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As from: Cabinet Office,
London,
SW1

2 May 1982

5/21 1115

Dear David,

Falklands : Military Decisions

The PM held an ad hoc meeting at Chequers at 1245 today. Those present were the Home Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Attorney General, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Force Commander and the Permanent Under Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

In the light of the latest intelligence about the movements and intentions of the Argentine fleet, and of the new situation created by the military events of 1 May, it was agreed that British forces should forthwith be authorised to attack any Argentine naval vessel (but not naval auxiliaries) on the same basis as had been approved by OD(SA) on 29 April in the case of the Argentine aircraft-carrier (OD(SA)(82) 22nd meeting, conclusion 1). The Attorney General made the point that any such attack would be harder to justify if it took place a long way away from the Total Exclusion Zone; Admiral Fieldhouse said that the patrol areas of the British units involved made that very unlikely to happen.

A meeting of OD(SA) was held subsequently at 1430 today, also at Chequers. It was attended by those listed above plus the CNS, the CGS, the CAS, Frank Cooper, Jim Eyre, Michael Palliser and Robert Armstrong. Formal minutes will be issued on 4 May. Because of the intervening Bank Holiday, it may be convenient if I set out in this letter an advance record of the military decisions taken:-

- (1) OD(SA)(82)39 and 40 were approved.
- (2) The Defence Secretary was authorised at his discretion to bring Argentine naval auxiliaries within the scope of the decision recorded in paragraph 2 above.

OD(SA) also

- (3) took note of OD(SA)(82)41;

/(4) invited

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- (4) invited the FCO to investigate what more needed to be done to step up the quality and quantity of vernacular and English language broadcasts audible by listeners both in Argentina and in the Falkland Islands (the cost of this was to be regarded as legitimate additional expenditure in the context of our current military operations, and it was suggested that American technical help might be sought if needed);
- (5) invited the FCO, in consultation with the MOD, to consider, e.g. with the ICRC, what arrangements should be made for the removal of Argentine prisoners who might be captured as a result of our military operations;
- (6) agreed to meet again at 0900 on 4 May.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to other members of OD(SA) and the Attorney General; and to the CDS, Antony Acland and Robert Armstrong.

Just over
Robert

R.L. WADE-GERY

D.B. Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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