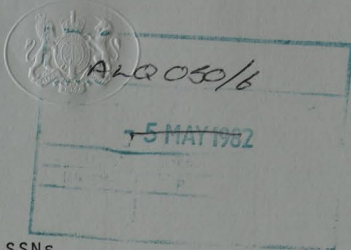


Mr Gillmore ✓



PA 5/5

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SSNs

1. The sinking of the Belgrano has brought to light one point about the timing of communications with the SSNs which is perhaps worth recording.
2. On several occasions over the past few weeks when the question of communicating quickly with the SSNs has been discussed with the Chiefs of Staff, the latter have insisted that the transmission of a message from the UK to SSNs could not be guaranteed in less than 12 hours, because of technical factors concerning sending and receiving cycles.
3. According to Mr Wright's minute of 2 May, ⁽⁵³⁾ the change in the ROE applying to warships outside the TEZ was reported by the PUS at 1330 hours on that day (presumably fairly quickly after Ministers had made the relevant decision). At 2100 hours that evening the Belgrano had been engaged and torpedoed outside the TEZ, ie an interval appreciably less than 12 hours. Assuming that on receipt of his changed rules of engagement the SSN commander needed a certain amount of time to go to action stations, close with and attack the Belgrano, this incident appears to show that the 12-hour delay referred to in paragraph 2 above is very much a worst-case estimate. No doubt the Navy would say that they were simply lucky in being able to get the amended ROE through at their first attempt. But the point may become more than academic if we are contemplating a temporary ceasefire in the near future.

P. J. Weston
Emergency Unit

4 May 1982

cc PS/PUS
Mr Wright

Mr Malleby ^{4/5}
 We spoke of this earlier today. The speed of transmission seems to vary in proportion to the aggressiveness of the instructions. But we may need to use this example to heed when they tell us (as they probably will) that what we have in mind cannot be done because of the difficulties of communications

This is exactly the point I made this morning at the meeting with Mr Jackson & others.

Mr Gillmore



PSJ

PSJ

John
Mr Gillmore
4/5

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SSNs

I think the ROE use the 12 hour delay to sink them per poses.

ANTONY ACLAID

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yes, immediately

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Stamp area with date - 6 MAY 1982

Weston

P. J Weston
Emergency Unit

4 May 1982

cc PS/PUS
Mr Wright

Mr Weston

See PUS's comment

Handwritten initials/signature