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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~930722~~ 218 2111/3

29th May 1982

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f.a.

Dear John,

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT - ARGENTINE MERCHANT SHIPS

*Sentence deleted and retained under Section 3(4).
(Wayland, 15 May 2012)*

At CINCFLEET's request my Secretary of State has therefore authorised her addition to the list of vessels which cannot be designated as combat or auxiliary ships but which pose a threat to the survivability of the Task Force. This means that under the ROE currently in force, the CHUBUT, like the fishing vessels CONSTANZA and MARIA ALEJANDRA, can be prevented from continuing its task by the use of minimum force when it has been positively identified either inside or outside the Total Exclusion Zone. These vessels are only to be attacked as a last resort, if they fail to heed all warnings.

CINCFLEET has also asked for the fishing vessel SANTA EUGENIA to be added to the list of Argentine ships classed as naval auxiliaries for ROE purposes. Current ROE permit our forces to attack auxiliaries both within the TEZ and outside it should the vessels show hostile intent. SANTA EUGENIA is currently believed to be preparing to run the Falkland Islands' blockade with supplies but your legal advisors have ruled that unless it were supplying naval units the vessel would not meet the definition of a naval auxiliary. In the light of this advice the Secretary of State has decided that the ROE which now apply to SANTA EUGENIA should not be amended since she could in any case be stopped inside the TEZ where the ROE permit attacks on "any merchant ship or fishing vessel which appears to be engaged in re-supply activity."

I am copying this letter to John Coles (No 10) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours,
John Ridley
(J E RIDLEY) (MISS)

J Holmes Esq

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