



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 October 1987

Dear Sir John

Thank you for your letter of 10 September. I am grateful to you for setting out your views so thoroughly and constructively. I understand the importance you attach to Britain's involvement in space - and I share your feelings about the way money has been wasted in defence R&D.

When I announced that the Government had decided not to increase funding for space at present, I invited the private sector to come forward with further resources. The aerospace industry has responded and major companies have agreed to continue work for the time being at company expense on certain key national space programmes. At the same time, the British National Space Centre has been authorised to commit £4 million in order to keep open programme options with the European Space Agency (ESA). This will allow the United Kingdom to continue to participate in the ESA preparatory programmes for the Ariane V launcher and the Columbus space station until the ESA Ministerial Council meeting which is planned for November.

I was also interested in your comments on the way in which the Government should manage its national space programme. As you say, the future status and structure of

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the British National Space Centre will have to be considered in the light of the broader decisions that are taken on our future involvement in space.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Sir John Mason, C.B., F.R.S.



*From the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister of Trade and Industry*

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THE RT HON KENNETH CLARKE QC MP

David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

5 October 1987

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 15 September to Timothy Walker enclosing one from Sir John Mason about space funding. As requested I attach a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature. I apologise for failing to meet your deadline.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to John Fairclough (Chief Scientific Adviser) Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office) and Tom Jeffery (Education and Science).

Yours sincerely
Julian Farrel

JULIAN FARREL
PRIVATE SECRETARY

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Please type

~~DRAFT~~ REPLY FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO:

Sir John Mason CB
The Royal Society
6 Carlton House Terrace
LONDON
SW1Y 5AG

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Thank you for your letter of 10 September, ~~in which you put forward arguments for increasing Government funding for investment in space science and technology.~~

I of course entirely

~~While I can~~ understand your views on the importance of space projects, ~~you will appreciate that the Government has to balance the longer term benefits of expenditure on space research against alternative uses of funds in support of other areas of British industry.~~

~~You will probably be aware that~~ ^W when I announced that the Government had decided not to increase funding for space at present, I invited the private sector to come forward with further resources. The aerospace industry has responded and

major companies have agreed to continue work for the time being at company expense on certain key national space programmes. ^{At the} In ^{same time} parallel to this, the British National Space Centre has been authorised to commit £4 million in order to keep open programme options with the European Space Agency (ESA). This will allow the United Kingdom to continue to participate in the ESA preparatory programmes for the Ariane V launcher and the Columbus space station until the ESA Ministerial Council meeting ^{which is planned} ~~scheduled~~ for November ~~1987~~.

I was also interested in your comments on the way in which the Government should manage its national space programme. As you say, the future status and structure of the British National Space Centre will have to be considered in the light of the broader decisions that are taken on our future involvement in space.