



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE

Prime Minister

The summary of

this report is at

page A.

Agree, if colleagues

do not dissent, to publication?

Ms 30/3

ECONOMISTS' REPORT ON SUPPORT FOR CAPITAL GOODS
FOR EXPORT

Since my minute of 13 December, with which I forwarded to the Prime Minister the agreed interdepartmental economists' report, we have had some useful exchanges on the arguments for and against export credit subsidies. In parallel, our officials have cooperated in working out new operating guidelines for ECGD, which I have now sent to the Prime Minister with my minute of 28 March. *with mcs?*

2. These guidelines reflect a good deal of the thinking, and some of the specific suggestions, in the economists' report. The issue is an important one, and the existence of the report is already widely-known from slanted press reports. I believe that discussion between Government and industry would benefit from full exposure of the arguments. It can only be a matter of time before we are required to make the report available, eg to a Select Committee or to the committee of enquiry which you are proposing to set up into ECGD's future status. I think that we would do better to take the initiative, and publish it now. I hope you agree.

3. I do not envisage our giving the report any special publicity. It would be sufficient to lay a copy in the

/House of Commons



House of Commons Library and announce that fact in a written PQ. Obviously the announcement would need to make clear that the report was simply a background paper; we could also add such a disclaimer to all published copies.

5. I also think that it would be best not to publish paragraph 31 of the report, which is the only part of the report which contains policy recommendations. Without this paragraph the paper is a background to policy rather than advice to Ministers. Since it contains some calculations relating to particular projects, you may feel that it would also be right to remove Annex 1, or at least such information in it as would enable specific projects to be identified. I would welcome your advice on that.

4. Copies of this minute go to the Prime Minister, Patrick Jenkin, Francis Pym, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.

G.H.
29 March 1983

Trade, Non-
Tariff Barriers,
Pt 3

30 MAR 1983

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