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SECCOSSECRETARY OF STATESSN RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE)

1. The Commander-in-Chief Fleet has signalled requesting that the SSN ROE should be aligned with those for surface ships and aircraft should the Argentine Navy attack our forces and their aircraft carrier be assessed by the Task Force Commander as a threatening unit. You will appreciate that this is a case separate from that discussed in the paper about the Argentine carrier ROE now going forward to OD(SA). The occasion could arise if the Argentine Navy decided to make a pre-emptive attack or ignore any warning that we might issue in future.
2. ROE currently approved include Rule 206 for surface ships and aircraft: "Authority is delegated to assume that an attack by an enemy unit is the first in a planned multiple attack. All threatening (ARGENTINIAN) units may be attacked in order to prevent a pre-emptive attack and ensure survivability". The ROE for SSNs outside the Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) are currently governed by SSN Rule One - covert surveillance only - and the SSN may only take offensive action in self defence or against conventional submarines it may detect.
3. Both Commander-in-Chief Fleet and the Task Force Commander point out that if the Argentine carrier was assessed to be a threatening unit following an initial engagement with the Argentine Navy, or if carrier borne aircraft attack our forces, the enemy carrier may be attacked by surface ships or aircraft under the current ROE. In practice the SSN may be the vehicle best suited and best placed to attack the carrier but his ROE do not permit it. We need, therefore, to be able to change the SSN's ROE quickly.
4. The SSNs are operated and controlled from Northwood and the Task Force Commander has no direct link with SSNs on patrol. I propose that authority is delegated to Commander-in-Chief Fleet to authorise SSN Rule Three: "all vessels positively identified as either an Argentinian aircraft carrier, cruiser,

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destroyer, frigate, corvette or submarine may be attacked", should the Task Force Commander report that he considers the Argentine carrier a threatening unit under the terms of Rule 206. I recommend that you seek the agreement of your OD(SA) colleagues to this proposal as a matter of urgency.

30th April 1982

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several stylized, overlapping strokes.

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF