

Anglo-American treachery: what Argentina can tell Iraq

by Cynthia Rush

The History of the South Atlantic Conflict, The War for the Malvinas

by Rubén O. Moro

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Now that Great Britain has embarked on a colonial war in the Middle East using the military might of the United States, it is useful to review Commodore Rubén Moro's account of Britain's war against Argentina in retaliation for that country's reclaiming the Malvinas Islands on April 2, 1982. Written from the standpoint of the Argentine Air Force, whose pilots performed feats beyond the call of duty during the two-month conflict, Moro's history is a moving testimony to the heroism and patriotism of the Argentine Air Force, as well as a vivid portrayal of Margaret Thatcher's colonialist brutality, and the United States' stupid betrayal of its most vital interests.

One is especially struck by his description of Britain's gratuitous acts of cruelty and vindictiveness, such as the unnecessary sinking of the cruiser *General Belgrano*, killing 323 sailors, and repeated cases of British firing on and strafing unarmed Argentine rescue crews as they attempted to save pilots who had been shot down. Thatcher was not about to forgive the "colonials" who had the audacity to challenge British power. She *personally* gave the order from

her London headquarters to sink the *Belgrano* on May 2, 1982 to the amazement of the British commander on the scene. Then U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger justified the attack on the *Belgrano*—a flagrant violation of Britain's own rules of engagement—as a response to Argentina's "acts of aggression."

The sense of betrayal comes across strongly, despite Moro's limited treatment of the broader strategic and economic issues involved and a tendency to ignore the fact that the Argentine military junta's decision to reclaim the islands was not a "miscalculation" of the type he suggests, but rather the result of a deliberate setup by Britain and the United States. He reports the fact that during a visit to Buenos Aires on March 8, 1982, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Thomas Enders responded with the phrase "hands off" when asked about the U.S. position on the Malvinas dispute—not unlike U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie's response to the Iraqis last year when queried about its border dispute with Kuwait.

The author doesn't mention the fact that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had infiltrated the top levels of junta President Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri's staff, with access to all intelligence regarding the Armed Forces' intentions and movements. Nor does he reference the fact that when General Galtieri attended the annual meeting of Latin American armies in Washington in November, 1981 he received "assurances" that the U.S. would not get involved in any dispute between Britain and Argentina over the Malvinas. Moro claims that the junta misread and miscalculated the U.S.'s

response, even implying that the April 2 reclaiming of the islands at that time was wrong.

Who miscalculated?

The real miscalculation was that the junta *believed* the United States, and continued to believe it despite clear evidence of Secretary of State Alexander Haig's treachery and activity on behalf of the British while he "mediated" between the two countries. Moro himself reveals this flawed thinking. On April 14, ABC News reported that the U.S. had sided with the British and would provide satellite communications and logistics support to British troops on Ascension Island and intelligence on the movement of Argentine troops and interception of their communications. Yet Moro generously concludes that Haig was somehow in the dark about this, and "was upset to learn that Mrs. Thatcher had gone before Parliament to state that there could be no negotiations with Argentina."

Moro shouldn't have been surprised by Haig's betrayal. Right in the middle of the war, on May 10, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, whose networks were still intact inside the State Department, gave his famous Chatham House speech to the Royal Institute for International Affairs, in which he boasted of his allegiance to the Foreign Office (see *EIR*, June 1, 1982, *Feature*). Yet Moro treats Haig as an honest broker, describing him only as the man who ended up "undermining the future of hemispheric relations and discrediting his country's policies toward Latin America." True enough, but this avoids the broader question of the strategic goals of the Anglo-American alliance and Haig as an agent of British interests.

He is harsher on Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, the chief architect of the U.S.'s massive military assistance to Britain, whom the Queen dubbed a Knight of the British Empire in early 1988 for his contributions to Thatcher's cause. He reports that Pentagon assistance to London was initiated "without the knowledge of Congress and the White House and sometimes flowed beyond the bounds provided for by law."

Again, Moro's description of Weinberger gives the benefit of the doubt to the Reagan administration—as if the secretary of Defense were acting as a loose cannon, rather than an instrument of U.S. policy. He fails to report that it was Weinberger who wanted to deploy the *entirety* of NATO against Argentina, including bombing sorties against the mainland to wipe the country off the map.

In the face of such treachery, the British Task Force's technological and numerical superiority, and the U.S. military assistance, the heroism of Argentina's pilots, as attested to by Moro, is extremely moving. It should be noted here that they were accompanied in their bravery by Navy pilots, and by some dedicated officers and soldiers of the Argentine Army.

The Argentines were not prepared for war, and not all

in the Armed Forces fought as they should have. The Air Force had obsolete equipment, bombs which wouldn't detonate and technology never tested in battle. Pilots had to fly the distance from the mainland to the islands, make their attacks in only a few seconds and return to base immediately or run out of fuel. Argentina "lost" the war, but the resourcefulness and determination of its pilots on more than one occasion caused the commander of the British fleet, Admiral Woodward, to question his ability to win. "It should be noted," Moro says, "that Admiral Woodward's staff had rated Argentina's capability of launching a massive, all-out attack, using its air and naval assets to the fullest, as an extreme threat."

