

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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22/12

① Ack
② EEC (i) for diff reply for
sts asap!
PS
PS/ Mr Lifford
PS/Pus

Mr C Tickell
Mr Hannay
CD(E)
RED
Mr Houston

Sir Geoffrey Howe
Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign Office
Whitehall
London SW1

December 21st

8/22/12

Dear Sir Geoffrey,
I am writing to you to reconsider your veto on the EEC's
ESPRIT programme to strengthen EEC information technology. I believe it to
be wrong to postpone decisions on this vital area or tie them to a successful
resolution of the budget problem. Whilst you are right to claim that funds
could be made available without increasing "own resources" if the CAP could
be brought under control, I see no reason why the go ahead for ESPRIT cannot
now be given as one way of shifting the EEC's near exclusive concern with
agriculture.

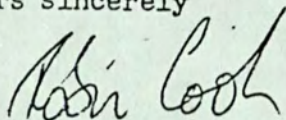
Everyday that you continue to delay the implementation of this
programme is another day of opportunity for the American and Japanese industries
to consolidate their increasing hold on the European market. As you must well
know the EEC information technology sector has a depressing 10% share of the
world market and even within the EEC holds only 40%. Such shares clearly have
not allowed the industry to adequately fund sufficient research to counter
the increasing penetration by the Americans and Japanese.

It is not acceptable that an American multinational like IBM should be
allowed such a dominant market position that their European revenues almost total
all its principal local competitors put together. Such a commanding position
achieved by one firm, in the absence of agreed European technical standards, allows
it to impose its standards, particularly in computer networking. Whilst the Labour
Party believes strongly in aid to British industry, we also believe that
particularly in sectors requiring such high investment in research and development,
there is an important role for EEC wide co-operation such as set out in the
ESPRIT programme. It represents an important attempt to break from an agriculture
dominated EEC.

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Moreover I cannot see how the use of a veto in this context will assist in pressing Britain's case. There is, rightly, very considerable enthusiasm for the programme throughout Europe, and for Britain to be seen to block its launch will cause political resentment out of all proportion to the sums involved. I urge you to reconsider the negative stance which the government has adopted towards this exciting programme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Cook". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Robin Cook MP

Labour Spokesman on European and Community Affairs



With the compliments of

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

22.12.83

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FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
SW1A 2AH