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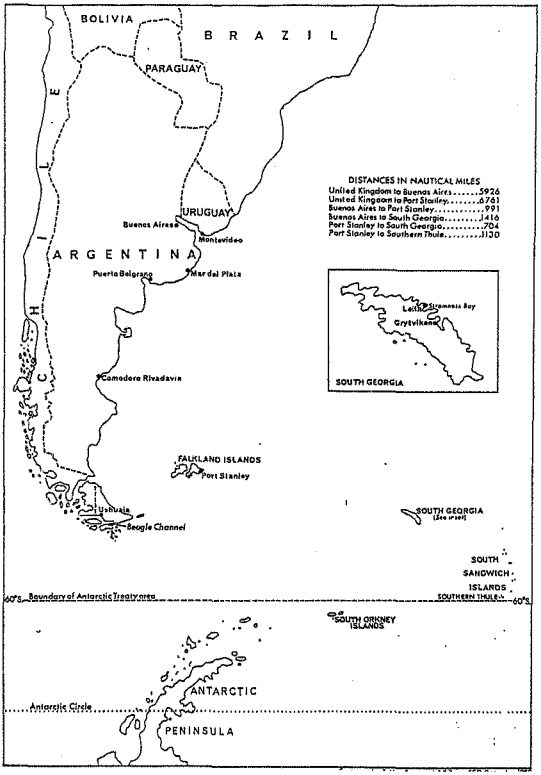
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Armed forces as instruments of foreign policy: some case studies

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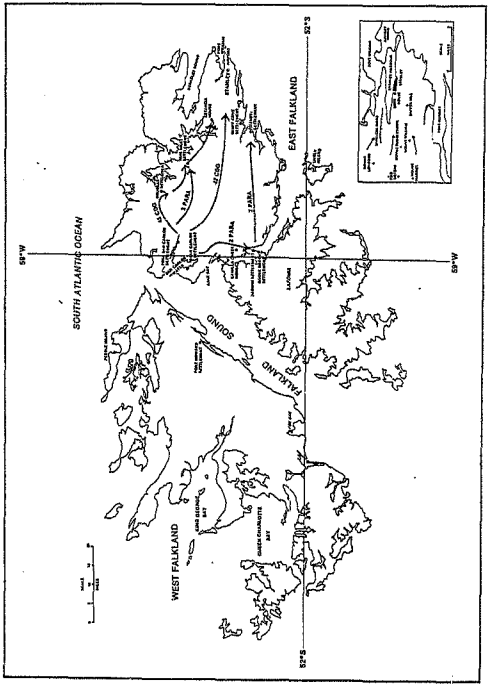
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MAP 4: Argentina, the Falklands and the Dependencies (Source: Franks, The Rt Hon. The Lord: Falkland Islands Review: Report of a Committee of Privy Councillors, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London 1983.)

MAP 5: The Falkland Islands
(Source: Underwood, G: Our Falklands War: The Men of the Task Force tell Their Story, Maritime Books, Liskeard, 1983.)



1811, when it was evacuated as a result of political unrest on the mainland. In 1820 the newly independent United Provinces of Rio de la Plata (predecessor of modern Argentina) sent a warship to claim the islands as an inheritance from Spain, they being inhabited by this time by a transient population of whalers and sealers. Not until 1823 was Buenos Aires able to appoint a governor, and he did not take up residence on the islands. The appointment of a new governor, Louis Vernet, in 1829 was the occasion of an official British protest. Vernet's subsequent seizure of an American ship (for illegal sealing) provoked more than a strong protest from the United States; the USS Lexington, in reprisal, virtually destroyed the colony, leaving only a handful of Argentines - mostly convicts - behind. Argentine attempts to reassert authority over the islands only resulted in the murder of the new governor. At this point the British returned, expelled the remaining Argentines, and subsequently established the settlement that continues to this day.

