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PRIME MINISTER

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Sleipner Gas

The meeting of ES arranged for Thursday 14 June was broken off before it began when the Secretary of State for Energy circulated his lengthy minute of 14 June round the table. Despite its length it is concerned almost wholly with rebutting statements or implications in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's minute of 12 June which are not central to the issue facing the Committee. That is, what should be the nature of the new export regime which, as seems to be common ground between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Energy, will be needed on the assumption that the proposed purchase of gas from Sleipner will go ahead? The only significant new point is that Mr Walker has now put forward the draft text of a Government announcement. This should enable the Committee to judge better whether, as Mr Walker claims, a regime on which the onus of proof would lie on those wishing to export gas would give a clear enough assurance to ensure continued exploration, development and exploitation of gas reserves on the UKCS. Otherwise, the brief I previously submitted stands.

PLG

P L GREGSON  
Cabinet Office

18 June, 1984

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