

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister. (2)

Sir Robin Nicholson's note

attached indicates his support for the
report's conclusion that spend on high energy
particle physics should be reduced. No
action required for now, stay on ODE
discussion may be needed in due course.

ME 18/6

1. I wrote to colleagues in March 1984 about a review of the UK's participation in high energy particle physics which had been set up jointly by the Advisory Board for the Research Council (ABRC) and the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC). The terms of reference of the review were:

- i. To review UK participation in the study of high energy particle physics, with particular reference to that necessarily carried out under international auspices;
- ii. To consider possible future involvement, the role and extent of international collaboration, and the implications of re-allocation of the resources in whole or in part to other areas of science;
- iii. To report to the Chairman of the ABRC and the Chairman of the SERC.

2. The Review Group's report is being published today by the ABRC and SERC. A short summary is attached to this letter. I shall be announcing publication to Parliament through an inspired Parliamentary Question; the Chairman of the Review Group, Sir John Kendrew FRS, President of St John's College Oxford will then be holding a Press Conference.

3. As the review is commissioned by the ABRC and SERC the report is addressed to these bodies, not to the Government. The Chairmen of ABRC and SERC have taken delivery of the report and will be considering what advice to offer me on the recommendations. I expect to receive their advice later this year, probably not before the Autumn.

4. There is thus no immediate action for the Government. I thought however that you and colleagues should know the gist of the Review Group's recommendations since they are likely to give rise to adverse comment both at home and abroad. At home, in addition to the predictable out-cry from particle physicists, there is likely to be more general criticism of the Government for apparently forcing such unpalatable choices on scientific communities.

5. Abroad, there will naturally be some consternation in CERN itself. And while there is reason to believe that some of our fellow member states will privately welcome the call for CERN's current level of expenditure to be cut back, their public posture may well be critical. More seriously they may take the threat of a considerable reduction in British support for CERN as a fresh sign of our unreliability as a partner in international scientific ventures. The decisions we take on Kendrew could therefore

be crucial in determining the extent^{to} which British scientists can in future participate in international scientific endeavours. More immediately, the message from the Kendrew report may cause complications to our present endeavours to secure French and German collaboration in the new UK Spallation Neutron Source in exchange for British membership of the proposed European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) on terms we can afford.

3 6. In an attempt to prevent our international partners over-reacting at this stage, I am writing to the Science Ministers of the other 12 member states concerned making clear that the review was commissioned independently of the UK Government; that we await further advice on its recommendations and that should this favour a change in our relationship with CERN, any decision would only be taken after close consultation with fellow members. The FCO has also briefed posts along these lines.

7. Copies of this minute go to Members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robin Nicholson.

KJ

KJ
18 June 1985

Department of Education and Science

SUMMARY OF THE KENDREW REPORT

1. The review group has concluded that although particle physics is a subject that is worth pursuing in the longer term, with the present resources available for science in the UK and taking into account other areas of research that are unfunded or having to be forgone, the current level of expenditure on the subject cannot be justified and should be reduced as soon as possible.
2. The group therefore recommends that the UK should remain a Member State of CERN on the present basis until the end of the construction of the Large Electron Positron collider (i.e. until 1989), but that it should continue its membership beyond that time if this can be achieved at significantly lower costs. The suggested reductions are 5% in 1988/89 rising to 25% in 1991/92. Similarly, progressive reduction are recommended in the domestic expenditure rising to 25% in 1990/91. The total savings that could be achieved amount to a total of over £40M over the six years 1986/87 to 1991/92.
3. The report stresses that even the final 25% saving (about £4M per annum) would not in itself solve the financial problems of other areas of science, but it balances the advantages of continued effective research in particle physics and at least making a partial contribution to the needs of other areas of science. In the short term additional funds are urgently needed, at least until the full savings from particle physics can be achieved, but in the longer term the strength of the case for increased funding would depend on how well the science community could show that it had made the most efficient use of the available funds.

Science: Budget; Pt 3



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Andrew Turnbull Esq
Private Secretary
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NB PM

24 June 1985

Dear Andrew,

My Secretary of State minuted the Prime Minister on 18 June, with copies to Cabinet colleagues, concerning the publication of the Kendrew Report on future UK participation in high energy particle physics research and, inter alia, on continued membership of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research - CERN. I now enclose a copy of the report.

The publication of the report has attracted some press comment and TV coverage, and Sir John Kendrew discussed the report with the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee at its meeting on 18 June.

Yours,

Elizabeth

MISS C E HODKINSON
Private Secretary

Budget: Sci & Tech. 1+3.

