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THE WAR FOR THE FALKLANDS: A CHRONOLOGY

Kenneth G. Weiss

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2000 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22311

THE WAR FOR THE FALKLANDS: A CHRONOLOGY

ORIGINS

March 1982	Economic problems incite widespread demonstrations against Argentina's military government.
March 19	A party of Argentines land on South Georgia Island to salvage scrap metal from an abandoned whaling station, but refuses to comply with customs regulations and raises the Argentine flag over the island.
	Britain protests, and Argentina extends its "full protection" to the landing party.

Phase I: The Argentine Initiative

March 24	Britain's Antarctic ice patrol ship HMS Endurance arrives off South Georgia (the Endurance carries two rocket-armed helicopters).
	Argentina puts several warships to sea. The British nuclear submarine HMS Superb is rumored to be sailing towards the Falklands.
March 26	British learn of Argentina's plan to invade, but claim that Buenos Aires did not make a final decision until March 29.
March 27	Argentine fleet sails.
March 31	British learn that the Argentine fleet is posed for an invasion.
	Junta reported to regard issue as military vice diplomatic problem.
April 1	At Britain's request, the U.N. Security Council adopts a resolution urging both countries to refrain from the use of force and to "continue the search for a diplomatic solution." Argentines reject British proposal for solution and call for U.N. Security Council Resolution.
	Argentine fleet reaches pre-landing positions.
April 2	President Reagan's telephone call fails to persuade Argentina's President Galtieri to give up his plans for an invasion.

An Argentine task force, including the aircraft carrier 25 of May, with 20 planes and four other warships, supports the landing of 2,000 to 5,000 Argentine troops at three points near Port Stanley. The operation is led by the Argentine marines, who secure the Port Stanley airfield for use by C-130 transport planes.

After three hours of fighting, the 84 Royal Marines surrender on orders of the governor.

Britain readies a naval task force for the Falklands.

April 13 — The U.N. Security Council demands that Argentine troops withdraw from the Falklands (Resolution 502). Ten vote in favor of the resolution, Panama votes against, and the Soviet Union, China, Poland, and Spain abstain.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announces that the Falklands will remain British territory and orders a large naval task force to the South Atlantic.

Britain freezes $1.5 billion in Argentine financial assets in London and imposes other economic sanctions on Buenos Aires.

RAF transport planes begin airlifting ammunition, fuel, and supplies to Ascension Island from Cyneham Airbase in Wiltshire, England.

Argentines seize South Georgia, 800 miles from the Falklands, after overcoming stiff resistance from 22 Royal Marines--who destroy an assault helicopter, damage an Argentine corvette, and kill 3 Argentines.

The entire Argentine surface fleet is on alert at sea. Three of the four Argentine diesel submarines (2 Guppy-class and 2 West German type 209s) are also at sea.

Phase II: Britain Applies Pressure

April 5 — Main body of British fleet of 36 warships sets sail under the command of a submariner, Rear Admiral J. F. Woodward. The task group includes: the ASW carriers HMS Invincible and Hermes, with 40 helicopters and some 20 AV8A Harrier jump jets, and the light cruisers Antrim and Glamorgan (5,440 tons each); the destroyers Broadsword, Brilliant, Sheffield, and Glasgow (3,500 tons each); the destroyer Coventry, which is slightly larger; the frigates Antelope, Arrow, and Alacrity (2,750 tons each); the frigate Yarmouth

(2,380 tons); the assault ship Fearless (11,060 tons), carrying landing craft; and 1,500 Marines aboard the Hermes. Also included are: the logistic landing ships Sir Galahad, Sir Geraint, Sir Lancelot, Sir Percival, and Sir Tristram (5,674 tons each, fully loaded); the fleet tankers Olmeda (36,000 tons, fully loaded), Tidepool (27,400 tons, fully loaded), and Appleleaf and Brambleleaf (each 40,200 tons, fully loaded); the tanker Pearleaf (25,790 tons, fully loaded); the fleet replenishment ship Resource (22,890 tons, fully loaded) and the stores support ship Stromness (16,792 tons, fully loaded). Four nuclear attack submarines of the Swiftsure were thought to spear the task group. The P&O cruise ship Canberra was requisitioned and fitted with two helicopter platforms. The Canberra would carry additional troops and other gear. The container ship Elk was requisitioned to carry tanks and tank spares. Seven destroyers and frigates fresh from an exercise off Gibraltar would also join the task group.

April 5 — British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington resigns. Mrs. Thatcher chooses Francis Pym to succeed him.

April 6 — Argentina requests support from nonaligned movement.

April 7 — Britain announces a 200-mile war zone around the Falklands effective Monday, April 12.

France, Austria, Belgium, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland join Britain's ban on arm sales to Argentina.

Moscow declares itself neutral while condemning "British colonialism."

April 8 — U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig begins his shuttle between London and Buenos Aires in an effort to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Mr. Haig was acting independently to arrange a mutually acceptable solution in an effort to persuade Argentina to withdraw its troops and accept a compromise satisfactory to London.

April 9 — British warships rendezvous off the Azores.

Canberra leaves England carrying 2,000 to 2,400 marines and members of Third Battalion of the Parachute Regiment.

RAF airlift to Ascension Island continues with C-130 transports (to be supplemented by jumbo jets chartered from British Airways). Helicopters were shipped and assembled at the British-owned island for shuttling between the U.S.-operated air base and the 23,600-ton fleet replenishment ship Fort Austin. The fleet is to be replenished as it sails by Ascension Island.

Soviet Union declares that the British naval force is "an immediate threat to international peace and security."

Argentine fleet returns to port.

Argentina creates South Atlantic Theater of Operations.

April 10 — The European Community (EC) declares a total ban on imports from Argentina for one month.

President Galtieri greets Haig's visit to Argentina with a tumultuous demonstration celebrating the invasion of the Falklands.

