



Minister of State  
for Defence Procurement  
D/MIN(DP)/AC/3/6

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 6621 (Direct Dialling)  
01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

12<sup>th</sup> September 1989

*EX 12/9*

*See Iron*

*With REQUEST if (GQU) (K)*

PROJECT JUNO

There was correspondence earlier this year between Robert Atkins (DTI), Simon Glenarthur (FCO), David Trefgarne (MOD) and Robert Jackson (DES) concerning Project Juno - the plan for a British astronaut to go on a mission on the Soviet space station. The correspondence rests with David Trefgarne's letter of 23 February to Robert Atkins. It was concluded at the time that HMG should not give anything that could be construed as official Ministerial support for the project. However, the possibility of the project team making use of the Royal Air Force Institute of Aviation Medicine (IAM) at Farnborough for the medical tests involved in the selection process was left open until such time as a formal request was made.

In the last few weeks it has been established that three serving Officers and one Ministry of Defence Civil Servant have volunteered of their own volition for selection as one of the astronauts, and have reached the group of 35 candidates for final selection. At this stage each candidate is required to obtain written confirmation from his employer that the candidate, if selected to be part of the team of four liable for astronaut training, is available to take up employment with the Project JUNO company. Officials have studied the various options and have proposed that the candidates may be released on unpaid leave. This would mean that the Service personnel would not be entitled to pay or allowances from the MOD during the period of

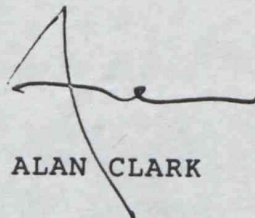
The Rt Hon Lord Brabazon of Tara

absence; that the period of leave would not count as service for the purposes of promotion, increments of pay, retired pay, pensions or gratuity; and that any injuries sustained during the period of unpaid leave would not be attributable to the Service. The Civil Servant candidate would also be released on unpaid leave; the absence would count for seniority, but, as with the Service candidates, it would not be reckonable for incremental or pension purposes. I am advised that there should, in principle, be no security problems if one of our people is selected.

As far as the IAM is concerned, a firm request has been made by the Project JUNO organisers for the facilities to be used by Project JUNO for the final selection testing for the prospective British astronauts, on repayment terms. There would undoubtedly be considerable media interest in the medical tests, and it is therefore proposed to allow the Project Juno team to give the press access to the IAM, subject to detailed arrangements being agreed by the Commandant.

I am disposed to agree to the two proposals above. I believe that to refuse permission for individuals to participate could be seen as churlish; if we refused access to the IAM, the tests would have to be conducted abroad (probably France or the Soviet Union). I take the view that the arrangements above would demonstrate that we welcome the opportunity this offers to the individuals concerned and that we wish the project every success in the context of developing Anglo-Soviet relations, but would preserve the line that the Service and Civil Servant volunteers applied as private individuals and are not sponsored by the MOD.

I trust that these arrangements can be agreed by you. The candidates are required to produce written confirmation from their employers by 15 September, so I would be grateful for your early response. As with the earlier correspondence, I am copying this to Eric Forth (DTI), and Robert Jackson (DES); also, given the interest this might spark in the media in the near future and her forthcoming visit to Moscow, to the Prime Minister.

2  
  
ALAN CLARK

