



Prime Minister:

CC NO  
CC BH

These arrangements have been agreed between Mr Ridley, Mr Butler and Mr Gwo.

Prime Minister

STANSTED/HEATHROW TERMINAL 5 PUBLIC INQUIRIES

Agree to proposal to debate the Inspector's report before

On 19 March 1980 the then Secretary of State for the Environment minuted you and Cabinet colleagues proposing that the handling of the post-inquiry arrangements for the Stansted and Heathrow Terminal 5 (T5) planning applications should be based on standard planning procedures. Your Private Secretary's letter of 24 March 1980 to the Private Secretary to the then Secretary of State for the Environment recorded your agreement to this course. Inspectors' reports are normally submitted in confidence under these procedures to the Ministers who are statutorily responsible for appointing them and for the ultimate decisions on the applications. The reports are generally published at the same time as the decisions are taken and announced.

14/11

The Stansted/Heathrow planning applications were considered at concurrent public inquiries which lasted from September 1981 to July 1983. The Inspector's report on these inquiries was originally expected at the beginning of this year but there has been a series of delays and his report is not now expected until later this month.

There has been considerable political pressure both inside and outside Parliament for the report to be published and for Parliament to be given an opportunity to debate it before decisions are taken. More than 80 Conservative MPs have now signed an Early Day Motion tabled last week opposing the development of Stansted (the application for which was brought forward by the British Airports Authority at the behest of the Government).

The Attorney General has recently advised that the whole of the Inspector's report on the inquiries will have to be disclosed in connection with the publication of the British Airways'

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prospectus, since it will contain information that affects materially the company's prospects. The Inspector's report, like the public inquiries themselves, is expected to be extremely long (2,600 pages) and detailed. 20 planning applications have to be decided by the Government. The decision letters will need to be drafted with the utmost care because of the possibility of challenge in the High Court. In view of this and the late receipt of the Inspector's report, we are very unlikely to be able to reach decisions on Stansted/Heathrow T5 prior to the publication of the British Airways' prospectus which is scheduled for next February.

I have therefore today discussed with the Lord Privy Seal, the Minister for Housing and Construction and the Deputy Chief Whip how we should handle the Inspector's report. For the reasons above, we now propose to depart from the normal procedures in this case and announce that we intend to publish the Inspector's report when we receive it, and to arrange a debate on the report as soon as is practicable thereafter and before decisions are taken. We do not need to decide on the form and timing of the debate until after the Inspector's report is received.

Subject to colleagues' approval, we would announce, by way of a Written Parliamentary Question, our intention to publish the report prior to the Second Reading debate on the Civil Aviation Bill, which is planned for next Monday 19 November, to prevent this debate being used as a vehicle for discussion on Stansted/ Heathrow T5. The announcement would make it clear that this course was being followed because of the unique set of issues involved, and that it was not a precedent for the handling of Inspectors' reports on future public inquiries.

I therefore seek colleagues' agreement that -

a. we publish the Inspector's report on the Stansted/Heathrow T5 public inquiries when it is received, and subsequently give

3

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Parliament an opportunity to debate it before decisions are taken.

b. we announce this decision prior to the Second Reading debate on the Civil Aviation Bill.

I am copying this to the members of Cabinet, the Attorney General, the Minister for Housing and Construction, the Deputy Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*du*

*pp. NR*

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

13 November 1984

*(Approved by the Secretary of State  
& initialed in his absence).*

Aerospace: Third London Airport Nov 79