April 11 — Argentina's only aircraft carrier, its only cruiser, seven of its eight destroyers, two of its three frigates, and all of its submarines "are back in port" according to the British Defense Ministry. Only a destroyer and a frigate are at sea. The frigate was believed to be returning from South Georgia to Argentina.

Another cruise ship, the Uganda, is requisitioned as a hospital ship.

British Defense Ministry claims that a Soviet AGI Primorye was shadowing the Canberra.

British believe they can enforce the 200-mile total exclusion zone with their Swiftsure-class submarines, each carrying 20 Tigerfish torpedoes with a range of 30 miles. They also carry Harpoon missiles and 2020 sonar systems that can detect a ship 40 miles away and give its type, course, and speed. However, their top speed of 30 knots is limited by the shallow waters of the continental shelf.

Argentina continues to airlift troops, supplies, and equipment to the islands with its seven C-130/Hercules transports.

April 12 Britain's ME2 becomes effective.

April 13 U.S. Defense Department announces that there are no U.S. naval ships in the South Atlantic but there were five Soviet naval ships off the African coast. The Soviet Union was believed to be providing Argentina with intelligence on Britain's naval movements.

In other reports, Soviet Echo II-class submarines were thought to be operating in the South Atlantic, and the orbit of Soviet satellites had been modified to track British fleet movements.

Secretary Haig returns to the U.S. to brief President Reagan.

OAS issues Resolution calling for friendly resolution of the crisis.

April 14 To the approval of the House of Commons, Prime Minister Thatcher declares, "If the [total exclusion] zone is challenged, we shall take that as the clearest evidence that the search for a peaceful solution has been abandoned. We shall then take the necessary action--let no one doubt that."

Some 8,000 Argentine troops are now said to be on the island.

Although Argentina's Navy is said to be at or near Puerto Belgrano, Argentina's naval chief announces that his ships are "ready to set sail."

The Argentines are believed to be extending the runway at Port Stanley's airfield.

The Royal Navy charters the Atlantic Conveyor to carry an additional 20 Harriers to the war zone. The Harriers are to take off from the Atlantic Conveyor, a 18,146-ton container ship with a speed of 24 knots, to join the Invincible and the Hermes. Presumably, a flight deck was added to the ship. The Royal Navy also recommissioned the 11,060-ton assault ship Intrepid, commissioned four trawlers to be used as minesweepers, and were thinking of sending Hunt-class minesweepers to the region.

Royal Air Force announced that Nimrods were flying reconnaissance from Ascension Island. But some analysts thought that 24 Nimrods would be needed to

cover the blockade zone around the Falklands because Ascension Island is 3,500 miles away.

Some of the Harriers to be sent aboard the Atlantic Conveyor were to come from the RAF. RAF pilots were reported already to be practicing landings on a dummy flight deck at an Air Force base in Somerset.

U.S. reported to be providing the British with a wide range of intelligence from satellites and Air Force SR-71 long-range reconnaissance planes. British are using U.S. satellites to communicate with their fleet and especially their nuclear submarines. U.S. fuel supplies at Ascension have been made available to the British, and the U.S. has supplied weather reports in the South Atlantic.

April 15 — Moscow accuses the U.S. of seeking a base in the Falklands.

Most air military personnel are withdrawn from South Georgia.

April 16 — Last of British warships have left the rendezvous point at Ascension Island. However, the British fleet did not dock at the island, but gathered about five miles off the island while helicopters shuttled between it and the command center at the airfield.

An estimated 3,400 to 11,000 Argentine troops are on the islands. Best guess is 8,000 combat troops are there, of whom only 4,000 are said to be well-trained. (To protect the coast adequately, military analysts believe the Argentines would need 50,000 troops.)

It is reported that there are only 68 Harriers in the Navy's Air Arm and the RAF with 30 others being refitted. RAF has only 56 C-130s, which are rather slow. So Britain is expected to use some commercial jets to carry spare parts and ammunition.

Some eight Argentine ships, including the 25 of May, are reported to have sailed from Puerto Belgrano on coastal patrol or training mission.

British report that the runway at Stanley has not been lengthened. It remains 4,000 feet long.

A fifth trawler, the Pict, was requisitioned by the Navy as a minesweeper--the 25th privately owned ship requisitioned.

Soviet TU-95 Bears conducted a surveillance mission of the flotilla on April 15.

Marines and paratroopers of the Third Battalion continue training aboard the Canberra.

April 18 — British fleet reserves are reported to number only 12 ships. The British fleet of 28 combat ships and 26 support ships can count on few replacements.

Use of air-refueled Vulcan bombers configured for conventional weapon considered.

April 19 — Haig ends talks with Argentine leaders in Buenos Aires--issue of sovereignty remains unresolved.

The Defense Ministry announces that almost 1,000 men of the Second Battalion of the Parachute Regiment were being added to the number of troops enroute. Along with supporting artillery and engineer units, the paratroopers are to be sent to the South Atlantic aboard the North Sea ferry Norland, requisitioned on April 17, and the 4,190-ton Europic commandeered April 19.

The Royal Navy chartered the 15,974-ton tanker Anco Charger to carry supplies of fresh water, and announced that three hydrographic ships--the Hydra, the Hecla, and the Herald--would be refitted to carry casualties between the area of operations and the hospital ship Uganda.

April 20 — President Reagan appeals for restraint from both Britain and Argentina.

Defense Ministry decides to prepare ten Vulcan bombers for operations in the South Atlantic. Victor tankers will be needed to refuel the bombers twice to reach the Falklands from Ascension Island. Each bomber can carry twenty-one 1,000-pound bombs fully loaded. Not only will the Vulcans enable the British to bomb the Port Stanley airfield, but they will also threaten Argentina's air bases, forcing Buenos Aires to hold A-4s and Mirages in reserve.

Half of the pilots of the 40 Harriers are said to have no experience in carrier operations.

April 21 — British draw up three-step Peace Plan.

An Argentine Air Force plane overflew the British fleet. It was identified as an unarmed Boeing 707 and was intercepted by a Harrier. Soviet satellites probably provided the Argentines with the fleet's coordinates.

