

SECRET



23

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000

DIRECT DIALLING 01-218

MO 5/21

*Dear John*

*mr*

*A.J.C. 5  
f-c.*

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR CERTAIN SURVEILLANCE  
AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING VESSELS

You should be aware that the Secretary of State has approved the attached submission, giving CDS the authority to amend the ROE initially for the CONSTANZA and MARIA ALEJANORA and subsequently for other Argentine vessels known to be engaged in surveillance and intelligence gathering operations.

I am copying this letter to Brian Fall (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,*  
*Jane Ridley*  
Miss J E RIDLEY

A J Coles Esq

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

2038/1/4

CNS  
CGS  
CAS  
PUS  
SECCOSSECRETARY OF STATERULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR CERTAIN SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING VESSELS

1. As you are aware, evidence now obtained from the FV NARWAL has provided conclusive proof of the involvement of two vessels - CONSTANZA and MARIA ALEJANORA - in intelligence gathering activities under naval direction. In the light of this, CINCFLEET has requested, on behalf of the Task Group Commander, Rules of Engagement (ROE) to allow him to take action against these vessels without warning. The ROE you agreed on Saturday 8 May allowed this action to be taken only against merchant ships and fishing vessels within 150 nautical miles of the centre of the TEZ which appeared to be engaged in resupplying the Falkland Islands.
2. The possibility of including these two vessels on the list of Argentine Naval Auxiliaries, thus allowing action to be taken against them without warning within the TEZ, has been considered. However, advice from the Foreign Office legal adviser on the FV NARWAL was that it and similar vessels could not be classified as Naval Auxiliaries. Existing ROE for dealing with surveillance and intelligence gathering vessels allow action to be taken only after the vessels have refused to comply with a warning to leave the area. This carries with it the disadvantage that the surveillance unit can comply with the warning and leave the area only to return at a later date. FV NARWAL had done this and was captured after her re-appearance.
3. Bearing in mind the vulnerability of the lines of communication to the Task Force and the Amphibious Group, it is important to allow action to be taken against these vessels both inside and outside the TEZ. It is proposed, therefore, that the existing instructions to all UK Forces engaged in Operation CORPORATE for dealing with Argentine surveillance and intelligence gathering vessels should be amended so far as the CONSTANZA and MARIA ALEJANORA are concerned as follows:

"When positively identified inside or outside the TEZ the vessels named above are to be prevented from continuing that task by the use of minimum force".

Depending on the circumstances this may result in the sinking of the vessel - for example the recent attack by the Sea Harrier on FV NARWAL.

SECRET  
1 of 2

SECRET



SECRET

4. If other vessels are subsequently identified as falling into the same category as the CONSTANZA and the MARIA ALEJANARO the instructions would be amended to include them. I should be grateful for your approval to issue the revised instruction to the Task Force.



10th May 1982

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

SECRET

2 of 2

SECRET

Covering TOP SECRET

CF

22a

Na

MR 19/11

CAN AIRCRAFT LAND ON  
PORT STANLEY AIRSTRIP?

We know that the airfield has  
been cratered, but I cannot  
say to what extent the Argentine  
forces may have been able to  
make repairs.

Covering TOP SECRET

**TOP SECRET**  
TOP SECRETREPRODUCTION COPY 1 OF 1 COPYBackground Note

We were able to fly a photo-reconnaissance mission after the first bombing raid on the Port Stanley airstrip. After the second attack, the Task Force Commander was unable to mount a similar mission. He has been asked to do so as soon as circumstances permit. The intelligence assessment is that aircraft with short take off and landing distances, for instance a lightly loaded Hercules may be able to use Port Stanley airstrip or grass airstrips elsewhere on the island, but we have no information about any such air movement.

**TOP SECRET**  
TOP SECRET