

RESTRICTED

SAPU(82) 26

SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESENTATION UNIT (SAPU)

The attached paper issued at 1630 hours on 25 May 1982 contains information and suggested lines to take on the following -

1. Alleged Naval Design Blunders
2. UN Security Council Debate
3. Lt Cdr Astiz
4. Mr Nott's Panorama Interview
5. Mr Pym's radio interview after the EC Foreign Ministers' meeting

Cabinet Office

25 May 1982

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1. Naval Design Blunders (Allegations in the Daily Mail)

The Daily Mail alleges that design blunders - notably the use of aluminium superstructures which are described as an "unacceptable fire hazard" - were a major reason for the loss of the Sheffield, Ardent and Antelope.

It is too early to say if the use of aluminium was a significant factor in the loss of any of these ships. Although all three were destroyed by fires, only the Type 21 frigates (Ardent and Antelope) incorporated significant amounts of aluminium in the superstructure and both ships sank only after multiple hits which would have caused serious difficulties for any warship.

Many factors are involved in warship design apart from ability to absorb damage, such as speed and armament, and aluminium construction has both advantages and disadvantages (as is pointed out in a more balanced article in the Times). While aluminium has a lower melting temperature than steel it is much lighter which permits the incorporation of more weapons systems and equipment without reducing speed or stability. For these reasons, many other navies - including the US Navy - use aluminium in warship construction. The decision to use aluminium in the Type 21 superstructure was taken after close consultation with the shipbuilder and designer, and careful consideration within MOD. It was not, as implied by the Daily Mail, against the wishes of the Royal Navy or simply the result of commercial pressures to produce an "export design".

The Daily Mail also claimed that a design decision in 1966 to reduce the length of the Sheffield class for financial reasons made it impossible to fit Sea Wolf missiles. The Type 42 class was designed around the Sea Dart missile to provide area air defence and was not intended to carry Sea Wolf which did not begin to enter service until four years later. We have subsequently twice considered fitting Sea Wolf to Type 42 destroyers but it was found to be impracticable to fit both Sea Wolf and Sea Dart.

2. UN Security Council Debate

Various draft resolutions have now been floated. Some are plainly unacceptable, although this does not mean that we are necessarily hostile to all of them. As Ministers have made unequivocally clear, calls for a cease-fire are not acceptable to us unless directly linked to a commitment

and a timetable for withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the Islands, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 502. But we shall continue, in consultation with others, to work towards a satisfactory conclusion to the Security Council debate in which the Council will be faithful to SCR 502.

The Security Council's debate has inevitably produced statements from some Latin American countries strongly supporting Argentina. Some of these, notably the statement by the Foreign Minister of Panama, have been violent, irrational and in thoroughly offensive language. On the other hand there has been some strong support for Britain and not only from Western delegations. For example yesterday the Kenyan representative made a robust statement in support of Britain which gave the lie to any suggestion that the Falklands crisis is promoting a more general North/South confrontation. He said that the breach of peace had started with Argentina's aggression on 2 April and that this was a separate question from the rights or wrongs of Argentina's claim to sovereignty. Some of those who "felt obliged" to support Argentina's case on sovereignty had tried to treat the two problems as one. He pointed out that despite Argentina's claim the Falklands was not a colonial issue: Argentina was engaged in a purely territorial claim in total disregard of the inhabitants of the Islands. The Argentine claim could not be settled at their expense; their interests were paramount. If the principle of decolonisation was distorted in order to redistribute peoples, the UN would be in real trouble and there would be endless war and destruction. Argentina had flouted the principle of peaceful settlement. There had been a deliberate campaign of distortion in some of the statements of the Security Council debate. It was perverted reasoning to say that aggression had begun when the UK forces moved towards the Falklands. Argentina had no right to impose its own form of colonialism on the Falklands.

3. Lt Cdr Astiz

The Swedish and French Governments believe that Lt Cdr Astiz was responsible for the deaths of some of their subjects in suspicious circumstances, quite apart from other allegations (see for example today's Guardian) of his participation in torture and killings in Argentina, and have asked to

interview him. This presents problems for us because Astiz is a POW and under the Geneva Conventions cannot be questioned unless he is willing - or much less extradited. We have much sympathy with the Swedes and the French but have to bear in mind that the way in which we treat him could create a precedent if the Argentines were to capture any more of our own men. We have explained this to the Swedes and the French and are concerned not to seem insensitive to their opinion - or our own public opinion. Astiz has been visited by the ICRC on Ascension Island who were satisfied with the conditions under which we were holding him temporarily, but he cannot remain there. He is now being brought back to the UK by ship which will give us more time to think about the problem.

