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Prime Minister

Copy No 2 of 5 copies
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Mr. Pym instructed F.C.O.

London SW1A 2AH

Official to send this letter just
before he left for Washington. He was
not aware of the decision when he saw
you at 8.30 this morning.

A.J.C. $\frac{22}{4}$.

22 April 1982

Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO
CABINET OFFICE

~~for~~
This is to be discussed further.

AR $\frac{22}{4}$
p.a.

My dear Robert,

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has seen a copy of your letter of 21 April to David Omand about the proposal by CDS to take an SSN outside the MEZ. He has asked me to say that he was not consulted about this after yesterday morning's meeting of OD(SA), and he does not agree. In effect, as Mr Pym understands it, this proposal increases the risk that an Argentine submarine may be engaged and sunk when it is neither in the MEZ itself nor in the direct path between the British task force and the Falkland Islands (both of which contingencies are of course covered by existing rules of engagement). Needless to say this risk assumes particular relevance in the light of Mr Pym's current visit to Washington. I assume there can be no question of the SSN leaving the MEZ on such a manoeuvre while the visit is in progress. The option of an attack on the Argentine naval force outside the MEZ and in its current patrol area would be a major policy decision which has not yet been considered by Ministers. There was no suggestion at the briefing this morning on SSN operations outside the MEZ either that a decision had been taken or that one was necessary in the near future. The impression left was that this was merely an option for future consideration.

Yours ever
Antony
Antony Acland

cc: A J Coles Esq
NUMBER 10
D Omand Esq
MOD