Second wave of British ships arrive at Ascension, including the Canberra, Fearless, Elk, a tugboat, and several smaller landing craft.

Victor tankers are said to be refueling the Nimrod reconnaissance planes.

An Argentine naval auxiliary and several smaller ships are said to be at Stanley.

New Stringray antisubmarine torpedoes would be made available to the ships in the South Atlantic ahead of schedule.

Argentine Navy reportedly backed Galtieri's coup in December in return for an invasion of the Falklands.

April 22 — Haig confers with British Foreign Secretary Pym in Washington.

President Galtieri visits the Falklands.

The Superb, Britain's nuclear submarine reported to be near the Falklands, had been at its base in the Clyde Estuary in western Scotland since April 16. British deny the naval blockade is a bluff, noting that they have four other submarines of the same type.

South Georgia is likely to be Britain's first objective—an inhospitable island with no airstrip and only one sheltered anchorage, but out of reach of Argentina's land-based aircraft.

April 23 — Argentina sights British frigate and supply ship 15 miles north of South Georgia.

Argentine government continues war preparations: bans antiwar movies and puts controls on money moving

overseas; Galtieri visits military bases of Rio Grande, Rio Gallegos, and Comodoro Rivadavia.

British fleet, ordered to be on "defense alert," nears South Georgia.

April 24 — Britain's first casualty occurred when a Sea King helicopter crashed, killing a crewman.

Hydra and Herald sail from Portsmouth.

Prime Minister Thatcher calls an urgent meeting of her war cabinet.

Argentina is not expected to seriously resist a British effort against South Georgia.

First Battalion Welsh Guards and the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards have been rushed to the mountains of Wales for intensive training in company with a battalion of the Parachute Regiment. These three battalions could be formed into a heavy infantry brigade supported by guns, antitank and antiaircraft missiles, and engineers to provide firepower beyond the commandos and paratroops already on their way to the Falklands.

From Argentine bases, A-4s (68), Daggers (26), and Mirages (21) give Argentina very limited flying time near the Falklands. Aircraft on the Falklands will be vulnerable to British Harrier strikes.

Argentina's five Super Etendards equipped with Exocet missiles have a range of only 400 miles.

Phase III: Britain Enforces the Exclusion Zone

April 25 — Britain retakes South Georgia in two-hour battle without sustaining any casualties. Supported by the bombardment of "a number of warships," 120 marines and a smaller number of support troops were landed by helicopter. The Argentines surrendered first at Grytviken and then Leith Harbor.

The attack was prepared by the landing on April 23 of a dozen men from the elite special boat squadron to reconnoiter Argentine forces and positions.

In launching the attack, the Argentine Guppy-class submarine Santa Fe was sighted on the surface at dawn and attacked by rockets and machine-gun fire from

British helicopters. The submarine was abandoned by its crew and the 50 reinforcements it was carrying to South Georgia.

Argentine Foreign Minister, Nicanor Costa Mendez, cancels his meeting in Washington with Secretary Haig, citing the British attack on South Georgia as the cause.

April 26

Argentina concedes the British recaptured the two bases on South Georgia Island: Grytviken and Leith Harbor.

British announce the capture of over 180 Argentines. Only one Argentine was killed.

Argentine troops on the Falklands said to number 14,000.

Atlantic Conveyor left Britain on April 25.

According to Prime Minister Thatcher, the British attacked the Santa Fe only after British helicopters carrying reconnaissance troops were fired upon. (Three direct hits were scored on the submarine.)

Haig attends meeting of the OAS in Washington.

April 27

Besides the Santa Fe, the U.S. believes that the other Argentine Guppy-class submarine is inoperable, leaving Argentina with only its two West German type 209 submarines.

Argentina declares "yellow alert" posture.

April 28

Britain expands ME2 with announcement of total exclusion zone applicable to all shipping and flights near the Falklands, effective April 29.

Britain confirms the landing of small troop units on the Falklands--Special Boat Squadron.

British ships said to be battling mountainous seas.

British force of 60 ships was augmented by four deep-sea fishing trawlers converted into minesweepers. The trawlers were dispatched after Argentines claimed to have mined the approaches to the islands.

OAS backs Argentina on sovereignty.

Of the 20 Harriers aboard the aircraft carriers, six will be assigned to airfield blockade and six to fleet protection.

British believe they can pull off the air and sea blockade if the Argentine Navy sits still. But British nuclear submarines, British ability to jam Argentine fleet communications, and the Argentine fleet's rudimentary ASW detection devices give the British the advantage if the Argentine Navy sallies forth. Still, an all-out Argentine military attack would jeopardize Britain's marginal military superiority.

Port San Carlos is mentioned as a possible sheltered anchorage for British oilers and supply ships that would be relatively free from attack. The British Navy used it in World War II as a provisioning point for the cruisers that hunted down the German battleship Graf Spee.

British jamming could affect Argentine air operations off the airfield at Port Stanley by interfering with communications with the mainland and with Argentine transport planes. This may explain why the Argentines closed Port Stanley to air traffic and why the Argentine Air Force has been relatively inactive, to the puzzlement of most observers.

April 29 — Argentina imposes 200-n.mi. MEZ around the Falklands.

Argentina orders all of its ships out of disputed (Chilean) channels.

April 30 — U.S. abandons its "impartial" role, sides with Britain, and imposes sanctions on Argentina. President Reagan offers "material support to Britain," but rules out direct U.S. military intervention.

British destroyers reported to be between the Falklands and Argentina.

British flotilla said to have supplies for 90 days.

A British Vulcan bomber refueled by Victor tankers between Ascension Island and Port Stanley drop 33 JP-2 airfield attack bombs on Port Stanley airfield in a predawn attack. In a second wave, Harriers attack the Port Stanley airfield and the smaller field at Goose Green. British jamming offshore helps render Argentina's inadequate air defenses relatively useless

(although they did have Tigercat antiaircraft missiles developed by the British).

