



## **FORUM:** HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

## **QUESTION OF:** FALKLANDS WAR

## **BACKGROUND**



UNITED NATIONS

The Falklands War was a territorial dispute of the Falkland Islands, and the islands of South Georgia and South Sandwich; between the states of the UK and Argentina. The UK was at the time in control of the territories, but didn't particularly want to keep them, as they were an economic inhibitor for the UK in South America. Argentina wanted the territories for their own, and the UK foreign office was fully ready to hand it over to them in the diplomatic meetings that occurred in the 1960s. The locals, however, preferred UK control; and created enough of a public disturbance that the UK foreign office could not simply hand the territories over to Argentina. This caused tensions in the area between the two countries to increase over the next couple of decades.

Argentina got a change of government at the start of the 1980s, and General Leopold Galtieri took control of Argentina as Acting President. He led a militaristic government known as a "junta", and other high-ranking officials included Air Brigadier Bazilio Lami Dozo and Admiral Jorge Anaya. Admiral Anaya was the one who first proposed solving the issue of the Falklands using military force instead of diplomacy, and was the major architect behind the Argentinian invasion. He thought that, given that the UK government didn't want the territories anyway, they wouldn't react to such an invasion. Apart from securing the territory for Argentina, the Galtieri government also wanted to use the invasion to foster feelings of patriotism among their civilians toward the new regime.



The first offensive act of the war is said to be on the 19th of March 1982 when a group of Argentinian nationals, who had been infiltrated by Argentinian agents, raised an Argentine flag on South Georgia island, which was under UK control. The UK, in response to this disturbance of the peace, dispatched the Royal Navy ice patrol vessel *HMS Endurance* -



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captained by Nicholas Barker - to the territory on the 25th. The Argentinian government, now nervous that further Royal Navy assets would arrive in a short time, decided to accelerate their invasion plans to the 2nd of April.

On the 2nd of April the Argentinian military launched an invasion on the territories known as “Operation Rosario”, and began occupying the territories. The invasion was met with resistance from the governor of the Falkland Islands - Sir Rex Hunt - and a garrison of 68 Royal Marines, commanded by Major Mike Norman. A few locals volunteered to join the defence force, but due to their lack of equipment and military experience they were mostly used as lookouts. The garrison was, however, defeated by the overwhelming numbers of Argentinian troops. The first wave of the Argentinian invasion was commanded by Commander Guillermo Sanchez-Serabots, and defeated Major Norman’s garrison. When the second wave of troops arrived, Sir Hunt surrendered to the Argentinian troops. He and his family were taken captive and flown to Argentina, but then returned to the UK shortly after.

Before the invasion, the UK had sent three Royal Navy vessels to reinforce the *HMS Endurance* - two ships and a nuclear submarine - but these assets did not arrive soon enough to help combat the invasion. On the 27th of March, in a crisis meeting headed by UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Admiral Sir Henry Leach (who was the First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff), it was agreed that in case of an invasion the UK should send a retaliatory force, and on the 1st of April an order was sent to fleet assets in the Mediterranean



to prepare to sail to the contested territories. When news of the invasion reached the UK government, a task force was authorized to retake the occupied territories. News of the invasion reached the UK via sources within Argentinian command, as well as BBC Journalist

Laurie Margolis who had a radio conversation with a local. The name given to the UK retaliatory effort was “Operation Corporate”, and lasted from the 1st of April to the 20th of June 1982. Also, on the 6th of April, a UK war cabinet was set up to provide political oversight to the campaign. While Prime Minister Thatcher mostly dominated this cabinet, it was noted by other members of the cabinet that she did not fail to consult others.



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On the 3rd of April, a UN Defence Committee meeting was called by UK Ambassador to the UN, Sir Anthony Parsons, which determined that Argentina was in breach of international peace and called for Argentinian forces to be removed from the contested territories immediately. Argentina, for their part, completely ignored this. However, it did give the UK the political upper-hand. This is mainly because Sir Parsons had, in his draft resolution, referred significantly to Argentina's breach of the UN's Charter VII, which states that no dispute will be solved through violence. This also freed the UK under UN jurisdiction to engage the Argentinian forces in order to defend their sovereign territory. The fighting lasted 74 days, from the Argentine invasion on the 2nd of April, to the Argentine surrender to the UK on the 14th of July, 1982. In the end 649 Argentinian military personnel, 255 British military personnel, and 3 Falklands locals were killed due to the conflict.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Falklands:** An Archipelago belonging to the British Crown off the Coast of Argentina, the ownership of which is the main point of contention between the UK and Argentina in the committee.



