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JG 63

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALING 01-218 2111/3

MO 26/11

5th March 1985

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RAF FUTURE BASIC TRAINER

Thank you for your letters of 8th and 15th February, about the RAF Basic Trainer. I note the arguments that you have put forward in favour of the PC9, and I certainly intend to consult colleagues before any decision is announced.

I would however prefer your officials not to take part in the discussions of the Equipment Policy Committee on Thursday. The function of this Committee is to give me the best possible advice on equipment choices in the light of defence policy, operational requirements, technical feasibility, industrial and sales considerations, procurement policy and resources. DTI will take part in the discussion, as is normal, representing the wider industrial arguments from a UK-wide perspective; the Treasury will also be present. Any contribution from your officials or from those of the NIO (and I do not think we could have one without the other, in view of the Shorts interest) would presumably be concerned with specific regional considerations. Important though these are, I believe they might best be fed in after I have received the EPC's advice. Needless to say, if you or Douglas Hurd wish your respective officials to put forward arguments in writing before the EPC meeting, you are welcome to do so either direct to my Department or to the DTI.

The Rt Hon George Younger TD DL MP

RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE



I am copying this letter to OD colleagues and (together with your letters) to Douglas Hurd.

Yours ever

Michael Heseltine