May 2

British Valiant-class nuclear submarine Conqueror torpedoes Argentina's only cruiser, the General Belgrano--362 lives thought to be lost.

British Defense Ministry claims one British seaman was wounded, one ship and one Harrier damaged, but at least two and perhaps three Argentine planes were lost and the two airstrips put out of service in the British air attack on May 1. (The air attack on that day was followed by a naval bombardment 10 miles offshore by a guided-missile destroyer and two frigates using 4.5-inch guns to deter repair work on the Stanley airfield. The Argentines retaliated with an attack by Mirage fighters and Canberra bombers. British Harriers downed one Mirage and one Canberra. (Another Mirage may have been downed by Argentine gunfire.)

British ships are generally east of the Falklands, but some ships are to the west in order to detect Argentine air attacks.

May 3

British Lynx helicopters firing Sea Skua missiles sink one Argentine patrol boat and damage another.

British pilots criticize Argentine pilots for firing their missiles too soon and for having inadequate knowledge of the Harrier.

The QE2 is requisitioned to carry some 3,000 British troops to the Falklands.

Argentine planes engaged by the Harriers were thought to have been refueled in flight.

May 4

HMS Sheffield is fatally damaged by an Exocet missile (AM39) fired by an Argentine Super Etendard plane at less than maximum range, hitting the ship's operations room. The type 42 ship, commissioned in 1975, has been criticized for its lack of defensive and offensive armament. It carried only one 4.5-inch gun, one twin launcher for Sea Dart missiles, one Lynx helicopter, and two 20-mm aircraft guns. Moreover, the Sea Dart SAM has a shorter range than the Exocet. The Sheffield also lacked the advanced radar jamming devices, chaff, antimissiles, or Gatling guns capable of detecting and destroying the Exocet. Defense of the Sheffield was inhibited by Britain's lack of early warning aircraft

in the South Atlantic. (Indeed, the British admit the Super Etendard was not detected by radar. They claim it came in under the Sheffield's radar cover.) Thus, it was providing an early warning function in an exposed area without air cover.

A Harrier and its pilot are lost in an air raid on Port Stanley airfield, adding to the 30 killed aboard the Sheffield.

Vulcan bomber and Harriers attack Port Stanley airfield and Goose Green.

May 5 — U.S. and Peru discuss peace plan with Britain and Argentina.

Argentina imposes austerity moves: devalues peso.

British believe two Argentine type 209 submarines, San Luis and Salta, are within the exclusion zone, although the rest of the Argentine fleet is not.

May 6 — British claim that Argentina's intransigence torpedoed the U.S. and Peruvian peace effort.

Two Harriers on combat patrol are lost to the elements.

NATO supports Britain in the dispute with Argentina.

Argentina said to have had six Exocets. With two used against the Sheffield, Argentina has four left and said to be seeking more.

May 7 — Britain extends its sea and air blockade to within 12 miles of Argentina.

Canberra said to have stopped three weeks ago at Freetowne, Sierra Leone, enroute to the war zone.

"British Aerospace, the company that makes the Nimrod, said today that none of the models now in service were equipped for airborne early-warning duties. A new model, the AEW Mark 3, specifically designed for such work will not be ready until the end of the year.... All the Nimrods at Ascension, he added, are designed for anti-submarine and shipping surveillance."

To strengthen the British task force:

1. More warships armed with the Sea Wolf antimissile missiles, probably including type 22 destroyers and Leander-class frigates, are to join the fleet, supplementing the Sea Wolf-equipped frigates, Brilliant and Broadsword.

2. Twenty Harrier jets originally sent by sea as reinforcements are now being flown to the combat zone, refueled by Victor tankers. Some are equipped with latest U.S. Sidewinder missiles that can be fired from the front or the rear.

3. Air-refueling equipment is being installed on RAF Nimrods.

Tories win local elections.

Argentines are counting on their Air Force to challenge the British fleet.

May 8

Argentina resumes C-130 flights to resupply the Falklands. Mirages are providing escort.

Argentina's submarines (diesel) are said to be more effective in the shallow waters than Britain's nuclear-powered ones. Britain's submarines need 300 feet and Argentina's need 120 feet for effective operation. Both have Tigerfish torpedoes.

Israel halts arms sales to Argentina.

British landing expected on East Falkland Island.

With arrival of the Canberra, the British will have about 5,000 troops. Argentine reaction will be hampered by lack of roads on Falklands (only 18 miles). Argentine morale has deteriorated and troops are largely young conscripts. British will have greater mobility.

British Task Force costs $365 million and rising, but it is hardly prohibitive.

May 9

British frigates shell military targets near Port Stanley airfield with 4.5-inch guns for 50 minutes.

An Argentine troop-carrying Puma helicopter was shot down by a Sea Cat missile fired from a frigate.

Argentines try to parachute or land supplies from C-130s escorted by Mirage fighters, but are turned back by British Harriers.

Argentine fishing vessel/AGI "NARWAL" (or Narval) is strafed by Sea Harriers and surrenders. Ship found to be commanded by Argentine naval officer and engaged in surveillance activities.

May 10 — British ships again shell targets near Port Stanley.

British acknowledge that Argentine light planes using grass airstrips may be getting through the British air blockade. (Probably counterinsurgency Pucaras).

Britain has asked the U.S. for a KC-135 long-range aerial tanker.

May 11 — British frigate Alacrity sinks an Argentine oil tanker with its 4.5-inch radar-controlled guns in the Falkland Sound.

BBC reports that British warships for the last 24 hours have been circling East Falkland, darting into each bay along the heavily indented coast, making "as much noise as possible" with their 4.5-inch guns, firing flares and machine guns and launching helicopters. (No response from the Argentines.) British are trying to frighten and confuse the Argentines.

Britains said to request U.S. long-range reconnaissance planes, probably E-2C Hawkeyes.

British ran two sweeps of Falkland Sound on May 10. The tanker was sunk on the second sweep conducted by the Alacrity.