Argentina never relinquished its claim to the islands, arguing that discovery can only be a basis for sovereignty if allied to settlement and administration; that the first colony was French; that this was ceded to Spain; that Britain's

original claim applied only to West Falkland and that this lapsed when the colony was withdrawn, the plaque being seen by Buenos Aires as legally irrelevant; that Britain did nothing to re-assert control over the islands after the Spanish evacuation in 1811; that the predecessor state to Argentina claimed sovereignty by inheritance in 1820, despatched governors and attempted to enforce law, order and administration; and that only an act of American piracy allowed Britain to occupy the islands. Britain, on the other hand, claims sovereignty over the islands on the basis of, firstly, the 1765 proclamation which has never been renounced; secondly, on the doctrine of prescription, that is, Britain's continuous possession of the islands, over a long period of time, recognised by most of the international community, providing the right of sovereignty; and thirdly, on the doctrine of national self-determination, that is, on the Islanders strong and oft-expressed desire to remain British (the islanders now inarguably forming an indigenous population) (2). Nevertheless, this diplomatic dispute was an extremely low-key affair which had, for decades, little real effect on Anglo-Argentine relations.

The immediate roots of the South Atlantic War can, like many other elements of contemporary Argentine

history, be traced to the Presidency of Juan Peron. Following the inauguration of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, Peron ordered that all schools in the country teach that 'the Malvinas [Falklands] are Argentine', and that continued British possession was an affront to the national honour. This was, however, as far as Peron went, possibly because Britain still possessed a naval base at Simonstown in South Africa, as part of her still extant global military presence (3). In 1964 the then Argentine government took the matter further, proclaiming an annual '*Malvinas Day*', following it up the next year by raising the issue at the United Nations. These acts were to stimulate, initially, unofficial acts by private Argentine citizens to promote their country's claim to the islands (in 1964 an Argentine civilian flew a light plane to Port Stanley, hoisted the Argentine flag, handed a proclamation to a bystander, and flew home again; more seriously, in September 1966 20 armed civilians hi-jacked an Argentine airliner to Port Stanley) and, ultimately, planned provocations by the Argentine Navy. In the interim, these developments led to Britain establishing a small (platoon-size) garrison on the islands, and in mid-1966, initiating what were to become a series of intermittent talks over the islands which were to continue for the next 16 years. Britain stood firmly, from the first, on the

principle of the Islanders' right to self-determination; Argentina, equally firmly, rejected this as irrelevant. The Argentines also claimed South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands which were, for convenience, administered as Falkland Island Dependencies. However, they were in no way part of the Falklands group, nor had any state or empire claimed them before Britain, Argentina claiming them only some years after Britain took possession. Britain steadfastly refused to discuss these islands with the Argentines, regarding them as a completely separate issue about which there was nothing to discuss. Given the irreconcilable positions over the Falklands, it is unsurprising that the talks reached an impasse during 1973. Nevertheless, separate negotiations on commercial and transport links between the Islands and Argentina were successfully concluded during the early- and mid-seventies (4).

However, thereafter Anglo-Argentine relations deteriorated and tensions arose, stimulated by provocations pre-planned by the Argentine armed forces (and not by the then civilian government). Popular press agitation in Argentina for an invasion led Britain, in early 1975, to warn Buenos Aires that such an act would trigger a military response. In early 1976, in furious reaction to the long-

range, comprehensive survey of the islands' economy being conducted by Lord Shackleton, the destroyer ARA Almirante Storni, on orders from the Navy Command, fired on the unarmed research vessel RRS Shackleton (named in honour of Lord Shackleton's father, the famous Antarctic explorer), and attempted to arrest her, apparently in the mistaken belief that Lord Shackleton was aboard. The Shackleton successfully evaded the Almirante Storni. Britain responded by sending the frigate HMS Chichester to Port Stanley. Then, in late 1976, the Argentine Navy secretly landed a small force on Southern Thule in the South Sandwich Islands. This intrustion into British territory was discovered by the Royal Navy's Ice Patrol Ship RMS Endurance, yet, incredible though it may seem, bearing in mind Britain's attitude to these islands, the fact was kept secret in London until May 1978. Britain merely despatched a quiet protest to Buenos Aires which had, in fact, expected a stronger British reaction and the Argentine armed forces engaged in contingency planning for reprisals, including the possibility of an invasion of the islands. Despite these events, negotiations were openly resumed in 1977 (after secret preparatory talks); nevertheless the situation continued to deteriorate. Late that year Argentine warships arrested 7 Soviet and 2 Bulgarian fishing boats in Falklands Waters, in the