**South Sandwich Islands:** Another set of Islands located near the Falklands, part of the wider conflict.

**Ascension Islands:** A Crown Colony of the UK in the Central Atlantic used as a forward base of operations by the UK in the war.

**Junta:** The name of a regime that has been established via military coup, typically an authoritarian dictatorship.



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**Amphibious:** Referring to both land and sea.

**PoW:** Prisoner of War

**ARA General Belgrano:** Argentine Navy Light Cruiser sunk by the British Navy.

**HMS Sheffield:** Royal Navy Destroyer sunk by the Argentine Navy.

**Exclusion Zone:** Area closed off by a government or any other authority with threat of repercussion.

**Exocet Missile:** Missile variant that can be used by aircraft and surface vessels alike.

## **MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED**

### **UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Capital City:** London

**Head of State:** HM Queen Elizabeth II

**Head of Government:** MP HE Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher

**Flag:**





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The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) is an island country that sits north-west of mainland Europe. It is made up of mainland Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) and the northern part of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland). It has numerous smaller islands. The UK is low lying in the east. It has mountains in the north of England, in Scotland, in Northern Ireland and in Wales.

Relative to the War in the Falklands, the UK was the defending side in the war having their sovereign territory attacked by the Argentine Junta.

On April 6th, the British Government set up a war cabinet to provide day-to-day political oversight of the campaign. This was the critical instrument of crisis management for the British with its remit being to "keep under review political and military developments relating to the South Atlantic, and to report as necessary to the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee". The War Cabinet met at least daily until it was dissolved on August 12th. Although Margaret Thatcher is described as dominating the War Cabinet, Lawrence Freedman notes in the *Official History of the Falklands Campaign* that she did not ignore opposition or fail to consult others.

## **ARGENTINE REPUBLIC**

**Capital City:** Buenos Aires

**Head of State & Government:** Leopoldo Galtieri

**Flag:**





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In the period leading up to the war — and, in particular, following the transfer of power between the military dictators General Jorge Rafael Videla and General Roberto Eduardo Viola late in March 1981—Argentina had been in the midst of devastating economic stagnation and large-scale civil unrest against the National Reorganization Process, the military *junta* that had been governing the country since 1976

In December 1981, there was a further change in the Argentine military regime, bringing to office a new *junta* headed by General Leopoldo Galtieri (acting president), Air Brigadier Basilio Lami Dozo and Admiral Jorge Anaya. Anaya was the main architect and supporter of a military solution for the long-standing claim over the islands, expecting that the United Kingdom would never respond militarily.

By opting for military action, the Galtieri government hoped to mobilize the long-standing patriotic feelings of Argentines towards the islands, diverting public attention from the chronic economic problems and the ongoing human rights violations of its Dirty War, bolstering the junta's dwindling legitimacy.

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Capital City:** Washington DC

**Head of State & Government:** Ronald Reagan

**Flag:**





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The United States of America (USA), commonly known as the United States (U.S.) or America, is a country primarily located in North America. The third-largest country in the world by land and total area, the U.S. consists of 50 states, a federal district, five major unincorporated territories, nine Minor Outlying Islands and includes 326 Indian reservations. It shares land borders with Canada to its north and Mexico to its south and has maritime borders with several other countries. With a population of over 334 million, it is the most populous country in the Americas and the third-most populous in the world. The national capital of the United States is Washington, D.C., and its most populous city and principal financial center is New York City.

The United States declared independence on July 4 1776, and went on to become the first country founded on Enlightenment principles of unalienable natural rights, consent of the governed, and republicanism. The U.S. Navy was willing to lend Britain an aircraft carrier during its 1982 campaign to retake the Falkland Islands from Argentina if the Royal Navy lost either of its two carriers, Defense Department officials said yesterday.

