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BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE FALKLANDS IN THE
LIGHT OF ARGENTINIAN PSYCHOLOGY

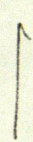
I ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumes:

1 that the US will prevent the USSR (including her surrogates such as Cuba) from interfering physically in the South Atlantic - should it be necessary;

2 that the NATO allies (including the US) will cover the rear of Britain and so prevent the USSR from taking advantage in Europe of the temporary withdrawal of British forces to the South Atlantic;

3 that the other countries of Latin America will not do more than give moral support, via rhetoric or minor economic help, to Argentina - and



4 that British policy remains to re-establish control (administration as well as sovereignty) before undertaking negotiations.

II CONSIDERATIONS: a) THE ARMY

The present Argentinian government is a military one like most governments in that country since 1930, though there are civilian ministers. The Army is not monolithic. The present President was, as it were, selected in 1981 by other war lords who have to be consulted on most important issues of policy. Several of them would be only too prepared to take over from President Galtieri. Even within each war lord's staff there are points of view which the officer concerned can neglect only at his peril.

The Army has now, in this phase, controlled Argentina since 1976, when General Videla overthrew Isabel Peron. Videla gave way to General Viola, his own nominee, who was not very successful and in turn gave way to Galtieri last year.

The Army in Argentina considers itself the only successful institution in the country. It crushed in the 1970s the two main terrorist groups in something like civil war (the left-wing Peronists, the Montoneros, and the People's Revolutionary Army, who are "Maoist-Gue^ver^varists"). They did this with brutality. Some of both the fascistic anti-semitism and the inhumanity of the terrorists stained the Army's own behaviour - anyway at lower levels of command. Nevertheless, the majority of Argentines are clearly grateful to the Army for this victory and many of those actually involved with the suppression of subversion have apparently since 1978 been removed from command. It is inaccurate to describe the Argentinian army as "fascist". The loyalty of ^{most} ~~many~~ officers is to the flag, not the leader. The fact that so many army officers are descendants of Italians helps probably to re-emphasise the importance of patriotism, and the flag.

The Argentinian armed forces have not gone to war against a foreign enemy since the Paraguayan war of 1865-70. This fact, combined with both their political power and their cult of the male hero (machismo), may make them specially reckless: they cannot know from practice what modern war is, even though they have been a professional army in character since 1870 and even though many officers have been educated in US military schools. Defeat at the hands of a Prime Minister who is a woman (and a Queen) would be riling.

The Argentinian government is not likely to concern itself greatly about loss of life to their own forces. They have little public opinion to worry about on that score - though a military disaster might play into the hands of the Peronists (see below). They have personally been living in a world of death and violence for a long time. Galtieri might have more chance to survive politically ^{after} a military disaster too than a withdrawal of a position which he has taken up.

Many Argentinians admire the British way of life, and most probably admire Britain more than they do any other country. This does not prevent the idea of "twisting the lion's tail" from giving pleasure.

It is difficult to estimate the role of persons of Italian origin who probably make up now about half of the Argentinian population. They have been more and more prominent during the years of political decline. Perón's father's name was Peroni- other leaders of Italian origin have included (as well as Galtieri) Lonardi, Illia, Guido, Viola - Italians have been specially important in the armed forces*. The

* In 1946 about half the serving general were sons of immigrants according to an analysis by Robert Potash.

first and long-serving leader of the Argentinian Communists (Codovilla) was an Italian by birth. This Italian side of the Argentinian population may have increased the national preoccupation with brava figura, may have brutalised the country somewhat and may also have increased their contempt for the dignity of the state. Many Italians are Neapolitan, Sicilian or Calabrian in origin. This is a disagreeable thought since in Italy these people are traditionally dishonest, shiftless, cruel and without civic responsibility. On the other hand, immigrants do alter their psychology once they become accepted in most societies. The question requires more analysis than I have yet given it.

Despite the success of the Junta against the terrorists they have not affected the "severe intellectual moral and spiritual crisis" which (in John Gunther's words) has affected Argentina since 1945. The word 'Argentinisation' in the Spanish world at least still implies left v right terrorism.

A characteristic of the Argentinian army is that once in power the generals behave as if they are politicians: they become interested in popularity. When things were going ill for them in 1977, the Junta excited enthusiasm for a war with Chile over the Beagle dispute. The Argentinians helped also to foment the military coup in Bolivia in 1980. The threat of war with Chile was in many ways a rehearsal for the present crisis. (It repays study: see Appendix I, where the issue is clarified.)

The Argentinian generals - mostly graduates of US officer schools - have excellent relations with their US counterparts. Galtieri's recent visit to the US was particularly well handled (apparently by the clever Argentinian military attaché).

