



Mike Pattison

I would be grateful if you could let me know whether you are content with Feo's draft letter to George Foulkes (attached). The Lord President will want to write this morning.

Henry Bastian
20/5

Agreed by none

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MA 20/5.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

LORD PRESIDENTS OFFICE
C 1
19 MAY 1982
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

19 May 1982

Dear David,

You asked us to produce the draft of a reply which Mr Biffen might send to Mr George Foulkes MP in response to the question which the latter raised in the House about the mechanism to be used for informing the House if we were legally in a state of war with Argentina.

/ I enclose a draft accordingly.

Yours ever,

for (J E HOLMES)
Private Secretary

David Heyhoe Esq
PS/Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
LONDON SW1

Registered
No.

DRAFT LETTER

Type 1 +

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

- Top Secret.
- Secret.
- Confidential.
- Restricted.
- Unclassified.

To:-

George Foulkes, Esq, MP

From

Mr Biffen

Telephone No. Ext.

Department

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

I promised to let you have a reply to the question you put in the House on 13 May about the mechanism for informing the House if we were legally in a state of war with Argentina.

2. As you will be aware, the military and naval operations which we are currently conducting in the South Atlantic are being carried out in exercise of the United Kingdom's inherent right of self-defence recognised in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, following upon the flagrantly unlawful Argentine invasion and occupation of the Falkland Islands. The prime objective of these operations is to secure the withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Islands.

3. In the circumstances, we do not consider that there exists a state of war between this country and Argentina. However, should Argentina formally declare war against the United Kingdom, an immediate statement would be made to the House.