In the next three weeks, British fleet is to be augmented by the Exeter-Sheffield class destroyer and the Bristol, a destroyer. Both have twin Sea Dart SAMs, Ikara ASW missiles, and a 4.5-inch gun. The Exeter does not have a helicopter.

Argentines claim Mirage-escorted C-130s are getting through, along with one vessel a day--vessel type unknown.

QE2 with 3,000 troops is ready to leave Southampton--troops are of the Fifth Brigade, consisting of Welsh Guards, Scots Guards, Gurkhas, and support forces.

QE2 has been modified to carry two helicopters on one flight pad on the aft deck. A smaller pad has been added to the bow.

British-Irish relations strained over the Falklands.

May 12

Two Argentine A-4 Skyhawks are shot down by Sea Wolf missiles from the frigate Brilliant or Broadsword. The A-4s had been escorting transport planes trying to run the British blockade. Twelve A-4s made the attack in waves of four. They may have been trying to attack the two British carriers. One of the British frigates was slightly damaged--apparently by a torpedo from an A-4.

British Sea King helicopter ditches into the sea. The four-man crew is rescued.

The QE2 leaves Southampton, accompanied by five newly commandeered ships--the 9,000-ton St. Edmund, a North Sea ferry that will be used as a troop ship; the 11,000-ton Contender Bezant, to be used to transport aircraft and supplies; the Alvega, a 5,700-ton tanker; and the Scottish Eagle, a general-purpose freighter.

May 13

Argentine Guppy-class Santiago del Estero is said to have been refitted and active. She is said to be a prime target of Nimrod surveillance planes.

Weather worsening and affecting British planning. Two Leander-class frigates armed with Sea Wolf missiles (the Andromeda and the Penelope) sailed from Devonport on May 12. They may provide escort for the QE2. Three other frigates--Active, Avenger, and Minerva--also apparently sailed for the South Atlantic. Their recognition numbers were painted out--a strong indication of their destination.

In reply to a question in the House of Commons, Defense Minister John Nott said, "it may soon become necessary" to call out a number of specialists from Navy and Marine reservists.

Mrs. Thatcher pledges no "sellout" in the crisis.

May 14

British troops destroy approximately 11 Pucara turboprop aircraft in a raid on a grass airstrip and other Argentine military installations on Pebble Island on West Falkland. British frigates and destroyers bombarded the area as the raid was taking place. About 50 Royal Marine commandos who are specially trained for

these types of operations were probably involved. An ammunition dump was also destroyed. One hundred Special Boat Squadron troops have been supplying intelligence about the Argentines for the last ten days.

The night attack coincides with the bombing of the airfield at Stanley by Sea Harrier jets. Pucaras have been noted near the runways.

May 13 — Argentines say 400 Argentine lives have been lost--most on the Belgrano (20 dead, 301 lost at sea). Britain has announced 24 fatalities: 20 in the attack on the Sheffield, one Harrier pilot shot down over Port Stanley, two Harrier pilots missing and presumed dead, and one in the Sea King helicopter crash.

May 16 — Two British Harriers from the Hermes strafe and bomb two Argentine supply vessels in the Falkland Channel. One of the planes is hit in the tail by Argentine antiaircraft fire, but returns safely.

In the raid on Pebble Island on May 14, it was revealed that a spotting team on land directed fire for a destroyer sitting offshore. The gunfire kept the Argentines away from the commandos' targets. The fire came in five short bursts from 4.5-inch guns, but was so accurate that none of the shells fell near the homes of the fifty or so civilians. British suffered two minor casualties in the raid, but the fire immobilized the Argentines dug in on the side of a hill. More raids might be directed against the mobile radar stations on the island that the Argentines use to pinpoint the position of British forces. Most of the four or five mobile radars are on East Falkland. British have been unable to jam them--perhaps because they are constantly on the move. (Light aircraft had been landing supplies at Pebble, which were then ferried to East Falkland and other Argentine garrisons.)

May 17 — U.S. has dispatched a third oiler to Ascension Island. British have so far failed to ask for the KC-135 that they wanted the U.S. to have on standby. Also on standby are generators, heating equipment, and other items to sustain the British ashore in a winter campaign.

Argentines say British Harriers attacked Fox Bay on May 16.

Argentines say most supplies in the islands are carried on small, one-engine Beaver planes that land on water and apparently redistribute the supplies brought by two vessels (4,600-ton Rio Carcarara and 3,100-ton Bahia Buen Suceso, a navy and civilian ship, respectively. The latter took Argentine workers to South Georgia in March and received only minor damage from the Harriers; the former burned but still floated.) The vessels apparently helped move cargo for the Argentines in the islands.

Sea Harriers attack two small Argentine supply ships in Falkland Sound.

May 18 — EC decided to extend sanctions for a week. Italy and Ireland refused to go along but promised not to take advantage of the situation.

EC passes agriculture price supports over Britain's veto.

British fleet said to be moving into assault formation. Harriers from the Atlantic Conveyor had been taken aboard the British carriers.

May 19 — Britain and Argentina agree to a brief extension of the UN talks.

Phase IV: The British Amphibious Assault

May 20 — On April 30, U.S. began contingency planning for aid to Britain. Several KC-135 tankers have begun freeing British tankers from NATO duty for use in the South Atlantic. U.S. has also earmarked a wide range of weapons, including missiles for the Falklands war, if the British get bogged down.

Sixty percent of Argentina's troops on islands are said to be conscripts with less than four months service, many of whom have not finished their basic training.

In contrast, British have five battalions of trained professionals, including commandos and paratroopers.

Argentines said to have Roland missiles, a French version of the British Rapier antiaircraft missile.

The Santiago del Estero is again reported cannibalized for spares. But British still worry about the type 209s.

British report crash of Sea King helicopter in Chile as a result of bad weather. British warship may have been operating closer to Argentina than thought since the helo has a range of only 250 to 350 nautical miles. Chile protested.

British quit UN talks.

May 21 — The British land at Port San Carlos.

