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MMP

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Secretary of State for Industry

16 June 1981

David Wright Esq
Private Secretary to
Secretary to the Cabinet
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1

overpaid underpaid?
What does Prime Minister
use Command Paper
content with these
arrangements?
MMP 19/6

Dear David

GOVERNMENT REPLY TO SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CONCORDE

The House of Commons Select Committee on Industry and Trade published a report on Concorde on 14 April. My Secretary of State considers that the Government's reply should take the form of a Command Paper, and that this should be presented to Parliament before the Summer Recess.

2 Mr Tebbit has written to the Chairman of the Committee accordingly; a copy of his letter is attached. He will also be informing Parliament when answering an (unsolicited) Oral Question by Mr Jock Bruce-Gardyne MP on 22 June.

3 In accordance with the customary procedures for giving collective Ministerial consideration to Concorde matters, Mr Tebbit will be writing to the Secretary of State, as Chairman of E(EA) Committee, indicating what he proposes and the reasons for his recommendations. The letter and attachment would be copied to other members of E(EA) and to other Ministers and persons whose views are being sought.

4 The date we have in mind for publication is Wednesday 15 July with embargoed copies being released a couple of days before. As the reply is self-sufficient, we do not envisage it being necessary to make a Statement after Questions or to respond positively to any request from members of the Select Committee for the report and the Government's reply to be debated in Government time. We shall probably arrange for written questions to be tabled in both Houses.

5 I am copying this letter and enclosure to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Lord President and Leader

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of the House of Lords, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Trade, the Chief Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Chief Whip, and the Minister of State for Defence Procurement.

Yours sincerely
Richard Riley

RICHARD RILEY
Private Secretary

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From the
Minister of State
Norman Tebbit MP

Sir Donald Kaberry Bt TD DL MP
Chairman
Select Committee on
Industry and Trade
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

8¹⁶ June 1981

D. Donald,

SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO CONCORDE

In my answer to Jock Bruce-Gardyne on 18 May I said that the Select Committee's observations and recommendations, which cover many aspects of Concorde, were being studied in detail; and that, in accordance with normal practice, the Government's final and considered reply would be delivered to Parliament as soon as possible. However, I could not at that stage anticipate when this would be, or the form or content of the Government's response.

I am writing to let you know that our consideration of the report is now well advanced; and that the Secretary of State for Industry has accordingly decided that a substantive Government reply can be given to Parliament before the Summer Recess. The reply would take the form of a Command Paper.

Our present objective is that this should be published in mid-July, probably in the week beginning 13 July. This is later than we would have hoped; but the outcome of the French Presidential elections and the still to be fought elections for a new National Assembly have made it quite exceptionally difficult to consult our French Treaty partners about those aspects of the Committee's observations and recommendations that have Anglo-French implications.

The fact that we have been in touch with the French authorities about the two Governments' mutual desire to reduce the net cost of Concorde to public funds in their respective countries should not be taken to imply that we have also discussed with them the second of the Committee's



alternatives, that of agreed cancellation. Our efforts are being concentrated exclusively on the first alternative, which in present circumstances offers substantial opportunities for bringing down the costs of continued support to well below those of cancellation.

I should add that, before publication, there will be a couple of Government announcements about Concorde which will be of interest to the Committee. The first, expected very shortly, will be by the Secretary of State for Trade indicating that revised tracks for British Airways and Air France Concorde will be introduced to alleviate secondary sonic booms in Britain and France. The second is that, later this month, my colleague Michael Marshall will be giving his customary annual statement on the latest figures for British and French Concorde expenditures and receipts, based on a report to be submitted jointly by British and French officials to the two Governments. For the information of the Committee as a whole, we shall be letting the Clerk to the Committee have details of both statements.

Norman

NORMAN TEBBIT

17 JUN 1981



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CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref: A05117

19th June 1981

*will request
it signed*

Government Reply to Select Committee Report
on Concorde

Thank you for your letter of 16th June about your Secretary of State's view that the Government's reply to the Select Committee's Report on Concorde should take the form of a Command Paper. We were grateful for this information and in particular the fact that the Government's intention is to be announced in Answer to a Parliamentary Question on 22nd June. We can see no objection to the course you propose, provided of course the other Departments concerned are content.

I am copying this letter to Mike Pattison (No. 10), Jim Buckley (CSD), Stephen Gomersall (FCO), John Rhodes (Trade), Terry Matthews (Treasury), David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy's Office), Murdo McLean and Colin Balmer (MOD).

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)

R. Riley, Esq