

OPS
PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 38/83

cc Martin
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reference: Sals
Pt. 3

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GRS 464

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FM FCO 241800Z MARCH 83

TO PRIORITY ATHENS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 74 OF 24 MARCH

INFO ROME, BONN

SALE OF TORNADO TO GREECE: YOUR TELNOS 52 AND 53

1. PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO MR PAPANDREOU WHEN YOU THINK FIT:

'AS THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FOR THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE MOVE INTO THE DECISIVE PHASE, I THOUGHT I WOULD TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE AND REITERATE MY BELIEF, WHICH I KNOW IS SHARED BY MY GERMAN AND ITALIAN COLLEAGUES, IN THE QUALITY OF THE TORNADO AIRCRAFT, AND ITS ADVANTAGES FOR THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE. I BELIEVE A DECISION BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO BUY TORNADO WOULD OFFER UNPARALLELED OPERATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL BENEFITS TO GREECE. I UNDERSTAND, MOREOVER, THAT PANAVIA ARE OFFERING A MOST ATTRACTIVE COMMERCIAL PACKAGE. YOUR TECHNICAL EXPERTS WILL HAVE GIVEN YOU A FULL BRIEFING ON THE ADVANTAGES OF THE TORNADO AS REGARDS RANGE, PAYLOAD AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS. IT IS A WELL-PROVEN WEAPONS SYSTEM WITH OVER 150 AIRCRAFT ALREADY IN OPERATIONAL SERVICE WITH THE ARMED FORCES OF ALL THREE PARTNER NATIONS OUT OF A TOTAL PROGRAMME OF OVER 800 AIRCRAFT. TORNADO IS A TRULY EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT BUILT FOR EUROPEAN DEFENCE NEEDS, WITH CONSIDERABLE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AND I AM CONVINCED THAT, UNEQUALLED IN THE AIR-TO-GROUND ROLE, IT IS THE BEST AIRCRAFT OF ITS TYPE IN SERVICE TODAY.

ASSOCIATION WITH THE TRI-NATIONAL TORNADO GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION NAMMO (NATO MRCA DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION) WOULD ENABLE GREECE TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT TRAINING, LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND EXCHANGE OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION WITH THE THREE NATIONS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING IN THE TORNADO PROGRAMME. ON THE INDUSTRIAL SIDE, I UNDERSTAND THAT WIDE RANGING PROPOSALS ARE BEING OFFERED BY PANAVIA, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THEIR PARTNER

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COMPANIES AND SUB-CONTRACTORS WHO TOGETHER REPRESENT A VERY BROAD SPECTRUM OF THE MOST ADVANCED EUROPEAN DEFENCE INDUSTRIES. THIS WOULD PRESENT GREEK INDUSTRY WITH THE OPPORTUNITY OF ACCESS TO THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN THREE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WHO TOGETHER ACCOUNT FOR OVER 30 PER CENT OF GREECE'S OVERSEAS TRADE. I SHOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW THAT THE OFFER OF TORNADO HAS THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF ALL THREE PARTNER GOVERNMENTS. THE EXTENT OF THIS SUPPORT IS SET OUT IN THE DETAILED TERMS OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH HAS BEEN NEGOTIATED AND REFERRED TO WITH THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE. WHILE THE PURCHASE OF A NEW COMBAT AIRCRAFT IS MAINLY A TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL QUESTION, THERE IS ALSO A WIDER POLITICAL CONTEXT. I BELIEVE THAT THE PURCHASE OF TORNADO WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED BY ALL THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNED TO DEFENCE CO-OPERATION ON A EUROPEAN BASIS AND STRENGTHEN THE LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIPS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE FOUR NATIONS CONCERNED.

PYM

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