

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

26 November 1982

ARMS SALES

There was some discussion of this question when the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary called on the Prime Minister this morning.

The Prime Minister said that the recent controversy over French and German arms sales to Argentina raised an important question of principle. When could one legitimately expect our NATO allies to refrain from selling arms to a country which had been guilty of aggression against one of the NATO countries? It was agreed that we should conduct an internal exercise to establish whether we could persuade our NATO allies not to conclude new contracts with a country which had committed aggression. It might be that there were Middle East precedents. We should consider whether the attitude which European arms suppliers had taken with regard to Israel provided a helpful precedent for dealing with Argentina (in this connection, the Prime Minister would be grateful for details of arms supplies from European countries to Israel - which countries now sent arms and when did the others cease to do so).

B.F. I should be grateful for further advice on these points in due course.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL