



Security Council

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LETTER DATED 3 MAY 1982 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL.

In my letter of 24 April 1982 (S/14997), I set out the terms of a communication made by my government to the government of Argentina on 23 April to the effect 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 the British forces in the South Atlantic will encounter the appropriate response". I now have the honour to inform you that on 2 May 1982, the British Ministry of Defence issued the following statement:

"At approximately 8.00 pm 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, Her Majesty's Government 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 Total Exclusion Zone. 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 United Nations Charter."

In my letter of 28 April 1982 (S/15006), I set out the terms of an announcement of a Total Exclusion Zone with effect from 1100 GMT on 30 April 1982. On 3 May 1982, the British Ministry of Defence issued the following statement:

"At about 4.00 am London time today two armed Argentine patrol craft type naval auxiliaries fired on a Royal Navy Sea King from HMS Hermes. Two Royal Navy Lynx helicopters from ships of the task force then engaged the ships with missiles. One of the ships was sunk and the other certainly damaged.

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The engagement took place North of East Falkland and some 90 miles inside the Exclusion Zone. No damage to British helicopters has been reported. Further details will be given as soon as they become available."

These actions have been taken in exercise of the United Kingdom's inherent right to self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, having regard to Argentina's unlawful invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982, her refusal to comply with paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 502 and her consequent illegal occupation of British territory by armed force.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. D. PARSONS