Although an offer to use the USS Guam, a helicopter carrier, was not made because the need did not arise, officials said such discussions took place as part of a large-scale effort to try to ensure that Britain's 100-ship armada did not meet defeat in a battle 8,000 miles from its home waters.

Pentagon officials were asked about the U.S. role in the Falklands campaign--which began with the Argentine seizure of the islands on April 2 and ended June 14 after the British recaptured them--in the aftermath of a detailed report on the extent of U.S. help that appears this week in the respected British magazine The Economist.

## **UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS**

**Capital City:** Moscow

**Head of State:** Leonid Brezhnev

**Head of Government:** Nikolai Tikhonov

**Flag:**



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The Soviet Union, officially the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), was a transcontinental country that spanned much of Eurasia from 1922 to 1991. The country was a successor state to the Russian Empire; it was nominally a federal union of fifteen national republics, the largest and most populous of which was the Russian SFSR, but in practice both its government and economy were highly centralized until its final years. As a one-party state governed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it was a flagship communist state.

## UNITED NATIONS

**Capital City:** New York

**Chief Administrative Officer:** Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

**Flag:**







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The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization whose stated purposes are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and serve as a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. It is the world's largest international organization. The UN is headquartered in New York City, and the UN has other offices in Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna, and The Hague, where the International Court of Justice is headquartered.

The resolution passed by the UNSC regarding the war in the Falklands went on to urge both Argentina and the United Kingdom to cooperate with the Secretary-General to achieve a ceasefire and, if necessary, to arrange a possible dispatch of United Nations observers to the region to monitor the implementation of a ceasefire. The resolution concluded by requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report on developments no later than seven days after the implementation of the resolution.

## **PREMISE**

The committee starts on the 3rd of April 1982, the day after the Argentine invasion occurs. The delegates have convened to try to reach a diplomatic solution to the invasion.

Key events that will be of importance during the committee are as follows:

**UK Declaration of War:** Margaret Thatcher spearheads military operations to retake the invaded territories by force. The UK gains the diplomatic high ground by arguing in the UN that it is merely defending its sovereign territory, and so provokes no significant international backlash

**Sinking of the General Belgrano:** 323 Argentine seamen's lives are claimed by the Royal Navy Submarine *HMS Conqueror*. This is a relatively large death toll (just under half the number of total Argentine lives lost during the war). This also is an action of the UK against the UN Charter, which had ordered a ceasefire between the two nations

The committee concluded on Monday the 14th of June 1982, by which point in real-world history UK military forces have succeeded in retaking the contested territories, and Argentina has surrendered.



## **SOLUTION ALTERNATIVES**

### **British Military Victory:**

The British armed forces achieve military superiority in the Falklands region, and the Argentine armed forces surrender after significant loss of troops. The Argentine government is forced to recognise the UK's sovereignty in the area, and signs a treaty in the UN that prohibits Argentina from producing more than a certain amount of weapons or military vehicles. This defeat adds to the social unrest in Argentina, and in 1983 Leopoldo Galtieri's junta is overthrown, and Argentina returns to a democratic system with Raul Alfonsi as President.

### **British Diplomatic Victory #1:**

The British diplomatic efforts prevail, and an agreement is signed between the two states that dictates that the contested territories are under the sovereignty of the UK, but gives Argentina exclusive economic rights. The boost to the economy helps Leopoldo Galtieri's regime hold on for a while longer, but the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands don't forgive the Argentinians. After the protests that grow increasingly violent, the UK has no choice but to enforce its military presence in the area, and the economic rights given to Argentina are severed. Galtieri's junta, which is struggling as it is, falls after this and Argentina returns to a democratic system with Raul Alfonsi as President.

