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MR. POWELL ✓ CDP  
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NIMROD AEW

I entirely agree, if I may say so, with the Prime Minister's and your comments on the MOD paper.

I have only one other to add. The main lesson which MOD Ministers, and indeed all other Ministers, should draw from this disaster is that the UK should only attempt vast defence projects at the limits of technology after the most thorough study and with the greatest caution. This lesson has been recognised in general, but not yet in the particular: the strong lobby for a national version of EFA shows that the temptation to folly is still strong.

If it sticks, the decision to constrain defence R and D spending will have the effect of preventing grandiose projects. But an arbitrary limit of the kind which has now been set is a very blunt instrument for bringing about the control which a disciplined and restrained scrutiny of defence projects, without delusions of grandeur, would allow.

DW

DAVID NORGROVE

7 April 1986

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CAJADO