/4. Panorama Interview

4. Panorama Interview with Mr Nott - 24 May 1982

RICHARD LINDLEY:

An opinion poll carried out for Panorama by MORI yesterday shows that the overwhelming majority of people supports the government's decision to take military action. Asked if it was right to go ahead with the landing, eighty percent said 'yes'. But although nearly two-thirds of the population sixty three percent thought we should go on fighting until the Argentines left the islands; nearly a third thought there should be an immediate ceasefire.

Mr Nott, you told the House of Commons this afternoon that the days of the Argentine garrison on the Falklands are numbered. Does that mean that you've ordered British commanders subject only to their own advice and their own opinions as to when to move to go all out to complete the reconquest of the Falklands?
RT.HON.JOHN NOTT, MP (Secy. for Defence): Yes, the task force commander has been told to repossess the Falkland Islands at the earliest possible opportunity.

LINDLEY: Argentina is supporting the call for a ceasefire. Would you be prepared under any circumstances to order a halt in our military advance and accept a ceasefire while further talks are held?

NOTT: Well, we've had six weeks of talks. I think that's right and we've made a succession of proposals all of which have been rejected by Argentina. We've gone backwards so far as their agreement is concerned to a withdrawal from the islands under the mandatory United Nations resolution and I see no reason why they should have changed their position. They have continuously said that they wanted a ceasefire and they wanted to negotiate, but every time that's been put to the test they have shown total intransigence.

LINDLEY: So we're not going to stop in the middle now?

NOTT: Absolutely not.

LINDLEY: Even though a third of the British public seems to think that a ceasefire now now that we've made our point, now that we've landed, a third of the public seems to think that a ceasefire would be a good idea?

NOTT: Well, two-thirds don't think it will be a good idea and I agree with the two-thirds.

LINDLEY: What you're after really is surrender?

NOTT: We're going forward to repossess the Falkland Islands. We must see how the Argentine garrison reacts. It's too soon to say; we've only just established a bridgehead; we're now making that secure and the task force commander will press forward as soon as he's ready to do so.

LINDLEY: If the Security Council seemed about to accept a resolution for a ceasefire would we veto it?

NOTT: Well, the Security Council has already passed a resolution — resolution 502 — requiring the Argentines to withdraw. They have totally ignored it. Indeed, following resolution 502 they continued to build up their forces on the islands. So that is the resolution that we are concerned about — withdrawal of the Argentines immediately — and only with withdrawal is a ceasefire sensible or a possible option.

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LINDLEY: So you don't think there's any possibility at all that the Security Council could call for a ceasefire now?

NOTT: Well, we already are operating under resolution 502 which has been ignored by the Argentinians.

LINDLEY: If it came to it, would you veto it?

NOTT: Veto what?

LINDLEY: If the Security Council did decide in a further resolution to call for a ceasefire would you veto it?

NOTT: Well, there can only be a ceasefire as we've made absolutely clear from the outset of this matter if there's total withdrawal of the Argentinians from the islands and so far they have shown no willingness to do that.

LINDLEY: You talked today in the House about the way in which despite the defensive screens we're now putting out some Argentine planes are still getting through to damage our ships. What do you feel about that?

NOTT: Well, we've shot down about fifty of their fixed wing aircraft which is an enormous loss of skilled pilots for the Argentine. We've successfully now blockaded the islands for many weeks. Undoubtedly the garrison there is getting short of food and now last weekend we successfully accomplished the most difficult military operation which has been establishing a bridgehead. That was always going to be the most dangerous part of re-establishing our position on the islands and it went on the whole very well. We suffered losses — tragic losses — but the military aim has been achieved and achieved with remarkably little loss of life, in fact none from the troops who are now ashore.

LINDLEY: Is it possible to say that the worst period of taking casualties on the British side is now over?

NOTT: Well, I would hope so but nothing is certain in a battle of this sort. It may still be a very tough fight. I think the morale of the Argentinians on the garrison is low but they may well fight very hard and so I cannot be sure that we will not take further casualties. I sincerely hope not, but I cannot be sure.

LINDLEY: Do you believe that we shall reduce them to a minimum by moving as fast as we can?

NOTT: I think it's important we move fast, but as I said in the House today that kind of tactical decision is for the force commanders on the spot. They must make the decision

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NOTT: as to how they're going to move forward from here.

LINDLEY: Mr Nott, thank you very much. We'll be coming back to you to talk to you again in a moment.

LINDLEY: Mr Nott, is it right to suppose that when you've achieved your immediate military aim of ousting the Argentines from the Falklands we shall have to garrison and defend the islands for the foreseeable future?