process firing on one of the Bulgarian vessels and wounding a crewman. Moreover, Argentina's other major territorial claim, against Chile over the Beagle Channel, saw the failure of an attempt at arbitration, while negotiations with Brazil over the River Plate Basin reached an impasse. Faced with a dangerous situation, Britain responded by secretly despatching a nuclear submarine to the Falklands, and by deploying two frigates plus supporting auxiliaries approximately a thousand miles from the islands, rules of engagement being drawn up. Buenos Aires was not informed of these deployments and seems never to have realised they occurred. Nevertheless, talks continued, to little avail (5).

During 1980 the new Conservative government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher began to consider the concept of 'leaseback' (that is, Britain would acknowledge Argentine sovereignty over the islands; Argentina would then immediately lease them back to Britain for a long period of time - along the lines of the British lease on the New Territories of Hong Kong) as a solution to the dispute. This, however, caused uproar in the Parliament and was rejected by the Islanders. So negotiations continued, fruitlessly as before. Then, during 1981, then defence minister John Nott announced a new defence plan that would severely cut the Royal Navy (RN) and render it

incapable of independent action outside the North Atlantic. This was of great importance to the Falklands, for among the ships to be disposed of (and not replaced) was HMS Endurance, which had become the very symbol of British determination to hold the islands. This seemed to indicate that Britain was no longer concerned over the future of the islands. Moreover late that same year Argentine President General Viola was replaced by General Galtieri who, however, unlike Viola, continued to remain Commander-in-Chief of the Army. To do this he needed the support of one other member of the junta, and he received it from his old friend, Admiral Jorge Anaya, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, the service that was most concerned with, and hardline on, the Falklands. This period also saw Argentina beginning to escape the diplomatic isolation of the previous few years, which increased confidence in Buenos Aires.

During January 1982 Argentina stepped up its diplomatic pressures on Britain; information available to London indicated that Admiral Anaya was in overall charge of the negotiations; it also indicated that any crisis was unlikely to develop until January 1983, being the 150th Anniversay of Britain's re-occupation of the islands. However, early 1982 also saw an anti-British press campaign

in Argentina, one well-informed journalist (Iglesia Rouco) even speculating that an Argentine invasion would receive support from the United States. And in late February, Buenos Aires announced that if the negotiations did not lead to the transfer of sovereignty then Argentina would resort to "the procedure which best accords with her interests" (7).

It was against this background that a crisis suddenly broke, over South Georgia. An Argentine scrap metal merchant, with a legal contract to recover scrap from the abadoned whaling stations on South Georgia, illegally landed at Leith, accompanied by Argentine servicemen, from the naval transport ARA Bahia Buen Suceso, and hoisted the Argentine flag. The almost immediate discovery of this act by British Antarctic Survey (BAS) personnel based at Grytviken triggered a flurry of diplomatic activity as the British sought to get the Argentines either to leave or legalise their position by going through the correct procedures. HMS Endurance, with 24 Marines aboard, was ordered to South Georgia. The next day, however, the crisis seemed to be over - the Bahia Buen Suceso left Leith; then, late the following day (22 March 1982), the BAS team discovered a small detachment of Argentine troops at Leith. The situation now deteriorated, Endurance

