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ABR23 – MoD MEMO – RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE (cab 148/212)

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23 April 1982

CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE

Note by the Secretaries

The attached note by officials identifies decisions which Ministers need to take on Monday 26 April and may therefore wish to discuss at their meeting on Sunday 25 April.

Signed ROBERT ARMSTRONG
R L WADE-GERY
R L L FACER

Cabinet Office

23 April 1982

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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR ENFORCEMENT OF FALKLAND ISLANDS
TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE (TEZ)

Note by Officials

1. OD(SA) has to date approved Rules of Engagement (ROE)
 - a. for our SSNs within the Maritime Exclusion Zone (MEZ) of 200 nautical miles around the Falkland Islands which are as follows:
 - (1) Any vessels positively identified inside the Exclusion Zone as being Argentine warships, submarines and naval auxiliaries may be attacked.
 - (2) After the first successful attack, withdraw from scene of action and report. Having reported or, if unable to clear report after 12 hours, continue patrol.
 - (3) Situation Reports are to be made at your discretion as soon as possible after any subsequent successful attacks and on all Argentine units detected.
 - (4) Additionally, if attacked you are authorised to retaliate as necessary for your self defence both inside and outside the Exclusion Zone.
 - b. (1) For the transit of the Task Force to the area which, for the area NORTH of 35° South has the following aim: to avoid provocation but to respond to aggression with sufficient firmness to ensure safe transit.
And the instruction that: to achieve transit you may attack any positively identified Argentine naval ship, combat aircraft or submarine which demonstrates hostile intent by coming within 25 miles of a British unit. Minimum force is to be used. All units may assist in defence of any unit which is attacked. Merchant ships may not be attacked. Maritime international law is not to be broken unless necessary in order to achieve aim.
(2) Once the task force has passed 35° South the aim is to: take sufficient action to ensure transit towards United Kingdom MEZ around Falklands.
And the instruction that to achieve transit you may attack any positively identified Argentine naval ship, combat aircraft or submarine which demonstrates hostile intent by coming within 25 miles of a British unit. All units of an Argentinian force may be attacked if one of them initiates an attack on a British unit. Merchant ships may not be attacked. Maritime international law is not to be broken unless necessary in order to achieve aim.

- c. In addition appropriate ROE were authorised in the context of Operation Paraquet.
2. The first surface vessels are due to enter the MEZ on 29 April. Thereafter a Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) can be established and enforced. This paper assumes that such a TEZ would have the same geographical limits as the existing MEZ and would exclude aircraft as well as ships, commercial as well as military traffic and (where necessary) non-Argentines as well as Argentines. To allow adequate time for planning its enforcement, appropriate ROE need to be authorised by 26 April. Authorising these would not in itself commit Ministers to implementing the actual operation. But if the TEZ is to be enforced from 29 April, appropriate public announcements will need to be authorised on 26 April. Once these announcements have been made, Ministers will in effect be committed to subsequent implementation, though some very limited flexibility on the decision to implement will remain until 28 April.
 3. The TEZ has both diplomatic and military objectives. In diplomatic terms, it would demonstrate our resolve with the use of a minimum force while negotiations offer prospects of a peaceful resolution. Successful enforcement of the TEZ therefore could provide negotiating leverage while retaining a degree of international support for the United Kingdom's position. The TEZ should also provide a longer-term opportunity to weaken the morale and fighting capability of the Argentine garrison on the Falklands by denying them food and supplies. If the Argentines were unable or unwilling to break this blockade, internal pressure on their Government to negotiate a solution could mount.
 4. In order to achieve these objectives, action will need to be taken to neutralise Port Stanley airfield and to prevent all aircraft, as well as all ships, from providing supplies to the Argentine garrison. This would involve authorising the ROE set out at Annex A, which may be summarised as follows:

Enforcement of Total Exclusion Zone

Aim is to establish a blockade to prevent entry or exit of all Argentinian surface ships (except designated hospital ships), submarines and aircraft, (including helicopters); and of other merchant ships or civil aircraft which appear to be constituting a threat by acting in support of the Argentine invading forces in the Falkland Islands or otherwise demonstrating hostile intent. Targets include all positively identified Argentinian naval ships,

military aircraft and submarines, all aircraft (including if necessary non-Argentinian aircraft) positively identified as carrying military supplies or personnel, all aircraft on the Falkland Islands, and all aircraft which cannot be positively identified at night or in poor visibility. In addition, the Port Stanley runway and airfield installations (including airfield defences) can be attacked. Minimum force is to be used. Merchant ships are to be warned off as are commercial aircraft not identified as carrying military supplies or personnel; they may be attacked in the last resort, if the warnings are not heeded. In other respects, the instructions in force for all units South of 35° South will apply, with an extra provision that any Argentinian combat aircraft within 40 miles of a United Kingdom unit is deemed to be demonstrating hostile intent. This is necessary as the force comes within range of Super Etendard aircraft carrying the Exocet missile.

5. The geographical scope of the proposed ROE is wider than the TEZ itself in order to allow attacks on targets within the Zone to be launched from outside it. Attacks against any aircraft which cannot be positively identified at night or in poor visibility are included because of probable inability to identify aircraft in such conditions. The Argentinians would be likely to exploit this shortcoming if they appeared able to do so with relative impunity.
6. It will take some time to establish an effective Exclusion Zone, particularly in the air, where the HARRIERS' first duty will be to protect the Task Force. The objective would be to establish local mastery and then gradually to extend control to a wider area.
7. The Government will need to notify the International Civil Aviation Organisation in advance of the intention to implement a Total Exclusion Zone (including air) and to close Port Stanley airfield. It will also be necessary to expand the earlier announcement of a MEZ, to include Argentine merchant ships and other merchant shipping carrying supplies to the Falkland Islands. Draft announcements are attached at Annex B.
8. Ministers' approval is therefore sought for the ROE at Annex A to enforce a Total Exclusion Zone and for the terms of the Announcement at Annex B. These approvals are required on 26 April if the Task Force is to be in a position to enforce the Zone on its arrival on 29 April.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR ENFORCEMENT OF FALKLAND ISLANDS TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE

1. a. Exclusion Zone Limits.