### **British Diplomatic Victory #2:**

The British diplomats succeed in getting Argentina to agree to a ceasefire. In the intermission in the fighting, intensive propaganda programs are launched that exult the virtues of being under Argentine sovereignty to the Falkland Islands' locals. The governor of the territory, Sir Rex Hunt, is replaced by someone more sympathetic to the Argentinians. Eventually the locals agree to Argentinian sovereignty. The UK government then arranges for sovereignty to be passed officially and peacefully, and sovereignty passes to Argentina. With the significant boost to the economy and public morale, Leopoldo Galtieri's junta gets stronger until Argentina becomes one of the most powerful nations in South America. Due to the exploitation of trade routes that pass through the territory Argentina gets to the point where it is a major international economic power, and one of the contenders in the political issues of the early 21st century alongside the USA, China, and Russia.



## **Argentine Military Victory:**

The Argentine armed forces, after invading and occupying all parts of the contested territories, miraculously succeed in defending the land from British retaliatory forces against all the odds, and the UK government decides to surrender sovereignty instead of losing more soldiers. This is an important political victory for Argentina, and Leopoldo Galtieri's junta sees increased support from the Argentine public. However, the locals continue to resist the Argentine authority, which leads to an Argentine civil war. Argentina then splits into the Kingdom of North Argentina, led by King Leopoldo Galtieri; and the South Argentina Republic, which is a democracy and has Raul Alfonsi as President. The Falkland Islands become a sovereign state, with a parliamentary political system.

## **Argentine Diplomatic Victory:**

The Argentine government manages to convince the UK government to hand over sovereignty of the contested territories in return for exclusive economic rights in Argentine territory. This is a significant moral victory for Leopoldo Galtieri's junta, and it immediately begins to gain support from the Argentine public. The UK, however, uses the exclusive economic rights to exploit Argentina's already failing economy, leading to severe economic instability. Coupled with insurrections in and around the Falkland territories, this leads the junta to fall and a new democratic system takes its place, with Raul Alfonsi as President. The members of the junta, however, are not persecuted but instead retire comfortably.

## **UN Diplomatic Victory:**

The UN succeeds in bringing both the UK and Argentina to an agreement that states that the sovereignty of the contested territories will pass to Argentina after a 20-year process of convincing the locals to reconsider Argentine sovereignty. A peace treaty is signed before any bloodshed occurs. Before the 20 years are over, however, Leopoldo Galtieri's junta falls and is replaced by a democratic system with Raul Alfonsi as President. The new Argentine government decides that it is no longer interested in the territory, and as such does not re-sign the agreement. The UK, however, also wishes to be rid of the territory. The UN works together with the UK, the new Argentine government, and the Falkland locals to set up a provisional government in the area, and eventually the Falkland Islands become a sovereign state, with a parliamentary political system.



## **USA Military Victory:**

When the British and Argentine forces reach a military and diplomatic stalemate, the USA signs an agreement with the UK to send US troops to the area in return for sovereignty over the area. The UK armed forces retreat to make way for the US armed forces, which quickly overpower the Argentine forces and restore order to the contested territories. As the result of such a defeat, Leopoldo Galtieri's junta falls and is replaced by a democratic system, with Raul Alfonsi as President. The USA makes the Falkland Islands the 51st State, and stations a significant military presence there. Using the Falklands as home base, they secretly set up extensive military operations in the South Pole until they have effective military supremacy over the entire Southern Hemisphere.

## **USSR Military Victory:**

In response to the near-overwhelming British military forces, Leopoldo Galtieri signs a secret agreement with Leonid Brezhnev that gives sovereignty of the territory to the USSR. The USSR then sends a significant military presence to the territory, which forces the British forces to surrender. Before NATO can rally a significant retaliation force, the USSR places Nuclear Missiles in the Falklands. NATO hesitates in its response, which leads China to decide to join the USSR and place a significant military presence in much of the Pacific. After a US task force sinks a Chinese aircraft carrier, the world descends into a third World War which inevitably ends with the entire human race being nuked back down to the stone age, with much of the planet's surface uninhabitable due to nuclear fallout. The human population drops from 8 billion to less than 1 million, and doesn't reach the same technological level again for another 10 thousand years.

## **USEFUL LINKS**

- Overview of the Events of the Falklands War:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falklands\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falklands_War)
- About "Operation Rosario":  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982\\_invasion\\_of\\_the\\_Falkland\\_Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982_invasion_of_the_Falkland_Islands)
- About "Operation Paraquet": [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Paraquet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Paraquet)



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