May 22 — The amphibious task group began sailing to the point of attack at dusk on Thursday, turning into the Sound at midnight. Previously landed commandos went into action--presumably against the small number of Argentines that had ventured into the area on May 19. In the hours before the main landing, diversionary attacks were mounted by Harrier jets and commandos, probably against Stanley airfield, Goose Green airfield and Darwin on East Falkland, Fox Bay on West Falkland, and Fanning Head. The weather favored the landing, and the troops were unmolested by the Argentines as landing craft, presumably from the Fearless and the Intrepid, and helicopters brought the troops from the Canberra and Hermes ashore where they set up Rapier antiaircraft missiles and Blowpipe hand-held SAMs, 105-mm howitzers, antiaircraft guns, and early warning radar systems. In 36 hours, 5,000 British troops were ashore, with a beachhead 10 square miles in perimeter. Troop transports and supply vessels returned to open sea, out of range of land-based enemy jets, but destroyers and frigates remained in the bay, covering the fleet with their missiles and guns.

Although the troops were left relatively unmolested, the Argentine Air Force launched a major attack on the covering fleet on May 21. Five British ships were damaged. The Amazon-class frigate Ardent was sunk by bombs and rockets from an Italian-made Aermacchi jet. (The 3,250-ton Ardent had one 4.5-inch gun, 20-mm single guns, four Exocet SSM and SAMs, and two Wasp helicopters. It had a crew of 192. Its speed was 30 knots maximum. It had a cruising range of 4,000 miles at 17 knots.) Thirty sailors were injured, twenty presumed dead (3 killed, 2 missing, and 27 wounded in the ground action). A 500-lb bomb failed to explode on a frigate, and two other ships received minor damage.

Britain destroyed 16 war planes in the attack--9 Mirages, 5 Skyhawks, 2 Pucaras, plus 4 helicopters. San Carlos had been selected as the site two weeks

before May 21. A school teacher provided information about the area.

British fleet said to number 100 naval and civilian ships with 25,000 sailors, troops, and others.

May 23

British claim to shoot down six Argentine planes (5 Mirages and 1 Skyhawk). Another three were probably lost. The aircraft were lost to missiles from surface ships, Rapier SAMs at the beachhead, and Sea Harriers from the Hermes and the Invincible. One British ship damaged.

Landing pads have been installed for Harriers on the beachhead.

Continuous unloading of supplies from ships to landing craft and rafts by cranes.

Ardent is reported to have been sunk after being attacked by "wave after wave" of Mirages. Sailors evacuated to the Canberra, which the Ardent had escorted to the war zone. Fatal damage seems to have been done by a bomb in the stern.

Soviets condemn invasion.

Argentines fail to react on the ground; supplies said to be low.

May 24

Eight EC nations extend sanctions against Argentina indefinitely.

In the third large-scale attack in four days, the British shot down seven more Argentine aircraft--types were not specified. But Mirages and A-4s attacked in three waves from the south and west, bombing British warships as they were loading supplies. Several civilian ships were also nearly hit. Several frigates and destroyers were hit. Again Argentine planes were hit by Harriers and shipboard and ground-based SAMs.

A 500-lb bomb explodes on the Antelope, apparently one of two bombs dropped by a Skyhawk. The Antelope's story is rather confusing.

British reporters complain of being used to provide misinformation to mislead the Argentines--like the story about hit-and-run raids instead of a landing.

May 25 Haig urges the British to be magnanimous in victory.

U.S. said to be supplying Britain with advanced Sidewinder AAMs and more advanced replacements for the Rapiers as British use their missiles at a high rate.

Britain said to be using the Dakar airfield as a refueling stop over the last 2 weeks.

A British destroyer, HMS Coventry, was severely damaged by Argentine aircraft, but three Skyhawks were downed by missiles in the attack that included Mirage aircraft.

Two Harriers lost in a raid against the airstrip and other targets at Stanley.

To provide more defense against air attack, the British were moving eight more warships to the Falklands vicinity (if not already there). The 7,100-ton light cruiser Bristol, the 4,100-ton destroyers Southampton and Exeter (both Sheffield-class) the 3,250-ton type-21 frigates Amazon and Avenger, and the Leander-class frigates Andromeda, Penelope, and Minerva, all over 3,000 tons. The Andromeda is said to have Sea Wolf missiles. More ships are also said to be on the way--the 4,000-ton destroyer Battleaxe (with Sea Wolf) and four more Leander-class frigates.

Three British warships damaged on May 21 were identified by the Times of London as the light cruiser Antrim, the Leander-class frigate Argonaut, and the destroyer Broadsword (one of the two with Sea Wolf--the other is Brilliant).

Argentines call for negotiations (open-ended).

May 26 British Defense Ministry announces that the 3,500-ton destroyer Coventry had sunk after being bombed and strafed on May 25. The Atlantic Conveyor was also crippled by two Exocet missiles on the same day. The Atlantic Conveyor, a 15,000-ton container ship, was requisitioned from Cunard for use as a makeshift aircraft carrier. None of the Harriers was aboard the container ship when it was hit.

The Coventry was operating just north of Falkland Sound in Foul Bay, acting as a radar early-warning vessel for the supply ships engaged in the logistical buildup in San Carlos Bay. Sheffield had been playing a similar

role. At 3:30, Coventry was hit by several bombs dropped by Skyhawks. She was immediately abandoned. About 4:30, two Super Etendards each launched an Exocet missile against the Atlantic Conveyor carrying hundreds of tons of supplies and equipment, including spare parts for the Harriers and replacement helicopters. The Argentines may have been aiming for the Hermes, Admiral Woodward's flagship. Argentina had five Exocets--four have been used, but the Argentines are seeking more.

Ten more destroyers and frigates had joined the fleet off the Falklands in the last 48 hours.

British lost 24 killed on the two ships, bringing British losses to 100 dead and 25 wounded. Argentines have lost sixty planes and the British five ships. Argentine losses for May 25 increased from three planes to five (four Skyhawks and one other plane).

The 3,000 troops aboard the QE2 are believed to have been transferred to other ships.