A circle 200 nm radius centred on position 51° 40' South 59° 30' West and from seabed to unlimited height.

b. ROE Area Limits and Applicability.

Applicable to all United Kingdom forces directly engaged in enforcement of the Exclusion Zone.

2. Time Limits.

When ordered until further notice. (United Kingdom forces south of 35°S and not directly engaged in enforcement of the Exclusion Zone continue to be governed by Operation CORPORATE High Seas Serial 2/82; (Paraquet forces are covered separately).

3. Recommended Policies.

POLITICAL

MEANING

EXPANSION

CHARLIE

Escalate

Enforce the Total Exclusion Zone, establishing a blockade to prevent the entry or exit of Argentinian surface ships, submarines and aircraft.

MILITARY

Surface Ship and Aircraft

104 Commanding Officers and Aircraft Captains may take such action as is necessary to achieve their military task, but are not to exceed it.

123 Carry out attacks against designated targets with conventional weapons.
Caveat: Applicable to targets within Exclusion Zone only.

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With suffixes

INDIA	All vessels positively identified as ARGENTINIAN warships, submarines and naval auxiliaries (latter as designated separately).	Night and low visibility identification and attacks will be seriously hampered.
JULIETT	All submarines detected which are assessed to be conventional may be presumed to be ARGENTINIAN.	
LIMA	All aircraft positively identified as ARGENTINIAN AIR FORCE or ARGENTINIAN NAVAL aircraft.	
PAPA	All aircraft which can be positively identified (eg by unloading on the ground or by dropping from the air stores or personnel) as carrying military supplies or military personnel.	Non ARGENTINIAN aircraft may, if assisting the ARGENTINES, be attacked.
SIERRA	All aircraft on the ground in the Falkland Islands	
TANGO	Runways and airport installations including airfield defences in the Falkland Islands	
UNIFORM	All aircraft that cannot be positively identified because of cloud or light conditions.	
202	Authority is delegat@d to attempt to warn off all Merchant Ships and Commercial aircraft within Exclusion Zone which constitute a threat.	

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And Caveat: If application of Rule 202 is ineffective resort should be made to Rule 104.

205 Authority is delegated to attack any ship, submarine or aircraft that demonstrates hostile intent. non ARGENTINIAN units are included.

With Suffix:

JULIETT All submarines detected which are assessed to be conventional may be presumed to be ARGENTINIAN There are unlikely to be non ARGENTINE conventional submarines in the area but only NIMRODS and JEZEBEL fitted SEA KINGS will be able to confirm whether submarine is conventional or nuclear.

And Caveat: Any Argentinian warship or submarine detected within 25 miles and any Argentinian combat aircraft detected within 40 miles of UK warships, RFAs or Supporting Ships is deemed to be demonstrating hostile intent.

206 Authority is delegated to assume that one attack by an enemy unit is the first in a planned multiple attack. All threatening units may be attacked in order to prevent a pre-emptive attack and ensure survivability. (ARGENTINIAN)

207 For the purpose of self-defence, attack on one unit may be considered an attack on all other units in company.

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208 Notwithstanding other Rules which may be in force the commander of a unit has the inherent right to use such force in self defence as may be necessary to protect his command and the lives of his men.

403 Maritime International Law is not to be broken unless it is necessary in order to achieve the aim.

SSNs

MEANING

EXPANSION

FOUR

All vessels positively identified as ARGENTINIAN warships, submarines and naval auxiliaries may be attacked.

Night/poor visibility attacks very unlikely.

FIVE

Any submarine detected not classified nuclear may be presumed to be ARGENTINIAN and may be attacked.

TWELVE

After the first successful attack on a vessel continue patrol in accordance with ROE in force.

THIRTEEN

Situation reports are to be made at discretion on all ARGENTINE units.

ANNEX BTHE TOTAL EXCLUSION ZONE: OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The text of the official announcement would be as follows:

"From () GMT on () 1982, a Total Exclusion Zone will be established around the Falkland Islands. The outer limit of this Zone is the same as for the maritime exclusion zone established on Monday 12 April 1982, namely a circle of 200 nautical miles radius from Latitude 51 degrees 40 minutes South, 59 degrees 30 minutes west.

From the time indicated, the Exclusion Zone will apply not only to Argentinian warships and Argentinian naval auxiliaries but also to any other ship, whether naval or merchant vessel, which is operating in support of the illegal occupation of the Falkland Islands by Argentinian forces. An Air Exclusion Zone will also be established: any aircraft wishing to enter this Zone must seek the necessary authority from the Ministry of Defence in London. Any ship, and any aircraft whether military or civil, which is found within this Zone without due authority ~~will be regarded as hostile and liable to be attacked by British Forces.~~ This measure is without prejudice to the right of the United Kingdom to take whatever additional measures may be needed in exercise of its right of self-defence, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter."

2. This announcement might take the form of a Parliamentary Statement to be made, possibly, on Monday 26 April. Notices to Mariners and Airmen are being prepared to accompany the statement. Briefing will also be provided for British Missions abroad and for the press.

* insert
 "... from the MOD in London will be regarded as operating in support and will therefore be regarded as hostile and will be liable to be attacked by British Forces."