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(It is hard not to believe that some Argentinian Generals let their US counterparts have some inkling as to what was being planned in March: surely Dr Costa Mendez must have winked, at least, at Assistant Secretary of State Enders, after the latter's recent visit to Buenos Aires, which led to the great 'triumph' for the US of securing Argentinian military support, in the form of officers or advisers, in Central America. It was also a triumph for the Argentinian military since it gave them another field for international activity.)

b) THE PERONIST LEGACY

The Junta argues that the only alternative to their rule in Argentina is a revived Peronista government. This is the view of many North American observers. I think it is true. If there were to be a free election, the Peronistas would win.

Old conservative or liberal statesmen survive, as in all Latin American countries, but in Argentina they have no power base though some of these people have come out with expressions of fear that the consequences of an attack on the Falklands could be to push the Argentines into the hands of the Russians. Such politicians could probably play a helpful part as individuals in private negotiations.

It is impossible to say what a new Peronist government would be like, since, like all Fascists, they are now by nature irrational: "a church of all the heresies", Mussolini himself described his movement. There are right-wing Peronists who might seek to keep Argentina in the western world; but the toughest and most ruthless are the left - the friends of the Montoneros or the Montoneros themselves, who, murderous and insensate though they may be, plainly hope to use the present crisis to return to the Argentina from whence they fled - either to Cuba or, in the case of one notorious assassin-leader, Switzerland.

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The Peronists' legacy is nationalism (traditionally directed against the US), state intervention in the economy (including unnecessary prestige industries) and bribes to trade unions leading to inflation: the Argentine age of inflation began with Perón. One consequence of the policies of Perón was the top-heavy emphasis in industrialisation in Buenos Aires now a very large city indeed.

Difficult though it may be to accept, the Army is better than any form of Peronism, considering the long-term interests of the west as a whole. (Note: in the years 1945-55 there were many Peronista officers. Most were purged after 1955.)

III ARGENTINA AND ITS PAST

The recent economic, political and moral decline naturally causes shame among all serious Argentinians who were precisely the Latin Americans who once looked down on the rest of the continent; who considered themselves the economic and political giants of the continent - rivals of the US potentially as leaders in the Americas; and who before 1930 enjoyed a life of tranquillity, prosperity and political stability guaranteed by the great British commercial connection. To read James Bryce, who wrote of a visit to Latin America in the early years of the century, and hear how "loitering in the great Avenida de Mayo ... one feels much nearer to Europe than to anywhere else in South America" is to be conscious now of observing an overwhelming tragedy - particularly acute since political mismanagement has brought them all to this plight. Yet, "Seldom has Nature lavished gifts upon a people with a more bountiful hand" Bryce concluded his chapter on Argentina.

Most Argentinians also recall that the history of their country is bound up with our own, in a way that we have forgotten (the importance of Trafalgar: the British failure at Buenos Aires 1806; diplomatic help to all new Latin

American republics under Canning*; British investment and commerce in the railway age etc.

IV ARGENTINA AND THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA

The Argentines are not popular in the rest of their continent since they have been traditionally so arrogant. Their arrogance has become even more unbearable in their economic and political decline. Argentines would speak in Buenos Aires of "going to Latin America", as if Buenos Aires were Paris. Mexicans mimic Argentinians' affected accent.

But there is a shared sense of belonging to a continent even in Venezuela. This is a tricky thing to deal with diplomatically. Argentina's bad relations with Chile are echoed by Peru's and so an Argentinian-Peruvian axis is normal in Latin American politics. Venezuela has, of course, her own attitude to Guyana to sustain her.

V THE PROPOSAL

My suggestion for a settlement which would take into account the above known characteristics of the Argentinian psychology is for a proposal which would include the following:

- i) The Argentinian forces to withdraw; but
- ii) No British troops would be returned to the islands - (since the marines were there only to defend the islands against the Argentinians they presumably would not be needed). The Argentinian government could usefully make much of that change from the status quo ante, as a face-saver.
- iii) We undertake (despite the aggression - surely itself a major concession) to negotiate from scratch. Another face-saver.

* eg by early recognition of consuls to assist trade and give legal credibility to the new regimes.

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- iv) An Argentinian Residence could be established on the island. This "residence" would be able to fly the Argentinian flag and would act as the guarantor of Argentinian commercial interests. The word "Residence" is suggested since it implies more than a consulate (which would be unacceptable to the Argentinians as designating foreign territory) but less than a governorship. There may be other such words: 'representative', after all is used at the UN by us. The "Resident" would concern himself with planning long-term economic collaboration.
 - v) An UN fleet might be established between Argentina and the Falklands; our task force would thus be withdrawn. The UN fleet - an innovation, I think - might include the US (and European powers) but not the USSR or any Soviet bloc state.
 - vi) Some Argentinian police might be allowed to guard the Residence - not more than six at most (they would have no other role). In these circumstances (and taking into account ii) above) the British police might be raised to twelve.
 - vii) A British deputy Governor would be appointed: perhaps not Mr Rex Hunt. Perhaps he could be Spanish-speaking and instructed to establish good personal relations.
 - viii) We express willingness to negotiate, from the moment i) to vii) are implemented, over the long term future of the Falkland Islands (not the dependencies however) at the UN taking into account:
 - a) our willingness to submit the issue of our sovereignty to the International Court of Justice;

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- b) our responsibility to secure self-determination to the islanders;
 - c) the infinite variety of possible long term solutions given good will; and
 - d) our responsibility for Antarctic research etc in South Georgia and the dependencies (for which let it be remembered there is no Spanish name).

