

7a-b

cc/c



MO 6/20V

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2111/3

7A July 1989

COMO7

Dear Richard,

ARGENTINA: POSSIBLE THREAT TO UK INTERESTS

Aap

The Defence Secretary wrote to the Foreign Secretary on 4th July on defence arrangements in the Falklands in the light of the new situation created by the election of Carlos Menem as President of Argentina.

There was I regret a small typographical error in the third line of the fifth page of his letter. The word "force" should read "form". I enclose a copy of an amended page.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries of OD Ministers, and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

John Colston

(J P COLSTON)
Private SecretaryR H T Gozney Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



assumes greater significance in this new situation. The review was prompted by the assessment that the present ROE might, at least in form, be insufficiently flexible to meet the range of events that might now occur, for example Argentine incursions of the FIPZ which do not appear to represent a direct attack. They could thereby lay us open to the possibility of being provoked into firing unnecessarily upon an Argentine unit in the FIPZ, which would have obvious political disadvantages. If the election of Menem means that there is a greater threat of limited military action designed to hurt or embarrass, it is even more important that the ROE are designed to ensure that our military reactions are proportionate to the nature and threat of any incursion and to provide clear and practical guidance to commanders on the spot.

We have almost completed our work on the review which has proposed new ROE based on the criterion of hostile intent rather than simply physical location. This would be far better suited to deal with the wide range of situations, falling short of reinvasion, with which we might be faced. We must, of course, ensure that these continue to meet our military needs and an important element of the proposals in this respect is an extension of the territorial limit to 12 nautical miles (in line with general practice) from the present 3 miles. I have recently written to you and to the Attorney General about this and another particular issue raised by the reviews. Once I have your views on these points, I will submit my proposals to OD.

Finally, I have in hand a review of possible retaliatory actions open to us in response to Argentine harassment.

In summary, I believe that the present garrison remains appropriate although we might need to review this if we faced serious or continuing harassment (which seems unlikely at present).

ARGENTINA - Colation P143.

10 JUL 1989