Soviets delay half of June grain purchase from Argentina.

Security Council asks UN Secretary General Perez De Cueller to revive negotiations.

Phase V: The British Ground Offensive

May 27

British troops strike eastward towards Port Stanley and southward towards Darwin and Goose Green. About 3,000 to 5,000 troops thought to be involved. (Paratroopers are said to be deployed in a semicircle around Darwin. Other reports said paratroopers and SAS commandos had seized Goose Green.) The British offensive was said to have been preceded by Harrier's dropping cluster bombs on Argentine positions and strafing them with 30-mm cannon fire. They were supported by 105-mm howitzers and 81-mm mortars.

British casualties revised to 109. Twenty-one men lost from the Coventry, 23 injured there; from the Atlantic Conveyor--8 known dead, 8 missing and presumed dead, 5 injured.

May 28

British capture Darwin and Goose Green and take 1,400 prisoners. Argentines were surprised and encircled, in part with the help of landing craft, so

and included the use of 105-mm howitzers. The victory eliminated the second largest concentration of Argentines on the island. Seventeen British soldiers reported killed.

May 29

British drive on Port Stanley continues. Two columns of troops with antiaircraft missiles advance on the port. The northern column has reportedly taken two small communities--Douglas and Teal Inlet.

A Pucara was shot down near Goose Green on May 28, bringing Argentine losses to 67. Britain has acknowledged losing 15 planes and helicopters (6 Harriers) and listed 115 men killed or missing before the latest ground action.

The grass airstrip at Goose Green (500 feet) is being refurbished by Royal Engineers for use by Harriers and helicopters.

British warships again bombard Port Stanley on May 28. Argentines responded without effect.

May 31

British occupy Mount Kent.

Two Exocet missiles reported to have been shot down by British frigates.

June 1

British paratroopers and commandos seize Mount Kent and adjacent hills overlooking Port Stanley. With 105-mm howitzers, the British can now shell Port Stanley from land as well as with 4.5-inch naval guns from the sea.

The British now claim the Argentines lost 250 men killed and 1,400 captured at Goose Green. The British lost 16 killed.

An Argentine C-130 is shot down by an Invincible-based Harrier 50 miles north of Pebble Island off West Falkland. An Argentine C-130 reportedly dropped bombs near a British warship over the weekend.

Atlantic Conveyor sinks.

Helicopter gunships, artillery, and Harriers are believed to be supporting the British advance.

Argentines confirm loss of Mount Kent.

British also advancing from Darwin and Goose Green towards Fitzroy River to the northeast.

Argentine government prepares public for defeat.

Two Harriers shot down while bombing Port Stanley airfield.

June 2 — In a 17-hour 8,000-mile record-setting journey, RAF Harriers were flown from Britain to the Falklands. They were believed to number about 12 and were refueled in flight.

British leaflets urging surrender and withdrawal are dropped on Port Stanley.

June 3 — Soviets said to be helping Argentines link their mainland radar sites.

Prime Minister Thatcher has ordered an assault on Stanley when the troops are ready.

Argentina appeals for Third World support at Nonaligned Conference in Havana.

Leaflets urging surrender again dropped on Port Stanley by the British.

June 5 — Argentina said to be buying planes, missiles, and other weapons abroad. British worried that Argentina will get the Israeli-made Gabriel SSM that could be adapted for Super Etendard aircraft.

June 6 — Britain confirms that 3,000 troops from the QE2 were landed at San Carlos. A week ago they were transferred from the QE2 to the Intrepid and Fearless. They have now joined British forces for the assault on Port Stanley. There were reports that the Gurkhas were "criss-cross" East Falkland looking for Argentines in the interior. Bad weather has hindered the launching of an attack, but one report claims it has begun. The bad weather, though, has also hindered Argentine air attacks and made it possible for the Fifth Brigade to land from the QE2 without air attack. The brigade plus supporting engineers and artillery also includes two troops of the Blues and Royals Regiment with Scorpion light tanks and other armored vehicles.

The QE2 has left the war zone for Southampton, carrying 700 survivors of three British ships--Ardent, Antelope, and Coventry.

Major-General Jeremy Moore commands the 8,000 British troops on the Falklands, and Brigadier General Mario Benjamino Menendez commands 7,000 Argentines at Port Stanley.

June 7

Washington Post reports that the Soviets have launched two Rorsats.

Royal Marine Commandos capture Mount Low, overlooking Port Stanley's airstrip and the main Argentine garrison. British 105-mm howitzers have been shelling Argentine positions for the last four days. Argentine return fire is becoming desultory. With Mt. Low in British hands, it is thought that the Argentines will not be able to use the Port Stanley airstrip.

"Up to 60" Argentines have been killed by British patrols near Port Stanley in the last five days. Besides the marines, Gurkhas of the Fifth Brigade are said to have been involved in these skirmishes.

"In the last day or so," Canberra bombers of the Argentine Air Force had attacked advancing British troops. The British did not suffer any casualties.

An Argentine air attack at Port San Carlos ended in the destruction of one Argentine aircraft by a missile fired from a British ship.

The QE2 reportedly will return to Southampton on June 11. After leaving Britain, the QE2 sailed down the African coast, turned southwest off Capetown, and rendezvoused with the amphibious assault ships Fearless and Intrepid in the sheltered harbor at Grytviken. There the Fifth Brigade of Gurkhas and Scots and Welsh Guards battalions were transferred for the trip to the Falklands. Although the QE2 had stayed well out of the range of Argentine aircraft, the captain of the ship reported that a "suicide mission or a submarine attack" might be launched against his ship.

Military analysts attribute Argentine misfortunes in part to tactical errors:

1. Air attacks at Port San Carlos were not coordinated with infantry assault. The deployment of a

battalion-size force to the beachhead would have made things difficult for the British. The Argentines had the helicopters necessary for such an assault. Instead, the Argentines deployed a company only at Fanning Head near the beachhead.

2. Despite the risk from missile fire, bombers would have been more effective against the British when they were organizing the beachhead.

