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TEXT OF MOD PRESS STATEMENT

" At approximately 8 p.m. London time this evening the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano was hit by torpedoes fired from a British submarine. The cruiser is believed to be severely damaged.

" On Friday, 23 April, HMG warned the Argentine Government that any approach on the part of Argentine warships, including submarines, naval auxiliaries or military aircraft which could amount to a threat to interfere with the mission of British forces in the South Atlantic would encounter the appropriate response. The cruiser posed a significant threat to the British Task Force maintaining the TEZ. The action taken was fully in accordance with the instructions given to the Task Force Commander based on the inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. The British submarine suffered no damage in the engagement and has resumed her patrol. Further details of the engagement will be given as soon as we have them.

[If pressed on whether the engagement took place within the TEZ the Ministry of Defence will reply that it was on the edge of and just outside the TEZ. In doing so however they will draw attention to the warning issued on 23 April, to the fact that the General Belgrano was posing a significant threat to the British task force and that action was taken in self-defence.]