

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. 182/83



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 June, 1983

*OPS*  
*Subject: Defence Sales Pt 3*  
*Mester*  
My dear Prime Minister,

It has been the common aim of both our Governments for some time now to strengthen our relations in the defence field, and I am very pleased that Geoffrey Pattie's recent visit to India was just as successful as the one John Nott paid to you last autumn. I am also encouraged by the progress that has been made in exchanges at official level such as those between our scientists on the light combat aircraft programme (including the British RB 199 engine) and on the Memorandum of Understanding on defence equipment co-operation generally which your Defence Secretary, Mr. Kaul, has been discussing this week in London with Ministry of Defence officials. I can assure you that Britain will play her full part in improving collaboration between our two countries - not only in the supply of equipment to meet your Armed Forces' requirements but also in helping to build up the indigenous capability in India to which I know you attach great importance. The Rolls Royce Adour engine and Jaguar aircraft programmes have been outstanding examples of what can be done in this area.

It has been in this spirit that my Government has been actively supporting both Westlands in their proposals to meet the Indian Navy's requirement for an ASW helicopter with the Sea King and British Aerospace in their offer to supply Sea Eagle, the most advanced air-to-sea missile in the Royal Navy's own programme. I was delighted therefore to hear that the Sea King is your Government's preferred choice and that your officials have very recently completed the final contract negotiations with the firms concerned. I have since heard of some delay in concluding the matter, which is why I am sending you this message at what is for me, as you will understand, a very

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busy time. I am confident that the combination of Sea King (which performed so well in the Falklands) and Sea Eagle will prove to be an excellent one for the Indian Navy and I do hope to hear in the near future that the contracts have been signed. This will give the prospects for future defence collaboration between India and Britain timely encouragement, which I am sure we should both welcome.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

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Her Excellency Shrimati Indira Gandhi