



PM./84/48

PRIME MINISTERReview of High Energy Particle Physics (HEPP)

1. Keith Joseph copied his minute of 5 March to you on this subject to Cabinet colleagues. I have since seen Turnbull's letter of 8 March to Miss Hodgkinson in the Department of Education and Science, giving your assent to what is proposed. As Keith Joseph says, he gave me warning of what he had in mind and I expressed my misgivings. You are aware of them too. But they are considerable, and other colleagues may wish to be aware of them also.
2. Though we may hope to limit the damage resulting from an announcement of the proposed review, there can be little doubt that it will be seen by many as heralding our withdrawal from CERN. Our partners in CERN, in particular France and the FRG, consider it a project of prime importance and President Mitterrand has emphasised his personal attachment to the project. We are unlikely to be able to persuade them to regard the review in a positive light.
3. Of course the consequences would be much more serious if the review were to lead to a decision to withdraw from CERN in due course. In the wider political context, our reliability as partners in European high technology programmes, industrial as well as scientific, will be called into question. Our recent decisions on the Airbus and Esprit have gone some way to offset the doubts some hold about our commitment to European collaboration, but the proposed review will revive them. We risk encouraging a more exclusive relationship between France and Germany as the two major powers in Europe with, as they see it, a vision of the future.
4. Our standing is likely to suffer more widely. The remarkable scientific advances of CERN, and the UK contribution to them, have

②  
Prime Minister

To note FCO concerns, though I do not think you need withdraw your endorsement of the review as these attitudes were known when you saw the papers.

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received global recognition. We risk indicating that we are ready to opt out of the small group of nations that take a leading role in scientific and technological advancement. This will affect how other countries regard us, and our attraction as a supplier of high-technology products.

5. I do not minimise the financial constraints which have led us to this point. But neither should the cost burden be exaggerated. Our contribution to CERN, at some £28-30 million a year, compares with Ministry of Defence net expenditure on research and development in 1982/83 of £1840 million. This is at a time when the R&D budgets of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Energy were £257 million and £213 million respectively. The preponderance of expenditure in the defence field undoubtedly puts great pressure on other R&D budgets, and I wonder whether we have got our priorities right when we are brought to contemplate terminating UK involvement in a whole field of scientific research involving a relatively much smaller sum. This imbalance in our R&D expenditure is highlighted in OECD comparisons - the latest figures show that over half of the UK's government-funded research is on defence, while for the French it is about 36%. There is of course a further, even more striking contrast with the Japanese, - less than 3%.

6. One particular point which I have already raised with Keith Joseph continues to worry me, and that is the composition of the proposed review team. We need to persuade our partners in CERN that the team approaches its task with an open mind. I fear that a group charged with a review of high energy particle physics which includes no specialists in that discipline will not be regarded in this light, however distinguished its members may be in their own fields. Keith Joseph has told me why he finds it difficult to include such people, but I hope he will agree to look at it again.

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7. I am copying this minute to Cabinet colleagues, and to Sir Robert Armstrong and Dr Nicholson.

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

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

13 March, 1984

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Science + Tech Sept 83

Science Budget



13 MAR 1984



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 March 1984

Dear Brian,

High Energy Particle Physics

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 13 March. She recognises the difficulties which he identifies and accepts that it is right that they should have been brought to the attention of colleagues. Nevertheless she feels that it is necessary to conduct the review and to take the precautions suggested by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in order to minimise the adverse reaction from our partners in CERN.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to members of Cabinet, to Richard Hatfield, Cabinet Office and to Dr Nicholson.

Yours sincerely  
Andrew Turnbull

Andrew Turnbull

Brian Fall Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Personal and Confidential

PRIME MINISTER

REVIEW OF HIGH ENERGY PARTICLE PHYSICS

I thought it right to consult Geoffrey Howe informally and on a personal basis before coming more formally to you and Cabinet colleagues for agreement to proceed. I think you should know of our exchanges and am sending copies with this minute; a copy of this minute goes to Geoffrey too.

ky

5 MARCH 1984

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

5 March 1984

*Jim Griffiths*

REVIEW OF HIGH ENERGY PARTICLE PHYSICS (HEPP)

Thank you for your minute of 2 February. I greatly appreciated your careful analysis of the difficulties, diplomatic and other, that face us in entering on this review; and your recognition of the financial constraints on the Science Budget.

I have discussed your analysis, and the advice from posts, very thoroughly with Peter Brooke and my officials, and with Sir David Phillips, Professor Kingman and Dr Nicholson. We understand, and to an extent share, the misgivings you voice; but, on balance, I have decided that it is right to press ahead. I am therefore minuting the Prime Minister, and our other Cabinet colleagues; your copy comes with this letter.

I discussed, in particular, with Sir David Phillips and Professor Kingman your suggestion that the seven members of the Review Group should include at least two scientists expert in high energy physics or closely allied fields. There are, as you say, good reasons for considering this, to enhance the credibility of the Group's work and report; and I wholly agree that the membership must be seen to be balanced and the review fair. I think there are difficulties about including high energy particle physicists - for them and for the Group. For practising people, more than a fair share of responsibility might be attributed to them, both for putting across the views of the HEPP community, and for the conclusions and recommendations; and there would be a real risk of a minority report. On the other hand, to take someone who has been eminent in the field, but is so no longer, could similarly expose him to unreasonable expectations or criticisms. There are risks either way but on balance we concluded that it would be best to rest on the present broadly-based peer membership pattern (which includes three physicists eminent in other fields, one of them - Pounds -

/in a subject

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign and  
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in a subject that has significant relations with high energy particle physics); and on full opportunity for the HEPP community to present evidence to the Group, singly and collectively, written and oral, and to engage in discussion with it.

We welcome your Department's involvement in the shadow Group and will shortly convene a first meeting, involving Sir John Kendrew, to discuss procedure and briefing for posts. We will also consult your officials on timing of an announcement; and, as you suggest, I will write to Ministers in CERN member states before making an announcement.

*Yours ever,*

*Kew*