being ordered to evict the Argentines, by force if necessary. Buenos Aires then undertook to evacuate the men itself; London agreed and Endurance's orders were revoked. However, the ARA Bahia Paraiso (another transport), instead of removing the detachment, reinforced it. Moreover the Argentines deployed the frigates ARA Drummond and Granville to prevent the Endurance from evicting it. As a deterrent action, it was most effective. London again turned to diplomacy, against a background of more and more reports of increasing Argentine naval deployments and unusual Argentine naval activity. What seems initially to have been an attempt to repeat the Southern Thule operation of 1976, to increase pressure on London and bolster Argentina's claims, was now rapidly turning into something more. That this was probably not pre-planned is indicated by the fact that the key elements and units of the Argentine fleet were either in, or due for, refit (only half the submarine squadron was operational; Bahia Paraiso was due for immediate refit) or had been recently disposed of (the ARA Candido de Lasala, Argentina's largest amphibious ship). On 30 March the Argentine Naval Command announced that the Fleet was "in a high state of readiness"; that night Buenos Aires saw the worst anti-government riots since the military coup of 1976; and reports from London indicated that Britain might have ordered

nuclear submarines (SSNs) to the Falklands. These, together, seem to have provided the final trigger for the invasion, code-named Operation Rosario (8).

Geostrategically, the Argentines were superbly placed; the islands were quite close to Argentina, but very remote from Britain; the British forces in the area were minute - 64 Marines at Port Stanley, 24 at Grytviken, and one very lightly armed and slow Patrol Ship; rapid reinforcement by air was impossible for the British due to the limitations of Port Stanley airfield; and even nuclear submarines would need days to reach the islands. Very early on the morning of 2 April, commandos of the elite Buzo Tactico unit landed by helicopter on the islands in an attempted surprise attack; but leaks in Buenos Aires gave just enough warning for the British to take counter-measures. The result was that the Buzo Tactico and the supporting 2nd Marine Infantry Battalion encountered unexpectedly tough resistance, losing at least 5 and probably 15 dead, and 17 wounded, for no British casualties, before Governor Rex Hunt, in the face of overwhelming power, surrendered. The very next day the Argentine squadron off South Georgia (now composed of the ARA Guerrico and Bahia Paraiso) called on the tiny RM garrison at Grytviken to follow suit; they refused. This was not merely in order to uphold the

traditions of their Corps (though this was a very important consideration); it was also to make a very important political point: South Georgia was not part of the Falklands, and the surrender there in no way altered the status of the garrison at Grytviken. The Argentines thereupon attacked, only to encounter fierce resistance: a helicopter was shot down, another damaged, and the Guerrico (which foolishly came close inshore) so badly damaged by rockets and machine-gun fire that it played no further part in the subsequent conflict. Having made this point, the garrison commander, Lt. K. Mills RM, surrendered. On his return to Britain, Mills stated "We made sure that the Falklands and South Georgia were two separate issues". Only the Endurance was left, but the Argentines had lost track of her due to the successful evasive tactics of her Captain. In fact, she had been only 40 miles from Grytviken during the invasion, but her request for permission to launch a helicopter-missile attack on the Argentines was refused by London. She then continued to evade the enemy by lying up in remote fjiords around the island by day, and withdrawing into the ice floes and bergs by night; on 6 April she was ordered north by London. Operation Rosario had been an outstanding success, albeit at a somewhat heavier price than expected. Now, all that re-mained for the Argentines was to hold their gains (9).

The rapidity of these developments had caught London completely off guard: Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington had proceeded on a scheduled visit to Tel Aviv, only to have to be hastily summoned home; while Chief of Defence Staff Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin had been sent to New Zealand: every day he had telephoned London asking if he should return, and each time he was told an unscheduled ending of his visit would only cause alarm. As a precaution, but only as a precaution, London did order, on 28 March, the despatch of 3 SSNs to the Falklands, but the earliest any would reach the islands was 12 April. Far more important were the unintended (by the government) consequences of this instruction. For the Admiralty, under the leadership, and at the instigation of, the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, seriously began to consider the possibility of, and the requirements for, war with Argentina over the Falklands. The geostrategic position was, for the British, very poor; the Falklands were some 8,000 miles from the United Kingdom, but no more than 400 from Argentina (see Map 4). The nearest British possession was Ascension Island, which (fortunately) possessed a single-runway American built and operated airfield (not airbase: there was only one United States serviceman on the island) and which lay some 3,400 miles from the Falklands. Moreover, it was the

