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SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

The attached paper was issued at 1900 hours on 7 May 1982. It contains information and suggests the line to take on the following -

1. Mr Pym's Press Conference
2. Sporting links with Argentina
3. Are we at war?

Cabinet Office

7 May 1982

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LINE TO TAKE

1. Mr Pym's Press Conference

A transcript is attached.

2. Sporting links with Argentina (Reports of footballers' doubts about World Cup)

Government are keeping the position under review. Present policy is to discourage all bilateral sporting contact in United Kingdom or in Argentina. No objection at present to teams and individuals competing in international events (including the World Cup) held in other countries where Argentina may be represented. Reports in the press that the Minister of Sport will meet the Football Associations involved (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland) next week to advise on participation in the World Cup are incorrect. (The occasion is a press launch of a guidance leaflet for British football fans planning to travel to Spain.)

3. Are we at war?

'War' is a technical term with some complex implications. In the legal sense there is no war unless one or other side declares it or recognizes that a state of war exists. Neither side has done either (Mr Costa Mendez's remarks after the South Georgia operation that we were "technically at war" were evidently off the cuff remarks and have not been confirmed or repeated). Our operations in the South Atlantic are in self defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter (text below). We are enforcing the Total Exclusion Zone which cuts off supplies to the Argentine forces, which are illegally occupying the Falklands in defiance of Security Council Resolution 502. We are not in a state of general war against Argentina.

Article 51

"Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the UN, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by members in the exercise of this right of self defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."