VI PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL - A SPEECH

The package contained previously might be launched in a speech by you at a critical moment before fighting begins (see VII below). The speech should be intended to make an impression on world public opinion as well as on the Argentine. Points to be mentioned in this speech might include:

- 1 warm recognition of the old collaboration between Britain and Argentina in the past. Argentinians, remember, know all this very well, think it important, and we should show that we recall it too.
- 2 Reaffirmation that with the best will in the world we cannot do other than believe in our own present sovereignty in this issue as interpreted by all international lawyers. As reasonable people of European origin - stress this - all must realise that we would be striking a blow at international law everywhere if we were to give up on this. Law really is what Britain stands for.

- 3 Our people in the islands have been there since 1842 (the date the colony was founded). At that date the ancestors of many South American were still in Italy or Spain - so that we must look on the islanders as having as good a right to be there as any.
- 4 Recognition of the part played by military government in preventing Marxist presence ("nihilism") in Argentina. This is the real issue isn't it? Marxism as we all know is the real evil and Russia and her surrogates the real colonialist. (This point is intended for Reagan supporters as well as Argentinian.) Here surely is the real threat to the Monroe doctrine. (Perhaps we should play down the alleged fascism and the Junta in this presentation.)
- 5 We understand Argentina's - and other Latin Americans' - feelings about the "continent". But frankly the Falklands cannot be regarded as part of the "continent" in the terms mentioned in the Treaty of Rio*. There are several territories (specify? too tactless?) in the Americas which are open to more doubt than are the Falklands (French Guyana?). Once we begin to talk of 'imperialism' too surely some strange morals could be drawn by American Indians.

*Article 4 of the Treaty: "The regions to which the Treaty refers are the North and South American continents and Greenland and an area of Antarctica."

- 6 The self determination issue really is important. In all negotiations leading to independence in the dependent territories, we have given this priority. General Assembly Resolution 1541-XV enshrines the principle (12.12.1960) as does the Civil and Political Rights Covenant (Article 1) of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Contract (Article 1): "all peoples have a right of self-determination".
- 7 Perhaps you could harken back to the events of 1841 when the Argentinian President General Rosas offered to give up their claim to the Falklands in return for our abandonment of the debt of the 1820s contracted via Baring's.

VII TIMING OF THE PROPOSAL

I presume that it will be possible for the Navy on arrival in the vicinity of the Falklands, to invest the islands further by eg

- 1 extending the blockade to affect military civilian aircraft; and/or
- 2 arranging a blockade to cover all merchant shipping.

I also presume (on the evidence of press reports etc and conversation with the very knowledgeable Lord Shackleton) that a similar investment of South Georgia might be easily managed; I do not know how easy a re-occupation of South Georgia would be nor whether the south Sandwich islands and other dependencies offer any problem at all.

The proposal could sensibly be launched at three separate moments:

- 1 now;

- 2 after the measures envisaged in (1) of the previous paragraph;
- 3 after the measures indicated in (2) of the previous paragraph; or
theoretically
- 4 after a successful invasion of the Falkland islands.

My preference would be for the proposal to be timed at moment (3) - ie after the measures to effect a successful re-conquest of South Georgia and the dependencies.

VIII OTHER POLICIES

It stands to reason that Government information services should be adequately briefed, beforehand, firmly and imaginatively to put over these plans throughout the world as the best way to guarantee the rule of law.

It might also be that the presentation of the plan could be accompanied by private attempts to sell it eg

- 1 by semi-diplomatic conversations between British and Argentinian elder statesmen. I confess that the only person with any credibility in Argentina who occurs to me is General Videla who, though, I believe, not very intelligent, is generally thought of as honourable and prudent;
- 2 by supplementary efforts at the UN. For example the Security Council could be asked by us to ask the International Court of Justice for an opinion on this case. This might be a helpful way of satisfying public opinion that we are racking our brains for *legal* ways of getting out of *the threat of war*.

IX A LANDING ON THE FALKLANDS

Should all these policies fail then it presumably would be essential to mount a landing on the Falklands themselves.

It seems to me essential if this were to occur that the following should be ensured beforehand:

- a) the action however violent should be brief;
- b) magnanimity should characterise victory;
- c) immediate proposals for negotiations should be launched at the same time as victory - perhaps more concessions than contained in Section III; and
- d) we should also announce that, though we act within Article 51 of the Charter, and are therefore not at war, we propose to regard all the old treaties on the treatment of prisoners and civilians as binding on us.