3. The Argentines failed to fortify and hold the high ground around Port Stanley, especially Mount Kent and the Two Sisters Ridge.

4. After the British took Darwin and Goose Green, Argentine forces failed to harass the British advance to Port Stanley with air attacks from the mainland or from the helicopters at Port Stanley. Additionally, they did not interfere with the helicopter movement of British artillery to the ridges overlooking Port Stanley. (British are believed to have 36 105-mm howitzers and 64 81-mm heavy mortars in place plus the fleet's 4.5-inch guns at sea.)

5. The above errors may have left the Argentines only one desperate gamble: a major attack with the best Argentine troops against the weakest part of the British line. Such an attack, however, would probably fail.

June 8

British Defense Ministry reports that the 2,800-ton frigate Plymouth and two landing ships of the Sir Lancelot class (5,674 tons) were damaged in Argentine air attacks, presumably at San Carlos or in the Falkland Sound. British claim to have shot down two Argentine aircraft and damaged five others (with one possibly destroyed). In other reports, the landing ships were identified as Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad. The Argentine attack reportedly came in three waves. The Argentine air attack was the first serious one in ten days. The Argentine Air Force is believed to be hampered by pilot shortage and bad weather. Five British casualties were reported in the raid.

A British military officer told reporters that 9,000 British troops were now in the Falklands--1,000 more than previously believed. He also reported that 20,000 tons of supplies have been placed ashore. The British Ministry of Defense announced that the British hospital ship Hydra had been sent to assist the

Hercules, a Liberian-registered supertanker (100,000 tons) said to have been attacked by an Argentine C-130. The attack occurred about 480 n.mi. northeast of the Falklands, well outside the 200-mile total exclusion zone imposed by Britain. The ship had been bound from St. Croix to Valdez, Alaska, where it was to take on oil. It was carrying ballast at the time of the attack. The Hercules was built in Japan in 1971 and is owned by United Carriers, Inc., which is based in Monrovia, Liberia. The ship was reportedly heading at top speed away from the area towards a South American port for repairs. The ship was reportedly listing 6 degrees after a rocket attack. A bomb that struck the foredeck failed to explode and rolled into the sea.

Argentines report two additional hospital ships were pressed into service, for a total of three.

Argentines claim to have sunk a frigate and two landing craft when the British attempted to land additional troops at Port Fitzroy. They also claim to have repelled three harassing night attacks by British troops and to have fended off Harrier attacks on the night of June 7th.

June 9

It is now reported that the paratroopers at Goose Green and Darwin remained there after retaking the area instead of advancing rapidly on Port Stanley. Also, the Fifth Brigade at Port San Carlos remained there with some Gurkhas units moving into the interior of the island and others reaching Mount Kent, the forward base near Stanley. Late last week, an advance force of the Fifth Brigade moved out along the Southern track. A telephone call on June 5th revealed that there were no Argentine troops at Fitzroy. Some troops were then ferried by helicopter to Fitzroy from Port San Carlos. They seized the wooden bridge across the Fitzroy River. Others were flown to Lively Island, south of Choiseul Sound, and loaded there into landing ships for an amphibious invasion near Fitzroy and Goose Green. Meanwhile, Gurkhas moved along the ridge above the new beachhead, silently attacking enemy observation posts.

In the amphibious landing at Fitzroy and Bluff Cove on June 8th, the British Defense Ministry confirmed on June 8th that the destroyer Plymouth and two 5,674-ton landing ships, Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad, had been damaged by enemy bombs, with five British troops

suffering wounds. The attacks were reported to have been conducted by Mirage and A-4s.

Michael Nicholson of Independent Television News reports that the Sir Galahad burst into flames after ammunition and fuel supplies exploded. He said a large number of British casualties was incurred (perhaps larger than the Sheffield).

Tonight, military sources said that the Sir Galahad had probably sunk, and the Defense Ministry confirmed that casualties had been minor in air attacks at Lively Island and in Falkland Sound, but "much heavier" in the raid off Fitzroy. Plymouth was hit in the Falkland Sound, but the Ministry strenuously denied Argentine assertions that it had been sunk.

The American-owned supertanker, Hercules, was reportedly ordered, by reasons unknown, to an Argentine port before being attacked.

June 10

As many as 50 soldiers and sailors may have been killed in Argentine air attacks on British landing craft on June 8th. For the first time, the Defense Secretary John Nott refused to give details of the British losses, indicating that they were the war's heaviest. Unofficial sources estimate losses to be as high as 150.

Two landing craft, the Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot (perhaps meaning the Sir Tristram), were said to have been sunk. A smaller landing craft was also hit near Lively Island to the south. The ship's stern was blown off, killing two sailors and four Royal Marines.

The disaster occurred when a landing was attempted in daylight without adequate antiaircraft protection. Apparently, there were no destroyers or frigates in the immediate area, and Rapier surface-to-air missiles had not yet been installed.

Argentine aircraft have been eluding radar detection by Harriers on CAP and British ships by flying at a very low level. The British had virtually no warning of the Argentine air attack at Fitzroy and Bluff Cove. The British lack of AWACS is again felt. Nimrod and Mark I and II aircraft are equipped for ASW and ocean surveillance. The Mark III, with early warning capability, is not yet available.

British are said to have asked for a U.S. AWACS, but since an American crew would be required, the request was denied.

British claim that their plans for an attack on Port Stanley have not been seriously disrupted. There are enough supplies and ammunition on the island to replace those lost in the landing.

British Defense Secretary promised that British troops would "go forward to another victory soon."

Spain, the newest member of NATO, warns that the crisis in the South Atlantic is straining the alliance.

Phase VI: The Argentine Surrender

June 11	Battle for Port Stanley begins.
June 15	British troops attack the city of Stanley during snowstorm. Argentine garrison commander requests a ceasefire. Formal surrender is offered after consultation with Junta.

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2. Listings for Professional Papers issued prior to PP 407 can be found in *Index of Selected Publications (through December 1983)*, March 1984.