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ABR27 – SCSA NOTE – ARGENTINE MERCHANT VESSELS ON THE HIGH SEAS (cab 148/212)

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CABINET

DEFENCE AND OVERSEA POLICY COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND
FALKLAND ISLANDS

ARGENTINE MERCHANT VESSELS ON THE HIGH SEAS

Note by the Secretaries

1. Officials recommend that, in view of the danger of surveillance of the British Task Force by Argentine fishing vessels or other merchant ships, the following warning should be sent to the Argentine Government, through the Swiss, and subsequently published.

In announcing the establishment of an MEZ around the Falklands Her Majesty's Government made it clear that this measure was without prejudice to the right of the United Kingdom to take whatever additional measures may be needed in exercise of its right to self defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. In this connection Her Majesty's Government now wishes to make clear that all Argentine vessels including merchant vessels or fishing vessels apparently engaging in surveillance of, or intelligence gathering activities against, British forces in the South Atlantic will be regarded as hostile and are liable to be dealt with accordingly.

2. As soon as the Swiss confirmed delivery, an appropriate amendment would be made to British forces' Rules of Engagement.
3. The Sub-Committee are invited to approve this proposal at their meeting at 0900 on 28 April.

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

Cabinet Office

27 April 1982

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