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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

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Prime Minister

FOREIGN SECRETARY

The Chancellor proposes to publish on 10 September our two papers on the "strict financial guideline" and the "safety net".

PUBLICATION OF UK PAPERS ON THE SAFETY NET AND STRICT FINANCIAL GUIDELINE

A.T.C. 5/9.

Copy: Mr. Lyham.

As you know from our conversation in Brussels on Tuesday, our paper on the strict financial guideline is now widely available in the hands of the Brussels press corps. We will therefore have to be ready to answer questions on it and to confirm that it is part of our negotiating position.

2. This has a number of other consequences. First, the document will clearly now have to be made available to Parliament as soon as possible. Once that is done, however, there could be no justification for refusing a request to make the safety net paper available as well. A request to do so seems certain. The existence of our proposals for a safety net scheme is already widely known and the details could leak out in Brussels at any moment. Moreover, you will be aware the Danes have already made a skilful job of presenting their Convergence Fund paper to the UK press.

3. Publication also has positive advantages for the UK, for example by showing Parliament and public opinion that we have devised coherent and reasoned proposals aimed at both safeguarding our own interests and bringing much-needed order to the Community's finances. It will also re-emphasise to our partners our determination to achieve both a lasting limit on our net contributions and effective control of agricultural spending.



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4. The right course now must I think be to publish both papers together at a time and in a form of our own choosing. This should clearly be done as soon as possible. We have an excellent opportunity in the next edition of the Treasury's Economic Progress Report due out on 10 September. Publication then has the added advantage that the papers can be referred to in our written evidence to the House of Lords Sub-Committee A enquiry, which has to be provided by 19 September. The texts will also have to be laid in the House of Commons Library. I suggest that this should be done in the usual way through the Cabinet Office.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, the members of the Ministerial OD(E) Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

N.L.

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2 September 1983

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