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*Rich Smith*

FCS/90/189

*CDP*

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

*24/11*

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Rolls Royce: Engines for an Argentine Frigate

1. President Menem recently announced that Argentina would make a contribution to the multinational force in the Gulf. The Prime Minister wrote to President Menem on 25 September to tell him that we were grateful for this action.

*at Flap A Pt 29*

2. An element of the Argentines' modest contribution is the provision of a Meko Class frigate, the Almarante Brown. I understand that your officials have been asked by Rolls Royce whether they can approve the sale of spare parts for it. The frigate is powered by Rolls Royce Olympus gas turbines which are covered by the ban HMG has imposed on the sale of military-related equipment to Argentina since the Falklands Conflict. We understand from Rolls Royce that the spares are for maintenance purposes and will not improve the performance of the frigate.

3. Both your department and mine have always taken great care to ensure that the embargo is not breached. Otherwise we would leave ourselves open to the charge of double standards from friendly countries, principally the

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US and the Western Europeans, whom we ask not to sell significant military equipment to Argentina. However, a refusal to Rolls Royce over the sale of equipment for this particular ship could make it impossible for the Argentines to contribute to the Gulf effort and would look petty. I therefore think that on this occasion Rolls Royce's request be treated as a special case and that an export licence for the spares be granted. We shall ensure that the licence covers spares for this frigate only.

4. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, other OD colleagues and Sir Robin Butler.

DH.

(DOUGLAS HURD)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
24 October 1990



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