

C22-5

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Throughout the latter part of the day elements of the British Task Force, off the Falkland Islands and within the TEZ (Total Exclusion Zone), have been subject to attacks by Argentine fighter and bomber aircraft. The Task Force Commander took the necessary defensive measures and RN Sea Harriers engaged Argentine Mirage and Canberra aircraft off the Falklands. We can confirm that 1 Argentine Mirage fighter and 1 Argentine Canberra bomber have been shot down and that a number of Argentine aircraft also sustained serious damage. Reports indicate that the Argentines may have shot down one of their own Mirage aircraft. There have been no losses of British aircraft.

A Naval bombardment of the airfield at Port Stanley also took place during the day.

We can categorically deny reports that a British ship has been seriously damaged. HM Ships involved only sustained minor splinter damage. There have been no reports of serious casualties among British servicemen.

*J. M. Reed*

DPO (N)

0115 25.82

Sources

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No 10.

At approximately 8 o'clock London time last night, the Argentinian cruiser General Belgrano was hit by torpedoes fired from a British submarine. The cruiser is believed to be severely damaged.

On Friday 23 April HMG warned the Argentine Government that any approach on the part of Argentine warships including submarines and naval auxiliaries or military aircraft which could amount to a threat to interfere with the mission of British Forces in the South Atlantic would encounter the appropriate response.

The cruiser posed a significant threat to the British Task Force maintaining the TEZ. The action taken was fully in accordance with the instructions given to the Task Force Commander based upon the inherent right of self defence under article 51 of the UN Charter.

The British submarine suffered no damage in the engagement and has resumed her patrol ... further details of the engagement will be given as soon as we have them... but this might not be for some time.

The engagement was on the edge of the TEZ - just outside.