy

12 MAY 1964

