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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

AT [signature]

4 October 1984

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Dear Andrew,

Sleipner

Please refer to your letter of 17 September to Michael Reidy on this subject, and his reply of 27 September.

The Foreign Secretary was glad to hear of the prospect of further movement shortly in the negotiations. When he met the Norwegian Prime Minister briefly in New York last week, Mr Willoch took the opportunity to complain about delays over our response on Sleipner, about which he was clearly very concerned. We have considerable interests in Norway as a major NATO partner, not least in the defence field, and the sooner this irritant in our relationship can be settled, the better.

The Foreign Secretary also hopes that the question of a satisfactory gas export regime can be quickly resolved. It would be extremely damaging if the negotiations with the Norwegians were to be successfully completed and we were then to find ourselves in difficulties over an export regime. Sir Geoffrey Howe realises that the hearing by the European Court of Justice of the Bulk v Sun oil case in the next few months is a potentially awkward time to be approaching the Commission about a gas export regime. This is a point which we shall be discussing with other Departments concerned.

I am sending copies of this to the Private Secretaries to members of ES, to John Graham (Scottish Office), Michael Saunders (Attorney General's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,  
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

Andrew Turnbull Esq  
10 Downing Street

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