

# Falklands: Navy prepares for operations

BY JIMMY BURNS IN BUENOS AIRES AND DAVID TONGE IN LONDON

BRITAIN LAST night said it was preparing a major naval task force for operations against Argentina as it set out to drum up international support to force Argentina to withdraw the troops which had seized control of the lonely Falkland Islands.

Mr John Nott, the Defence Secretary, said last night that a "substantial task force of naval ships" is being prepared for Britain for operations. It is expected to include two aircraft carriers and consist of at least 18 ships.

The force is to join up with other British ships now at sea and the Government appear to be bracing itself for military confrontation with Argentina. However, no orders have yet been given for the task force to set out on the two weeks' journey to reach Britain's South Atlantic colony.

Mr Nott and Lord Carrington the Foreign Secretary said that they could defend the islands on a sustained basis but refused to be drawn on whether Britain would use force.

The Government is coming under severe criticism in Britain for having left preparations so late. Today the Commons is to meet, the first Saturday session since the invasion of Suez in 1956.

The United Nations Security

Council was called into emergency session yesterday following accusations from Britain that Argentina was guilty of a "blatant violation" of international law by its actions in the pre-dawn raid and demands for it to pull out its troops. The U.S. was among the countries deploring the use of force and urging Argentine withdrawal. Several hours before the invasion President Ronald Reagan

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spent 50 minutes on the telephone with President Leopoldo Galtieri of Argentina trying to persuade him to cancel the operation.

Last night EEC Foreign Ministers condemned the Argentine invasion and called for the immediate withdrawal of the force.

Argentina claimed its invasion had been successful in a broadcast on Buenos Aires radio. British communications with the island had been broken several hours beforehand. The Argentines reported that their first detachments of troops had been landed at Port Stanley, capital of the windswept British colony, in the early hours of the morning.

The announcement said that

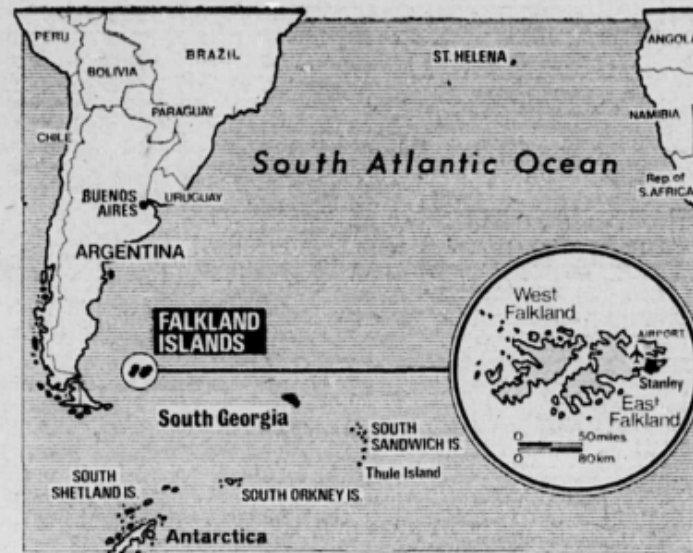
the islands had been "recovered" by the Argentine armed forces. Mr Rex Hunt, the British Governor reportedly handed over the administration of the Islands to the Argentine military, after the surrender of about 80 British marines stationed there.

The invasion was reported to have been completed after only token resistance following an appeal by Mr Hunt for the population to remain calm.

In Buenos Aires, the pro-government evening newspaper La Razon reported that one person had been killed and several had been injured on what it called the British side. The Argentine navy said however that there were no British casualties, but that an Argentine captain was killed and a lieutenant and corporal injured when British marines resisted the landing.

An amateur radio operator in the islands reported that the invaders had heavily damaged buildings in Port Stanley in machine gun and mortar barrages during the invasion.

According to the Argentine Navy, the first stage of the invasion was launched on Thursday night, as Britain called an emergency session of the UN Security Council in a last ditch attempt to resolve the Falklands dispute



An Argentine aircraft carrier, two destroyers, and two corvettes were diverted to Port Stanley from their positions near the island of San Pedro in the South Georgia chain, 620 miles further east across the South Atlantic.

The British believe more Argentine warships are involved.

Heavily armed navy infantry transported in amphibious trucks and backed by heavy

artillery swooped on the main airport and established a bridgehead, connected to the main naval base and airport at Comodoro Rivadavia in south Argentina.

Further troops were subsequently transported in Hercules aircraft from Comodoro and from Rio Gallegos, another airport strip in southern Argentina. The Argentine navy claims that the island had been fully occupied and subdued by

dawn yesterday morning.

Argentine radio yesterday afternoon claimed that Mr Rex Hunt and the British marines were being transported to the Argentine mainland, where they would be handed over to British Embassy officials.

According to General Alfredo Saint Jean, the Argentine Interior Minister, the Falkland Islands would be put under the military governorship of General Benjamin Menendez, the chief of army operations. Scenes of national fervour in Buenos Aires greeted the news of Argentina's successful invasion. The Central Bank suspended all transactions in foreign exchange, the city's commercial life was virtually paralysed as crowds rejoiced.

The Argentine Government pledged that the well-being of British subjects and property in Argentina would be fully protected. However, by late afternoon, local British officials showed growing concern that the Government-promoted ultranationalism might reach uncontrollable dimensions.

British journalists in Buenos Aires were warned by British officials of possible reprisals by the Argentine authorities or violence by uncontrolled nationalist bands, if and when

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# OVERSEAS NEWS

## Britain faces daunting military operation

BY HERBERT BLOOM, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT



The Falkland Islands invasion

BRITAIN'S DEFENCE has been reorganised to meet the possibility of a "substantial naval force for immediate operations."

Mr John Nott, the Defence Secretary, told a news conference yesterday morning that the force had not yet received orders to sail, which is a serious responsibility given its status as a reserve force. He said the force was being sent to "Falkland" to give the main fleet of British military preparations to keep available.

Though the official word of orders, military operations are in to show that Britain does

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Last night, three more reinforcements were sent to the Falkland Islands as well as the aircraft carrier Invincible plus 300 soldiers to JMWEL and 100 commandos to JMWEL. The Falkland Islands are being held in readiness for a possible invasion and possibly as a base for a number of commandos which are currently being sent to the Falkland Islands.

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## Company's hold over islands

By David Hoyle

ARGENTINE SALES FOR BRITAIN'S BRITISH AIRWAYS have been suspended, with the Falkland Islands Company now over the top of the islands. The British Airways sales company will be suspended from the islands until the British Airways sales company has been suspended from the islands.

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## Carrington and Nott deny intention to quit

BY PETER HODGAL, POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN CARRINGTON, the British Chancellor, and Mr John Nott, the Defence Secretary, have denied reports that they intend to resign over the Falkland Islands issue.

Mr Nott said he was not planning to resign and that he was committed to the Falkland Islands issue.

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## Credit rating unlikely to be affected

By the Editors

THE RISK OF AN ARGENTINE default is unlikely to affect the credit rating of the UK, according to the International Monetary Fund.

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## Never has so much diplomacy been expended for so few

BY DAVID HOYLE, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

The military operations in the Falkland Islands have been described as a "diplomatic disaster" by the British Foreign Office.

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## UK trade with Argentina £58m in surplus

BY MIKE WORTH

BRITAIN HAS A TRADE SURPLUS with Argentina of about £58 million, according to the latest figures from the Office of Statistics.

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