



PM/84/181

PRIME MINISTER

Space Policy

1. I am sorry that my visit to Berlin on 10 December will prevent me from attending Geoffrey Pattie's presentation on civil space matters on that day: Tim Renton will attend instead. There are several points I would have liked to make.

2. First, studies by officials on military opportunities in space are currently under consideration. It seems likely that military and civil interests will overlap to some degree - for example, in regard to communications and remote sensing satellites, and perhaps the use of space stations too. Although decisions on the civil issues are more imminent, it seems to me essential that we should as far as possible look at the civil and military aspects together, not least in order to compare the return we might get for our expenditure in each sector.

3. Secondly, our civil space programme - scientific as well as industrial - is based on the European Space Agency (ESA), in which EC countries play the major role. There would seem to be merit in examining carefully whether collaboration with allies other than the US on military space projects might also be appropriate, taking into account the possible impact on our key relationship with the US in this field.

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4. We do not face decisions yet. When we do, I shall want to consider carefully the political consequences of any suggestion that we should choose to opt out of a major European and transatlantic collaborative endeavour.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Nigel Lawson, Michael Heseltine, Keith Joseph, Geoffrey Pattie, Sir Robert Armstrong and Dr Robin Nicholson (Cabinet Office).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written in a cursive style.

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

7 December 1984