



CABINET OFFICE

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From: J B UNWIN
4 March 1987

MR MONGER

cc Mr Norgrove (for info)
Mr Fairclough

COPY FOR

SPACE PLAN: HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

I was a little alarmed to see from the recent MOD letter (27 February) that you kindly copied to me that the above House of Lords Select Committee have set up, under the chairmanship of Lord Shackleton, a Sub-Committee to enquire into UK space policy and have already sent a list of questions to a number of Departments. Some of these are directly addressed to the issues on the new Space Plan currently under consideration by Ministers.

2. I have had a word with Alastair Macdonald at DTI about this. I asked him whether they saw this as in any sense a deliberate pressure group, designed to influence the Government's decisions on the Space Plan.

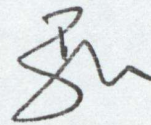
3. Alastair Macdonald assured me that they did not think this to be the case. The new Sub-Committee are planning a series of hearings through the summer with a view to a report later in the year if possible. Informal discussion with the Clerk suggests that they are not seeking to influence immediate decisions and that indeed they will take whatever decisions the Government announce on the Space Plan as part of their given baseline.

4. DTI have not decided whether they should respond to the MOD suggestion that they should take on the task of coordinating the response from Departments to the questionnaire. He agreed, however, that at the very minimum all the replies should be cleared with all the Departments involved, including the Treasury. I confirmed also (in response to his question) that it was not the Cabinet Office's job to coordinate a response when there was a

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clear lead Department (in this case the DTI). I assumed, however, that through Mr Fairclough's Secretariat the Cabinet Office would in due course want to make a contribution.

5. I suggested that when E(A) resume discussion of space Mr Channon should very briefly inform his colleagues of this development, explaining that it was not a reason for delaying any of the present decisions.



J B UNWIN

