



33  
see 34  
see 40

23 APR 1982

Mr Gillmore

*Minute*

## MARITIME EXCLUSION ZONE

1. The Swiss Chargé telephoned me at 1020 hours today to report that the Argentine Foreign Minister had asked the Swiss Ambassador in Buenos Aires (in the latter's capacity as representative of British interests) whether 'civil merchant vessels were affected by the Maritime Exclusion Zone announced around the Falklands'.
2. I undertook to arrange for the Chargé to be given an urgent reaction from us, and reported this to you immediately on the telephone.

*J B Ure*

J B Ure

16 April 1982

cc:

Mr Wright  
Mr Giffard  
Mr Weston, Defence Department  
Mr Moray Stewart, MOD

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| INDEX                | PA | Action Taken |
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EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND

S. Am. D. (35)  
cc PS see (40)  
PS/Mr Onslow  
PS/PUS  
Mr Hittad  
Mr Wingat  
Mr Williams  
Mr Vane  
Defence Dept.  
Planning Staff  
Sir I. Sinclair

26 APR 1982

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Just 16/4

BY HAND

The Swiss Ambassador presents his compliments to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and has the honour to inform him that, in connexion with the naval blockade of the Falkland Islands, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, inquiring on behalf of the Argentinian Foreign Ministry, wishes to know whether or not the definition "war vessels and naval auxiliaries" includes the ships of the Argentine merchant fleet.

The Ambassador would be very grateful for the Secretary of State's views on this matter.

The Swiss Ambassador avails himself of this opportunity to renew to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs the assurance of his highest consideration.

London, W.1,  
16th April 1982



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| ALQ 050/16           |    |              |  |
| RECEIVED IN REGISTRY |    |              |  |
| DESK OFFICER         |    | REGISTRY     |  |
| INDEX                | PA | Action Taken |  |
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26 APR 1982

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Mr Wright

 See H Gillmore  
 minute of 20/4. *one*  
 2/4

 cc: Mr Giffard  
 Mr Ure  
 Mr Weston  
 Mr Stewart, MOD

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## MARITIME EXCLUSION ZONE

1. You will have seen a copy of Mr Ure's minute about his telephone conversation this morning with the Swiss Chargé (attached).
2. The question relayed by the Swiss Ambassador in Buenos Aires is a tricky one. We certainly cannot say yes lest the Argentines leak an alleged intention to attack merchant vessels to the press; on the other hand to answer in the negative would merely encourage the Argentines to use merchant vessels for reinforcing and supplying the Falkland Islands.
3. I think therefore that we should ask the Swiss to reply on the following lines:

'The announcement of the Maritime Exclusion Zone by Her Majesty's Government on 7 April was quite clear. It stated that from 0400 GMT on Monday 12 April 1982 any Argentine warships and Argentine naval auxiliaries found within the Zone would be treated as hostile and would be liable to be attacked by British forces.

The British Government statement went on to say that the measure was without prejudice to the right of the United Kingdom to take whatever additional measures may be needed in exercise of its right of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.'

4. My inclination would be to go no further than this. The reference to the right of self-defence under Article 51 might just be enough to give the Argentines pause if they are considering the use of merchant ships to resupply the Islands. But I would be grateful if Mr Stewart, to whom I am sending a copy of this minute, would look urgently at the Notice to Mariners, which I think was issued immediately after the announcement, in order to see whether there are any additional points in that document on which we could draw in supplementing the points set out above.

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| ALQ 050/16           |    |              |
| RECEIVED IN REGISTRY |    |              |
| DESK OFFICER         |    | REGISTRY     |
| INDEX                | PA | Action Taken |
|                      |    |              |

D H Gillmore

16 April 1982