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8 April 1982

CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC
AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Note by the Secretaries

1. Following the declaration of an Exclusion Zone surrounding the Falkland Islands, it is necessary to issue instructions to HMS SPARTAN; she will be the first SSN to enter the Zone where her arrival is expected to be late pm Sunday 11 April. Unless Ministers are notified or decide otherwise, these instructions will apply to the other submarines as they arrive on station.
2. The following instructions are proposed:
 - a. Any vessels positively identified inside the Exclusion Zone as being Argentine warships, submarines and naval auxiliaries may be attacked.
 - b. After the first successful attack, withdraw from scene of action and report. Having reported or, if unable to clear report after 12 hours, continue patrol.
 - c. Situation Reports are to be made at your discretion as soon as possible after any subsequent successful attacks and on all Argentine units detected.
 - d. Additionally, if attacked you are authorised to retaliate as necessary for your self defence both inside and outside the Exclusion Zone.

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3. These draft instructions have been agreed by the Chief of the Defence Staff in consultation with officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (including the Legal Adviser), Ministry of Defence and Cabinet Office.

Signed ROBERT ARMSTRONG
R L WADE-GERY
D H COLVIN

Cabinet Office

8 April 1982

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