The Argentine Air Force used any piece of "junk" that would fly, including Lear jets unequipped with ejection seats, and a variety of other aircraft made serviceable only by the ingenuity of technicians and mechanics. Nonetheless, this "Third World" fleet sank or destroyed 9 British vessels (including the Class 42 destroyers Sheffield and Coventry), seriously damaged 12 others (including the carriers Hermes and Invincible) and moderately damaged 11 others. Argentina inflicted this damage in spite of the anti-aircraft defense arrays, SAM and Sidewinder missiles, and the use of AWACS and early warning systems provided by the United States.

The Anglo-Americans' U.N. rubberstamp

The parallels in *The War for the Malvinas* to today's Middle East crisis and the British-orchestrated setup of the nation of Iraq are numerous—particularly the United Nations' role in rubberstamping Anglo-American geopolitical goals. The 1982 British-Argentine conflict was a pretext for testing the type of NATO "out of area" deployment now being repeated in the Middle East, and while Moro doesn't analyze this issue in great depth, he indicates an understanding of it when he states that "the coastal states of the Southern Cone area of South America that border on the South Atlantic . . . would play a major role as the location of operational bases for aircraft, ships, or submarines . . . and the potential for those islands' serving as bases to support [Britain's] operations in the area."

Commodore Moro does not address the role of the Anglo-American deployment in destroying the potential for the creation of a debtors' cartel and common market which was the central feature of the continental mobilization which occurred subsequent to April 2, 1982.

Moro's description of the manner in which Britain acted over the years—150 years to be exact—to set up Argentina, back it into a corner, and ultimately force it to choose a military option to seek a solution which could have been achieved at the negotiating table, is striking. Britain had illegally seized the Malvinas Islands (which they call the Falklands) from Argentina in 1833. As Moro recounts, numerous resolutions passed at the United Nations and the Or-

ganization of American States (OAS) recognized Argentina's legitimate claim to the islands and demanded that Britain decolonize them. Britain ignored these, even while it ignored the islands and their inhabitants, known as Kelpers. It was Argentina which provided the islanders with most of their basic services, communications, and transportation infrastructure.

At no time from 1833 until 1965, did Britain make any effort to seriously negotiate a solution to the dispute over the islands which centered around the issue of sovereignty. Negotiations which began after 1965 ended in failure, due to British intransigence on this issue. This was the case right up to March 2, 1982, when the last round of talks between the two nations ended.

From the very beginning, Prime Minister Thatcher's emissaries went into high gear at the United Nations. They had no intention of negotiating. While Argentina bent over backwards to maintain a moderate diplomatic stance, even indicating its willingness to implement the original U.N. Resolution No. 502 (which called for a cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of troops), Britain never maintained any position other than demanding the withdrawal of Argentine forces and a return to the *status quo ante*. It bullied and bludgeoned even Non-Aligned countries into backing its resolutions against their own interests.

In Moro's words, the British moved "with deftness and speed in every possible area of endeavor . . . confounded world public opinion by painting Argentina as the aggressor, by claiming legitimate sovereignty over the islands, by picturing the islanders as hostages, by branding the military government as an atrocious dictatorship."

As today, the cowardly and pragmatic European governments did Thatcher's bidding in condemning Argentina and imposing sanctions against the "aggressor."

The Argentine operation to occupy the islands was bloodless. The junta's stated objective was to make a symbolic occupation, leave a reduced garrison on the islands and recommence talks as quickly as possible. "Occupy in order to negotiate" was the slogan. It had no reason to believe Thatcher would respond by sending an enormous naval task force to the South Atlantic, or that the United States would ally with Britain against Argentina and turn its back on Ibero-America.

The analogy to today's Anglo-American vendetta against Iraq again comes to mind. Moro notes appropriately that what Argentina had really done on April 2 was "to slap a colonial power in the face," adding correctly "and what better excuse could a beleaguered prime minister have to distract her people from the more pressing and crucial problems that endangered her remaining in office?" The South Atlantic conflict "came to Mrs. Thatcher as a tailor-made alternative with which to distract from the realities that were eating away at the foundation of her Conservative government, and she was not about to let it slip by."

The conceptual power of Christianity

by Warren A.J. Hamerman

The Feast of Faith

by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1986
153 pages, paperbound, \$9.95

No matter what your religious belief or personal spiritual activity, here is a book by a provocative Vatican thinker in which you will find rich insights into the survivability of mankind in today's world wracked by moral, economic and strategic crises. In his preface, Ratzinger states his broad intent as follows: "Only if man, every man, stands before the face of God and is answerable to him, can man be secure in his dignity as a human being." Ratzinger identifies the fact that at an hour of complete crisis in the physical and moral condition of man, no solution is possible without an exploration of fundamental philosophical and cultural truth-seeking.

Ratzinger divides his work into two sections: The first is a general theoretical discussion on the contemporary "dispute" over whether the modern age has "ended" prayer and religion. A second section deals with practical applications such as the status of Church music, in which he treats such questions as the distinction between the bestializing aspects of pagan music, and the spiritualizing compositions of Wolfgang Mozart, whom he identifies specifically: "The cultic music of pagan religions has a different status in human existence from the music which glorifies God in creation. Through rhythm and melody themselves, pagan music often endeavors to elicit an ecstasy of the senses, but without elevating the senses into the spirit; on the contrary, it attempts to swallow up the spirit in the senses as a means of release. This imbalance toward the senses recurs in modern popular music: The 'God' found here, the salvation of man identified here, is quite different from the God of the Christian faith. Quite different coordinates of existence are applied, quite a contrary view of the cosmos as a whole is exhibited. Here music can indeed become a 'seduction' leading men astray. Here music does not purify but becomes a drug, an anesthetic."