

SECRET



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DATE 16-4-82 COPIES 2

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16 APR 1982

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R A Burns Esq
Private Secretary to
Sir Antony Acland KCVO CMG
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
LONDON SW1

16 April 1982

Dear Andrew

MERCHANT SHIPS

Sir Frank Cooper was most grateful for the note about the legal position on attacking Argentinian merchant ships enclosed with your letter of 15 April. This is helpful to our present discussions. There are a few supplementary points on which your Legal Adviser's guidance would also be valuable. These are:

- a. Is the position the same for merchant ships of other nationalities/flags?
 - b. Is the current Argentinian Defence Zone legally established in the same way as our Exclusion Zone (we have not seen, for example, any clear notification to seafarers)?
 - c. Even if we were justified in sinking an Argentine (or other) merchant ship, would we need to give a prior warning?
2. A copy goes to David Wright.

V. Webb
SW

S WEBB
Private Secretary

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