TABLE ONE

STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION OF THE ARMADA REPUBLICA ARGENTINA 1982

A: MAJOR SURFACE SHIPS

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
Veinticinco de Mayo	CVL 'Colossus'	19,896 tons	9 x 40 mm	-	-	c. 22 (F/W + H)	24.25	1000
General Belgrano	CC 'Brooklyn'	13,645 tons	15 x 153 mm 8 x 127 mm 4 x 40 mm	2 x Quad Seacat SAM	-	2(H)	c. 30	100
Hercules, Santissima Trinidad	DDGH 'Type 42'	4,100 tons	1 x 115 mm 2 x 20 mm	1 x Twin Sea Dart SAM 4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	1(H)	30	300
Hipolito Bouchard Piedra Buena	DDG 'Allen M Summer'	3,320 tons	6 x 127 mm	4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes 2 x Hedgehogs	Facilities for small Helicopter	34	291
Seguí	DDG 'Allen M Summer'	3,320 tons	6 x 127 mm 4 x 76 mm	4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes 2 x Hedgehogs	-	34	331
Comodoro Py	DDG 'Gearing'	3,500 tons	6 x 127 mm	4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes 2 x Hedgehogs	Facilities for small Helicopter	32.5	275

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
Rosales, Almirante Storni	DD 'Fletcher'	3 050 tons	4 x 127 mm 6 x 76 mm	-	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes 2 x Hedgehogs 1 x Depth Charge Rack	-	35	249
Drummond, Granville, Guerrico	FFG 'A69'	1 170 tons	1 x 100 mm 2 x 40 mm 2 x 20 mm	2 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	-	24	93

ALSO: 5 TRANSPORTS (Bahia Aguire, Bahia Buen Suceso, Canal Beagle, Bahia San Blas, Cabo de Horno) 1 LANDING SHIP TANK (Cabo San Antonio), 3 ANTARCTIC SHIPS (Bahia Paraiso, Almirante Irizar, General San Martin), 3 TANKERS (Punta Medanos, Punta Delgado, Punta Alta), 7 LARGE PATROL VESSELS (Commadante General Irigoyen, Francisco de Gurruchaga, Murature, King, Yamana, Alferez Sobral, Comodoro Somellera). Assorted Coastal Forces. See Notes.

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
Rosales, Almirante Storni	DD 'Fletcher'	3 050 tons	4 x 127 mm 6 x 76 mm	-	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes 2 x Hedgehogs 1 x Depth Charge Rack	-	35	249
Drummond, Granville, Guerrico	FFG 'A69'	1 170 tons	1 x 100 mm 2 x 40 mm 2 x 20 mm	2 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	-	24	93

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NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
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B: SUBMARINES

NAME	DISPLACEMENT (SURFACED)	DISPLACEMENT (DIVED)	TORPEDO TUBES	SPEED	CREW
Salta, San Luis	1 185 tons	1 285 tons	8 x 533 mm Forward	10 Surfaced 22 Dived	32
Santa Fe Santiago del Estero	1 870 tons	2 420 tons (Santa Fe) 2 540 tons (Santiago)	6 x 533 mm Forward 4 x 533 mm Aft	18 Surfaced 15 Dived	82-84

C: MARINE INFANTRY CORPS (CUERPO DE INFANTERIA DE MARINA)

TACTICAL ORGANISATION	COMPOSITION
1st Marine Force	2 Infantry Battalions, Group Command and Service
1st Marine Brigade	2 Infantry Battalions, 1 Field Artillery Battalion, 1 Service Battalion, 1 Command Battalion
Amphibious Support Force	1 Air Defence Battalion, 1 Communications Battalion, Amphibious Craft Units, Amphibious Commando Group, 1 Independent River Infantry Battalion, 2 Security Battalions, 2 Security Companies

