

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 May 1986

Dear Charles

Falkland Islands Fisheries: Sinking of a Taiwanese Fishing Vessel

The reports that have appeared so far in the media about this incident are substantially correct. The Taiwanese fishing vessel ignored a challenge from the Argentines, and made a dash for it. The Argentine coast guard boat chased, fired and sank the Taiwanese boat. At least one Taiwanese was killed. The incident occurred less than 200 miles from the Falklands but more than 200 miles from the Argentine coast, by our definition on the high seas. According to radio reports, the Argentines are seeking to justify their action on the grounds of their claim to sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.

I attach copies of two telegrams to posts abroad giving the facts and the text of an on the record statement which News Department made at the regular 12.30 news conference today.

Lady Young will, with the Secretary of State on his return, be giving urgent consideration to the policy implications of this incident for us.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Howe, Martin Dinham, Ivor Llewelyn and Richard Broadbent.

Yours ever

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

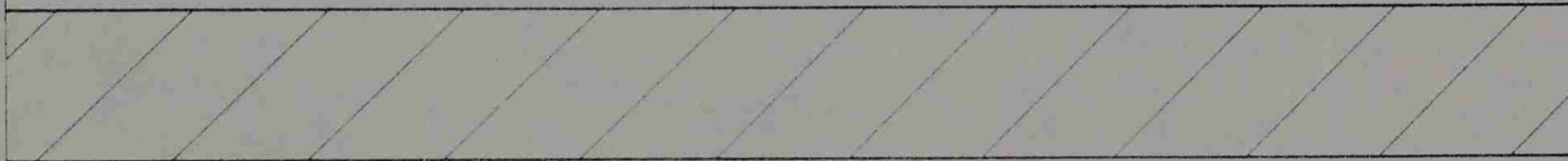
C D Powell Esq
PS/No 10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

OUT TELEGRAM

		Classification CONFIDENTIAL	Caveat	Precedence IMMEDIATE
--	--	---------------------------------------	--------	--------------------------------

ZCZC 1 ZCZC
 TC 2 CONFIDENTIAL
 CAVEAT 3
 FM 4 FM FCO
 TO 5 TO IMMEDIATE BIS BUENOS AIRES
 TELNO 6 TELNO
 OF 7 OF 291200Z MAY 86
 AND TO 8 AND TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, OTTAWA, PORT STANLEY
 9 AND TO IMMEDIATE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POSTS, MOSCOW, WARSAW, SOFIA
 10 AND TO IMMEDIATE EAST BERLIN, TOKYO, SEOUL, BRASILIA, MONTEVIDEO
 11 AND TO IMMEDIATE SANTIAGO, BERNE
 12
 13 FALKLANDS FISHERIES: SINKING OF TAIWANESE VESSEL
 14
 15
 16 1. MIFT gives the text of the statement ^{to be} made by News Department
 17 at 1230 this morning. Following are the details of the
 18 incident:
 19 a) location: the incident took place at a point (48°46S
 20 59°56W) which is outside Argentina's 200-mile maritime zone
 21 measured from the mainland. The vessel, Chiann Der 3, was
 22 first intercepted some 15 miles outside the FIPZ (48°46S
 23 59°56W) and shot at at a point about 5 miles outside the
 24 FIPZ. According to radio reports the Argentines have sought
 25 to justify their action on the grounds that the incident
 /// 26 took place in a zone within 200 miles of the Falklands
 // 27 coast:
 / 28 b) timing: the Taiwanese vessel was intercepted at 1523Z
 29 on 28 May by the Argentine coastguard vessel Prefecto



YYYY				Catchword: Derbes.
MAIN	File number	Dept FID	Drafted by (Block capitals) DAVID BROAD	Telephone no 233 8199
ADDITIONAL	Authorised for despatch by: <i>DB</i> <i>20/1300</i>			
NNNN	For COD use only	Comcen reference	Telegram number	Processed by

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

		Classification CONFIDENTIAL	Caveat	Precedence IMMEDIATE
--	--	---------------------------------------	--------	--------------------------------

