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Prime Minister

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PRIME MINISTER

EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

I minuted you about this project on 2nd July. The further bilateral meeting with M. Hernu which I mentioned in my minute proved useful, and enabled agreement to be reached at the full meeting with my German, Italian and Spanish colleagues in Madrid on 9th July on the launch of a six month collaborative technical and industrial Feasibility Study. I attach a copy of the Resolution which was agreed and made public.

2. I referred in my earlier minute to the differences between the French and ourselves on the size of the aircraft. In the event Ministers agreed on a compromise position midway between the heavier design that the UK preferred and the rather smaller machine which the French wanted. Useful progress was also made on the question of the engine, though we are not out of the wood yet. It is not true to say as some Press comment has suggested, that the UK was insisting that the engine for the EFA should be the existing RB 199 or a direct derivative of it. We have recognised for some time that a new design employing the latest technology would be required for the production aircraft, but we have insisted that this new engine should be interchangeable with the RB 199 so that it can be used to re-engine our Tornado F2s in due course. You will see from the Resolution that we have gained this point.

3. Where we, supported by the Germans and Italians, still disagree with the French is that whereas they believe that the new engine should be employed in the aircraft test programme from the outset, we judge that this would entail too great a risk, and that it

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would be more prudent to use an existing engine, such as the RB 199, in the early prototypes, introducing the new engine into the flight test programme when it has demonstrated sufficient maturity. This is a topic which will be studied further during the next 6 months.

4. Finally, I and my Ministerial colleagues from the other countries are at one in laying great stress upon the need for tight control. We want the feasibility study to produce realistic estimates for the costs of any future phases and mechanisms for ensuring so far as possible that these costs will not be exceeded in real terms. In other words, we want a sound basis for decision taking before any commitment to subsequent phases is entered into. This is very much in line with the approach I outlined in my minute of 2nd July.

5. You will see that a further meeting at Defence Minister level has been scheduled for March 1985 to consider the results of the feasibility study and to take decisions on the next steps. I shall, as promised, consult you and colleagues fully before this meeting takes place.

6. I am copying this minute to OD colleagues and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Ministry of Defence
19th July 1984

MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION ON THE EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT (EFA-ACE).-

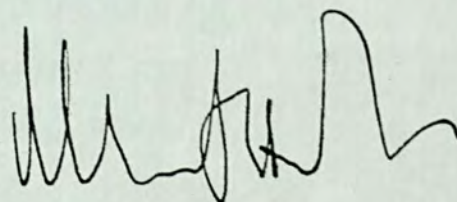
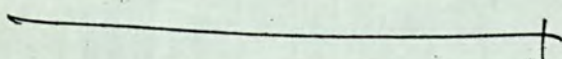
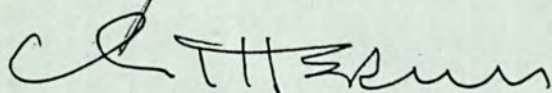
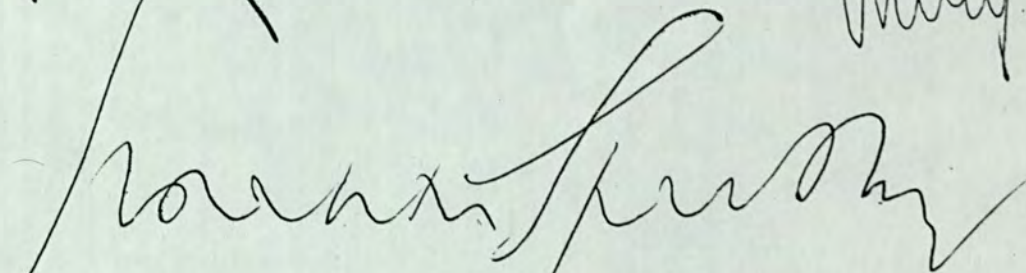
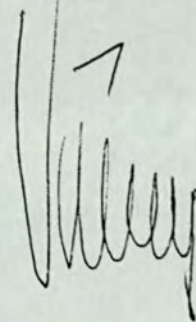
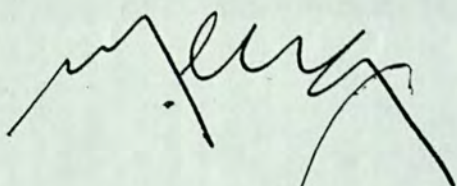
THE DEFENCE MINISTERS OF FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY, SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM MET IN MADRID ON 9 JULY 1.984, AND:

- NOTED, WITH APPROVAL, A REPORT BY THEIR NATIONAL ARMAMENT DIRECTORS.

- HAVING AGREED, IN PRINCIPLE, ON THE NEED JOINTLY TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE FOR 1995 A NEW EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT (EFA) AND AN ENGINE DESIGNED FOR EFA, INSTRUCTED THEIR OFFICIALS TO SET IN HAND BETWEEN THEIR NATIONAL INDUSTRIES A SIX MONTH TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL FEASIBILITY STUDY OF SUCH A FIGHTER AIRCRAFT WEAPON SYSTEM ON THE BASIS RECOMMENDED IN THE NADS REPORT.

THE STUDY ON THE ENGINE SHOULD CONSIDER IN PARALLEL AND IN THE SAME TIME SCALE THE IMPLICATIONS OF USING THE NEW E F A ENGINE PROGRAM FOR A RE-ENGINEING FOR THE TORNADO ADV.

- CALLED FOR A FURTHER REPORT FROM ARMAMENT DIRECTORS REFLECTING THE RESULTS OF THIS FEASIBILITY STUDY AND MAKING PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER WORK, TO BE SUBMITTED IN TIME FOR A MEETING OF MINISTERS IN MARCH 1985.



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cc: PC

OD: LCO LPS
FCO CDL
HMT CO
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 July, 1984

EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

The Prime Minister has noted the Defence Secretary's minute recording the agreement reached with his German, Italian and Spanish colleagues to launch a six month collaborative technical and industrial Feasibility Study on a European fighter aircraft.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OD and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(C.D. Powell)

R. Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

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