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| DESK OFFICER | | REGISTRY |
| INDEX | PA | Action Taken |
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Mr Gillmore

c. Mr Darwin (with enc)

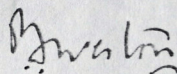
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THE 12 MILE LIMIT : RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

I have now been given a hidden copy of the draft ODSA paper referred to in my earlier minute of today's date. It is attached herewith.

2. The paper makes clear that the proposal would be limited to positively identified Argentine warships, submarines, naval auxiliaries or aircraft performing a military function. But the argumentation in favour of it is weak. The real motive of the Chiefs of Staff is transparently to retaliate for the recent sinking of British warships. As indicated in my earlier minute, to which I do not wish to add, the balance of advantage to HMG lies against this.

3. If however the FCO is once again outnumbered when it comes to ODSA, we might wish to consider as a fallback position the possibility of a public warning to Argentina that any further attack on British ships within 12 miles of the Falkland Islands would render Argentina liable to an appropriate response within 12 miles of the Argentine mainland. This at least would offer a deterrent which, if it were to work, might obviate the need for actual attack within the Argentine 12 mile limit.



P J Weston
Defence Department

27 May, 1982