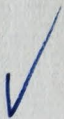


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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 May 1982

copy with ref
prol cds
47 DS 8

Dear David,

Argentine Aircraft - Laser Equipment

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your letter of 3 May.

Yours ever

John Major

David Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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SECRET

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~830 7822~~ 218 2111/3

MO 5/21

3rd May 1982

Dear John,

ARGENTINE AIRCRAFT - LASER EQUIPMENT

I understand that Sir Timothy Kitson mentioned to the Prime Minister the possibility that Argentine Mirage aircraft could be fitted with laser equipment.

The Argentines had 14 Mirage III (now down to 12) supplied by France and primarily designed for air defence. These aircraft are not equipped with lasers.

The Argentines also have 23 Mirage IV, bought from Israel, which have a primary role of ground attack. In this role a laser can be used in two ways. It can provide range information to the weapon aiming system which improves accuracy of attack against ground targets. Secondly, a laser can be used for illuminating a target on to which a suitable weapon will then home (the so-called "smart bomb"). However, our intelligence assessment is that no Argentine aircraft have a laser capability.

It is true, however, that both the Mirage III and V can be fitted with types of laser equipment (this is the case with some of the French and Israeli Mirages) and knowledge of this may have caused Sir Timothy Kitson to raise the matter. We suggest that if any reply to Sir Timothy is required it is confined to the general statement that this question had already been investigated and it is not believed to be a problem.

Yours ever,

(D B OMAND)

A J Coles Esq

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