



Z PPLS

PRIME MINISTER

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Prime Minute

To note.

A.S.C. 4.
13.

UNITED NATIONS LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION

I have seen a copy of Francis Pym's minute to you of 22 February seeking agreement to UK participation in the Preparatory Commission and to the aims which would form the basis of our negotiating position.

2. We have said publicly that we need to obtain satisfactory improvements in the deep sea mining regime. It would look a little odd if we were now to turn away from an opportunity of exploring with G77 countries the extent to which improvements might be attainable. The report at Annex B to Francis Pym's minute, relating the outcome of the discussions with like-minded countries, demonstrates that we cannot rely on them to fight the battle for us with equal determination. Further, our absence would give hope to the G77 of completely isolating the US and the UK. I therefore agree the UK should be represented at Prep. Com. meetings. Our continued presence can of course be reviewed at any time during the course of Prep. Com. in the light of events.

3. I accept that obtaining satisfactory changes will, at best, be a long process; the G77 will be in no mood at the start of Prep. Com. deliberations to give anything away, but we should not dismiss too easily the power of the financial lever. Whether or not they have signed the Convention, those countries we have consulted accept that their ratification of, or accession to, the Convention depends on all the industrialised countries joining. The main burden of financing the Sea Bed Authority and the Enterprise would fall on them, the US and UK since, under the proposed system of assessments, between us we would fund 60% of the costs of those and other organisations.

4. I am satisfied that the points at Annex A cover all our main concerns, and I agree these should constitute the ultimate aim of the UK in negotiations. I also agree that bringing the Americans back into the Convention is not amongst our immediate aims - but clearly the more success we have in reaching our own aims, the more likely it is that the Americans might reconsider their own position. I am bound to point out, however, that UK participation in a Convention which does not include the Americans could, if the financing arrangements were to remain unchanged, involve a 33 per cent increase in the UK contributions, which on their own account would be considerable.

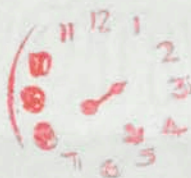
5. I am copying this minute to those who received a copy of Francis Pym's minute.

L.B.

LEON BRITTAN
3 MARCH 1983



4 MAR 1983



File for ^{See} Bluey

7 March 1983

United Nations Law of the Sea Convention

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of the Chief Secretary's minute of 3 March.

A. J. COLES

John Gieve, Esq.,
Chief Secretary's Office,
HM Treasury