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Mr Weston

MJB/4

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Communications with the Submarine

1. I went with Mr Gillmore to a meeting chaired by Mr Blaker, The Chief of Defence Staff, ~~and to~~ VCNS, Mr Hastie-Smith and others were present.
2. I said that I hoped there was no misunderstanding. Neither the Foreign Secretary nor the Foreign Office were proposing that the rules of engagement previously approved should now be changed. That was a matter for collective ministerial decision. All we were trying to ensure was that in a fast moving situation and that with no information so far from Mr Haig in Buenos Aires, Ministers had the maximum flexibility up to the last moment. The CDS said that he entirely understood and endorsed this objective.
3. There was then considerable discussion on how this could be achieved. In the end it was decided that the best course would be to send a signal at midnight tonight (10/11 April) telling the submarine that previous instructions were suspended and that Rule 2 would operate (in brief that the submarine should only fire in self-defence). This would then give Ministers the option at any time up to 0400 on Monday, 12 April to approve a further message reverting to the previous rules of engagement. It should be possible to get such a message through in the last 12 hour listening period.
4. The CDS said that this would be his recommended solution to our problem. It was agreed that Mr Hastie-Smith and Mr Gillmore would draft a note setting it out precisely and the CDS himself would take this to Chequers where he would be lunching with the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Defence Secretaries. Mr Nott had meanwhile sent a message to say that he did not agree to any change until he had had a chance of discussing the matter.

AAA

10 April 1982

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cc: PS
Mr Gillmore