NOTT: Well, of course, we would like to recreate a situation where the islanders can live in peace with their neighbours. But if in the short-term that doesn't prove possible then, yes, it will be necessary to garrison the islands. That's quite correct.

LINDLEY: You'd agree, I take it, that with the links with Argentina now broken first by Argentina and now by the fighting that's followed, that there's no going back to the relationship that sustained the people that before?

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NOTT: Well, I can't be sure. I mean clearly there's a total rupture in relations between the Falkland Islanders and Argentina at the moment, but that need not necessarily be long-lasting. After this is over I think we must try and recreate good relations between Argentina and Great Britain and with the Falkland Islands. I think that's possible.

LINDLEY: Listening to what Dr Costa Mendez said there it does seem that Argentina is unlikely to abandon its claim to sovereignty over the Falklands. Can you imagine that they're going to forget about it and not try again?

NOTT: Well, you see the Argentine government wants to impose colonialism on the Falkland Islands. They talk about colonialism there. What they want is to deny the islanders their democratic rights. In the interim arrangements which we put to the United Nations totally in accordance with the United Nations charter for the elected council to continue they denied the right of the islanders to keep their democracy. Colonialism is what the Argentines want for the people of the Falkland Islands who are British and we are denying that to Argentina and will continue to do so.

LINDLEY: Well, that may well be so, but the point is that they are very determined to keep on pressing their claim however it is interpreted. They don't appear and I think the British government was at pains to point out, when the negotiations were finally rejected, that Argentina, whatever it might have said on the one hand continue to assert sovereignty it seems very hard to imagine that just because they've got a bloody nose this time, just because you've beaten them this time that they're going to go away and forget about it doesn't it?

NOTT: Well, we haven't beaten them yet. It depends what you mean by them. I'm merely seeking withdrawal of the occupying Argentine forces in the islands. You say they're determined but so are we. Senator Moynihan who's been a great supporter of ours throughout in the United States talked about principles and of course there is a principle here, that of defending your own people however few in number. And after all these islands have been British for a hundred and fifty years and the Argentines may have a claim over them but they've been British and the people of the Falkland Islands have said they wish to remain British and this is the central issue which the Argentines cannot accept.

LINDLEY: Do you ever see them accepting it?

NOTT: The people of the Falkland Islands?

LINDLEY: Do you ever see the Argentines accepting that the islands will be anything but Argentinian.

NOTT: If one is to believe the Foreign Minister, no.

LINDLEY: That means, doesn't it then, that we are going to have to look after the islands for the foreseeable future. Have to garrison them, protect them?

NOTT: In the foreseeable future have repossessed them it seems probable that we will have to leave a garrison there, yes, and protect it.

LINDLEY: Any idea how much that would cost?

NOTT: I've no idea at all, but it needn't necessarily be particularly expensive. We would probably have to keep some submarines in the area and a garrison which was larger than the earlier one we would need to provide some air defence for the islands. It need not be extremely costly. If the Argentines suffer a defeat I think there's very much....a lot of exaggerated talk about the cost of defending the islands in the future.

LINDLEY: I've certainly seen one estimate that suggests that it might be as much as one thousand seven hundred million pounds to do the job properly over a three-year period. That's more than a million pounds per islander. Is that the sort of cost that we could consider...is it proportionate with Britain's other interests?

NOTT: Well, I haven't seen that figure. It's about what it costs us to....the British army on the Rhine...

LINDLEY: Are the Falklands that important?

NOTT: ...helping to defend Germany against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. I think it's a hugely exaggerated figure. But I must make the point that once we've repossessed the islands we will obviously try and create a peaceful environment in which the islanders can live in peace with their neighbours as was said on the television. That includes Chile and Uruguay and Brazil. I don't necessarily believe that because we have repossessed the islands the relations with the South American continent need remain bad. I don't accept it.

LINDLEY: Do you think we have the will to defend them as long as necessary?

NOTT: Oh absolutely.

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LINDLEY: I was looking back into history a little... I think it was in 1770 when the Spanish occupied the Falklands and the British fleet saw them off. Within four years we'd sailed away again because we couldn't afford to stay. You don't feel the situation is rather similar today?

NOTT: No, I don't at all. I'm sure that it will be essential for us to remain there and protect the Falkland Islands whilst the neighbour has an aggressive intention for the islands, but as I'm making clear we as soon as this is over we will want to get into discussions with Argentina and with Argentina's neighbours about the future. I prefer the word 'discussions' rather than 'negotiations'. Once we're back in control of British sovereign territory it is not negotiations we're talking about but discussions about the future of the islands which we'll be quite happy to talk about but subject of course to the wishes of the islanders themselves and they must remain paramount.

