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FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY  
DATE: 1 March 1985

CCPC  
②  
CCNO

PRIME MINISTER

ms Prime Minister  
A good point.  
CDP 5/3

## EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

I welcome Michael Heseltine's full exposition of the present position on the European Fighter Aircraft, in his minute to you of 26 February. It gives us useful forewarning of, as he says, the major and complex issues that the Government will need to consider. I am also glad to see that the full range of options will be set out, alongside EFA, and I should be glad to take up Michael's offer for my officials to be fully associated with the continuing work on this.

2 My immediate concern, as you know, relates to the proposed timetable, and the risk in relation to the BAE sale. A meeting at the end of April would be particularly inappropriate from that point of view, and if things went wrong it could badly upset this important sale. I am sure Michael and, if necessary, our potential EFA partners will recognise this. This project is in any case itself so important that adequate time for a thorough discussion of the options is essential.

3 Copies of this minute go to OD colleagues and Sir Robert Armstrong.

PK

PETER REES

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DEFENCE: Procurement: Pt 2



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