

From: Dr Alan Kemp, Private Secretary



Minister of State
for Defence Procurement
D/MIN/AB/6/3/4

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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7 August 1985

Pinehurst

Dear Charles,

Dr
8/17

I understand that the Prime Minister raised with Mr Butler in the course of discussions on the future of Shorts in EA on 29 July, the question of possible implications for the RAF Basic Trainer programme of the selection of a Garrett-engined version of the Tucano aircraft. This note is intended to summarise the position.

The RAF Basic Trainer aircraft is being purchased on a firm price basis with Shorts, the prime contractor, responsible for producing an airframe and engine combination that meets an overall performance specification.

From the outset it has been and remains Short's judgement that the Garrett TPE 331-12B engine will satisfy the aircraft's requirements and that Garrett will achieve the performance level claimed within the timescale of the project needs. MOD(PE) accepted this view in carrying out their own assessment, but noted there was inevitably a small development risk with the Garrett engine which had not previously flown in the Tucano.

While it is correct that the particular version of the TPE 331 selected for the Tucano is new, it represents a combination of existing well proven elements within the Garrett range and the risk of failing to achieve the desired performance level is considered low and acceptable. The main engine in fact is derived from a product with over 1.5M hours flying in commercial applications. The gearbox is a well-proven unit off a military aircraft.

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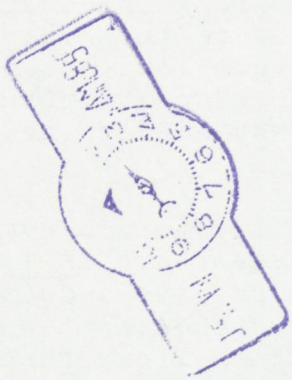
Charles Powell Esq

The project timescale is tight but Garrett have already begun engine running of a development engine/gearbox combination, with a definitive engine due to run in December of this year. A Company development aircraft is due to fly with a lower standard engine by the end of the year and a production standard aircraft and engine combination is scheduled to fly in May 1986 to meet an In-Service date of 1 January 1987.

There is thus no reason to doubt the ability to achieve the technical objectives of the programme. However there is little margin for programme slippage. We expect to receive a detailed schedule from Shorts after which a definitive assessment can be made. There is at this stage no reason to believe that the engine programme will jeopardise achievement of the overall objectives.

Minister(DP) has already personally, as recently as the Paris Air Show, stressed to the responsible Garrett project manager the importance he attaches to the company achieving the intended project deadlines.

Alan Kemp.



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cc: Nick Owen

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 August 1985

This is just to record that the Prime Minister has seen and noted your letter of 7 August about the implications for the RAF Basic Trainer programme of the selection of a Garrett-engined version of the Tucano aircraft. She was grateful for this explanation.

Timothy Flesher

Dr. Alan Kemp,
Office of the Minister of State for Defence
Procurement,
Ministry of Defence.

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