LINDLEY: How do you think we could ask or expect other nations in the area to help us to bear some of the defence burden of defending the Falklands against any revenge attack should Argentina decide to make one?

NOTT: Well, I don't think we could expect the other South American countries to help us defend the Falklands against Argentina but we would like to feel that we can come to a final long-term solution where the integrity of the Falkland Islands is guaranteed in an international way.

LINDLEY: By whom? America?

NOTT: Well, I think we haven't yet considered that matter. May be by the United States, may be by the United States in conjunction with other South American countries. But in the end it will be the wishes of the islanders that are paramount as we've said all along and that's in accordance with Article 72 of the United Nations charter. So why anybody should think there's something wrong or colonialist or undemocratic about the upholding of the principles of the charter I fail to see. The colonialism that's talked about is on the side of Argentina who wants to deny the democratic right to the Falkland Islanders.

LINDLEY: I think it's a little hard, though, for people to imagine how we can get others to defend a part of Britain as you suggest the Falklands really is at the other end of the world for us.

NOTT: Well, I'm looking...casting into the future. It may be we could bring the Falkland Islands into some general kind of arrangement. I mean the Antarctica is in some kind
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NOTT: of general arrangement which guarantees its integrity. These are all matters that'll have to be thought about. In the short-term we are concerned with the military aim which is to repossess the islands and ensure the withdrawal of the Argentinians..

LINDLEY: Do you agree with your war Cabinet colleague, Mr Parkinson, that we've ruled out for the foreseeable future giving sovereignty of the Falklands to Argentina. Is that out of the question?

NOTT: Oh, out of the question. Out of the question. We wouldn't have sent a task force with twenty six thousand people involved eight thousand miles which is half way... equivalent to half way across the Pacific from these islands. We wouldn't have done this with the full support of the British people only to arrive there, having suffered tragic losses of our men only once we're there to say: "Well, thank you very much we're now going to sit down with you and discuss sovereignty". That's not what it's all about. We've had six weeks of negotiations with the Argentinians. They've steadfastly opposed every kind of concession that we have made. In fact they've gone backwards. Now we are being asked... now we're there and now we're winning and taking them back and re-establishing democracy for our own people on these islands we're now being told that we must cease firing that there must be a truce. The notion is absurd. I'm in favour of negot... discussions about the long-term future of the islands as soon as we're back there. But let's achieve the restoration of British administration and then we can see what the islanders want.

LINDLEY: But during this period of negotiations...this six weeks...you've never once ruled out the possibility of handing sovereignty to Argentina. You've gone out of your way not to do that. Are you now saying that we never will?

NOTT: What I'm saying is that our immediate objective is now to repossess the islands. We tried for six weeks to get a reasonable peaceful settlement in accordance with the United Nations mandatory resolution, the Argentinians rejected it, we went through seven sets of proposals, now what I'm saying is there's a new situation and we're not going to talk about sovereignty at the moment that we're trying to retake the islands and free the Falkland Islanders from their occupation.

LINDLEY: I can see the logic of that, but there's another logic, too, isn't there? If it was right until two months ago for Britain to talk about handing over sovereignty to Argentina what in the long-term has changed about that once this emergency...once this crisis is over. If it made sense two months ago why doesn't it make sense now?

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NOTT: Well, in the short-term what has changed is that whilst we were discussing these issues with Argentina, in good faith she invaded the islands. That is what has changed and that has changed the whole atmosphere and mood of the situation. It's a fundamental change. Once we have peace re-established, once the union flag is flying again in Port Stanley, once we have tried to arrive at a peaceful solution with Argentina and her neighbours which secures the future of the islands and the wishes of the islanders then of course we're prepared to have talks with Argentina.

LINDLEY: How long will all this take?

NOTT: I've no idea. We're pressing on as fast as we can.

LINDLEY: But can I just return to that point. If it made sense from British point of view to think about giving the Falklands to Argentina won't it make sense to go on thinking that in a month or two?

NOTT: It doesn't make sense from the British point of view. These are British people. They've been occupied by an aggressor and we are now freeing them and restoring democracy.

LINDLEY: It no longer makes sense?

NOTT: Not in the short term, of course not, it can't.

LINDLEY: You used the word 'never' yourself in an interview.

NOTT: I used the word 'never' in answer to a question which I thought was referring to the interim arrangements which we were then discussing and which have now been withdrawn from the table since we failed to achieve a peaceful solution with the Argentinians now we are trying to achieve our military aims.