<<<<

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

<<<<

Derbes. The vessel was shot at at 1915Z after refusing to proceed to Argentina, and the crew abandoned ship at 2050Z. Two other Taiwanese vessels escaped into the FIPZ. The vessel attacked sent a garbled and emotional message on a 4-metre band claiming it was under machine gun fire and on fire. This was picked up by a Falkland Islander on the Camp radio network. The vessel requested assistance from the British Navy:
 c) response: a Hercules C130 was sent to investigate, and HMS Brilliant also proceeded to the edge of the FIPZ. Two Sea King helicopters and a ~~fighter~~ Hercules were scrambled at 2135Z on reports of urgent assistance needed for men in the water. By 2330Z the Argentine coastguard vessel had recovered 21 survivors and 1 dead crew-member. No crew members were missing. British forces offered medical help, but the Argentines said the three Taiwanese casualties were not seriously injured and they were proceeding at full speed to Puerto Deseado.

HOWE

YYYY

MAIN

FALKLAND ISLANDS FISHERIES
 LIMITED

NNNN

OUT TELEGRAM

		Classification RESTRICTED	Caveat	Precedence IMMEDIATE
ZCZC	1	ZCZC		
TC	2	RESTRICTED		
CAVEAT	3			
FM	4	FM FCO		
TO	5	TO IMMEDIATE BIS BUENOS AIRES		
TELNO	6	TELNO		
OF	7	OF 291200Z MAY 86		
AND TO	8	AND TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, OTTAWA, PORT STANLEY		
	9	AND TO IMMEDIATE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POSTS, MOSCOW, WARSAW, SOFIA		
	10	AND TO IMMEDIATE EAST BERLIN, TOKYO, SEOUL, BRASILIA, MONTEVIDEO		
	11	AND TO IMMEDIATE SANTIAGO, BERNE		
	12			
	13	MIPT: SINKING OF TAIWANESE VESSEL: NEWS DEPARTMENT STATEMENT		
	14			
	15			
	16	BEGINS		
	17	We greatly deplore the Argentine use of force on the high		
	18	seas against an unarmed vessel which was both unjustified and		
	19	excessive. We are shocked at the tragic loss of life and the		
	20	sinking of the vessel. The British Government rejects		
	21	Argentina's claim to exercise jurisdiction over the waters in		
	22	question: this action amounts to an attempt to pursue a		
	23	sovereignty claim by force.		
	24	The British Government believes that the regulation of		
	25	fisheries in the South West Atlantic is an international problem		
///	26	that calls for an international solution based on cooperation.		
//	27	It is for this reason that the British Government has supported		
/	28	moves in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation for		
	29	a collaborative approach to conservation and management for the		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 50px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px);"></div>				
YYYY			Catchword: South	
MAIN	File number	Dept FID	Drafted by (Block capitals) DAVID BROAD	Telephone no: 233 8199
ADDITIONAL	Authorised for despatch by:	Initials <i>DB</i>	Date/time <i>29/5/86</i>	
NNNN	For COD use only	Comcen reference	Telegram number	Processed by

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

		Classification RESTRICTED	Caveat	Precedence IMMEDIATE
--	--	-------------------------------------	--------	--------------------------------

<<<<

1 <<<<
 2 South West Atlantic fishery semi colon and has urged all the
 3 countries concerned, including Argentina, to support it.
 4 Yesterday's incident illustrates all too vividly the validity of
 5 this view. Earlier this week the British Government reminded the
 6 Argentine Government, through the Swiss Government, of the need
 7 to avoid actions in the South West Atlantic that could increase
 8 tension.

9 In answer to questions: Did the incident occur in British
 10 waters? By virtue of our sovereignty over the Falkland Islands
 11 HMG has a right to claim fisheries jurisdiction over adjacent
 12 waters. As far as HMG and international law are concerned the
 13 waters in question remain the high seas, more than 200 miles from
 14 Argentina. What are the implications for British sovereignty?
 15 Argentine action has no implications for British sovereignty over
 16 the Islands nor for our right to claim fisheries jurisdiction.
 17 Will you now claim fisheries jurisdiction? HMG reserves our
 18 position entirely on this matter.

19 ENDS

21 HOWE

24 YYYY

25 MAIN

26 FALKLAND ISLANDS FISHERIES

27 LIMITED

29 NNNN