



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 June 1982

Dear John

I felt that I should write to you since I may have misled you during Questions on my visit to the United States of America in the House yesterday.

In answering your Question about Argentina's indiscriminate laying of mines in the Falkland Islands, I referred to a Disarmament Convention forbidding the laying of plastic mines, and said that Argentina was not a signatory of this Convention. I was referring to the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which is known as the "Weaponry Convention", and I should have made it clear that this Convention is not yet in force, and that Argentina is in fact a signatory.

However, when the Convention comes into force, it will ban the use of plastic weapons intended to injure by fragments not

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detectable by X-ray; and although what I said in the House yesterday is therefore not correct, I still think it is deplorable that Argentina should use plastic mines in the Falkland Islands when it has signed a Convention of this sort, even if it is not in force.

Yours
sincerely

Raymond

Sir John Biggs-Davison, M.P.