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MO 26/11/9

18th March 1985

John Brown

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EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

Thank you for your letter of 14th March.

As you know, I have consistently stressed throughout the history of this project that our agreement to participate in collaborative studies is entirely without commitment at this stage; and we shall need to consider very carefully the issues set out in paragraph 4 of my minute to the Prime Minister of 26th February before reaching any final conclusion. Industrial factors, particularly the question of the protection of British Aerospace's position relative to the French, will play a large part in determining the way forward. It is precisely because we here are so alive to the importance of decisions on this matter to the British airframe, aero-engine and avionics industries that we have taken every possible step to keep your Department and the industries concerned informed as to progress. Indeed, I issued instructions to my Department on 19th December 1984 to the effect that Geoffrey Pattie should be given full access to all information and assessments on this project at our disposal. I know that there has been continuous contact - both formal and informal - at all levels. My officials have ensured that yours have been involved in the shaping of important policy papers and there have been numerous discussions both with your officials and jointly with Industry. I understand a further meeting involving

The Rt Hon Norman Tebbit MP

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Prime Minister
CDP
19/3



Ministry of Defence and Department of Trade and Industry officials will take place tomorrow. As you will also know, Geoffrey and I have discussed EFA on a number of occasions, most recently at a meeting on 8th March at which Sir Raymond Lygo of British Aerospace and Mr Robbins of Rolls Royce were present.

It has long been my intention to have a collective discussion on the way ahead on this project in advance of the next meeting of Ministers of the Five Nations (now scheduled for 16th or 17th May). I will of course be putting a paper to OD before then. But if you feel that it would be helpful to have an earlier discussion of the project in OD, I should be delighted to see if this can be arranged.

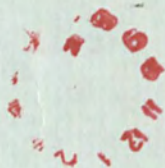
I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

Michael Heseltine

DEFENSE

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19 MAR 1964

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Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

28 March 1985

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1

NBPM

D Michael,

EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT (EFA)

Thank you for your letter of 18 March about the strategy which the Government should adopt in relation to EFA.

2 I am grateful for your assurance that industrial factors, particularly the question of the protection of British Aerospace's position relative to the French, will play a large part in determining the way forward. Geoffrey Pattie and I, along with our officials, will continue to work closely with the MoD in assessing the best strategy for the UK in this vitally important project.

3 I look forward to discussing your paper on 25 April.

4 I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nigel Lawson, Geoffrey Howe, Peter Rees and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

NORMAN TEBBIT

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Defence PTZ

Procurement Systems

25 MAR 1994