LINDLEY: So it's still a possibility in the future handing sovereignty to Argentina?

NOTT: Well, I've said it's impossible at this stage to talk about sovereignty.

LINDLEY: The government has been very clear, firm, decisive in the action it's taken. I think public support for your action shows that, but you have been unclear about the long-term.

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LINDLEY: Don't you think now rather than just say "well, let's hear what the islanders have to say" it is about time you told us what status, what shape you think the islands should take in the future?

NOTT: I'm not going to tell the islanders what they should have.

LINDLEY: Shouldn't you have a view?

NOTT: There are eighteen hundred people and at the moment they're under occupation and we will get there, we will re-establish British administration and then we will talk to these people who are free, they have their own democratic, their own elected council and what Argentina wants and I repeat it again is to establish colonialism over British people on those islands. They charge us with colonialism but we want to restore the democratic freedoms which British people on the islands have.

LINDLEY: I've heard...very briefly....I've heard another member of the War Cabinet hoped that more British settlers will go to the Falklands. Is it really the government's hope that the islands could become a viable independent territory, a little Britain at the end of the

NOTT: Well, I noted that Lord Chalfont said that that was impossible. I don't think I rule it out as firmly as that. It may be possible. Of course there are very few people there for the Falkland Islands to be totally independent. But with some broad... some kind of broad international guarantee I think it's a choice that possibly (I don't know) possibly the islanders might take.

LINDLEY: Mr Nott, thank you very much, indeed.

NOTT: Thank you.

LINDLEY: That's all from Panorama tonight. We'll be watching events on the Falklands just as closely as anybody. Until we see you next on Panorama, good night.

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5. FOLLOWING IS EXTRACT FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S INTERVIEW WITH IRN AFTER THE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY ON ECONOMIC MEASURES AGAINST ARGENTINA.

BEGINS

Q: MR PYM, CAN YOU TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER COLLEAGUES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY HAVE AGREED WITH REGARD TO THE CONTINUATION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST ARGENTINA?

A: THEY HAVE AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THESE ECONOMIC MEASURES AGAINST ARGENTINA SHOULD CONTINUE. WE AGREED LAST MONDAY TO DO IT ON A CERTAIN BASIS UNTIL TODAY. TODAY WE HAVE AGREED UNANIMOUSLY TO CONTINUE ON THE SAME BASIS WITHOUT ANY TIME LIMIT. THEY NATURALLY HOPE - EVERYBODY HOPES - THAT THE DISPUTE WILL COME TO AN END BEFORE TOO LONG BUT THERE IS NO TIME LIMIT TO IT. THERE WAS DISCUSSION ABOUT WHETHER IT MIGHT CONTINUE FOR ONE MONTH BUT ON THE WHOLE THEY PREFERRED FOR IT TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY AND NATURALLY I AM ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME. INDEED I AM GRATEFUL.

Q: THERE ARE STILL TWO COUNTRIES WHO ARE NOT TAKING PART IN ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST ARGENTINA. DOES THAT DISAPPOINT YOU: THAT IS ITALY AND IRELAND.

A: THEY HAVE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT. THEY MADE IT CLEAR LAST TIME THAT THERE WOULD BE NO COMFORT TO ARGENTINA ON THE BASIS ON WHICH THEY WISH TO CONTINUE SANCTIONS. THEY HAVE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES AT HOME WHICH OF COURSE I RESPECT AND UNDERSTAND. THERE WAS SOLIDARITY AND UNANIMITY ALL AROUND THE ROOM FOR CONTINUING THESE MEASURES WITHOUT ANY TIME LIMIT.

Q: BUT WHAT DOES THAT DO FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AT THE MOMENT?

A: IT GIVES US FURTHER AND STRONG AND I WOULD SAY ALMOST INCREASED BACKING ON THE ECONOMIC PRESSURES WHICH ARE STILL APPLIED. LET US REMEMBER, WE ARE APPLYING ALL THREE PRESSURES, THE ECONOMIC ONES WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THIS MORNING, THE MILITARY ONES WHICH ARE MAKING SO MUCH NEWS AT HOME AND ALSO THE DIPLOMATIC PRESSURES. THERE IS NOT MUCH SIGN OF ADVANCE ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT AT THE MOMENT FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT THE ARGENTINES DO NOT FEEL INCLINED TO CHANGE THEIR POSITION BUT NONETHELESS IF THEY WERE TO DO THAT - IF THEY WERE TO COME FORWARD WITH SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT - NATURALLY WE SHOULD LISTEN TO THEM. WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE TODAY IS TO MAINTAIN AND INCREASE THE ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON ARGENTINA.