Notes (to 'A'): CC - Cruiser
CVL - Light Fleet Aircraft Carrier
DD - Destroyer
DDG - Guided Missile Destroyer
DDGH - Helicopter Carrying Guided Missile Destroyer
FPG - Guided Missile Frigate
F/W - Fixed Wing
H - Helicopter(s)

D: ARGENTINE NAVAL AIR COMMAND

(COMMANDO DE AVIACION NAVAL ARGENTINA - CANA)

TYPE	NUMBER	CATEGORY
Aermacchi 326	8	Light Strike/Trainer
Aermacchi MB 339	10	Light Strike/Trainer
Aerospatiale Alouette III	9	Light Helicopter
Beech AT-11	2	Communications
Beech Queen Air	5	Communications
Beech Super King Air 200	10	Communications
Beech T-34C Turbo-Mentor	15	Armed Trainer
Dassault Super Etendard	6	Strike Fighter
Douglas A-4Q Skyhawk	12	Fighter-Bomber
Douglas C-47	6	Transport
Douglas C-54/DC-4	6	Transport
Fokker F.28 Fellowship	3	Transport
Grumman S-2A/S-2E Tracker	12	Anti-Submarine
Hawker-Siddeley HS.125	1	Communications
Lockheed L-188A Electra	3	Transport
Lockheed SP-2E/SP-2H Neptune	9	Maritime Patrol
Pilatus Turbo-Porter	3	Light Transport
Piper Navajo	4	Communications
Sikorsky SH-3D Sea King	5	ASW Helicopter
Westland Lynx 2	2	ASW Helicopter

Sources: A, B and C: Jane's Fighting Ships, 1981-82, pp. 23-33
D: Hatch, P.F., "Argentine Air Power"
Air Pictorial, Vol. 44, No. 6, June 1982, pp. 212-213

southern hemisphere winter, and all the various islands and their encircling seas were completely open to the Antarctic gales. The logistical problems were thus enormous. Then there were the Argentines. The Argentine Navy (Armada Republica Argentina - ARA) was a balanced, powerful regional fleet centred on a force of 13 major combat surface ships, including an aircraft carrier and a heavy cruiser, with supporting naval air, submarine, coastal, mine countermeasures, transport, amphibious and marine force (see Table I - A, B, C, and D) and which could also call upon the patrol boats and aircraft of the Coast Guard (Prefectura Naval Argentina). Though only some of its ships were of recent construction (the two DDGH, the three FFG, and the submarines ARA Salta and San Luis) the rest had all been modernised - the carrier extensively so. The cruiser ARA General Belgrano was, with its heavy armament (the 153mm guns each had a range of 13 nautical miles or 23.5 kilometres), armour and two helicopters, despite its age, a formidable unit. And the old destroyers ARA Sequi, Hipolito Bouchard, Pedra Buena and Comodor Py, had (like the DDGH ARA Hercules and Santissima Trinidad) been fitted with the Exocet surface-to-surface missile (SSM) system, giving them a most credible surface comb't capability. The ARA was generally regarded as a well-trained force; certainly, thanks to its

possession of a carrier, it was one of the most powerful navies in the Third World, and the most powerful in Latin America. The ARA, of course, was not the only figrue in the Argentine equation: there was also the Argentine Air Force (Fuerza Aerea Argentine - FAA) which possessed some 29 Dassault Mirage III and 25 IAI Dagger supersonic fighters (externally these two types were identical), 75 A-4P Skyhawk fighter-bombers, 10 BAe Canberra bombers, and 75 FMA IA-58 Pucara aircraft in widespread service with first-rate air arms throughout the world; training was also regarded as good. In total, the FAA and CANA together could deploy some 137 high performance combat jets and over 157 light strike, counter-insurgency, and armed trainer aircraft (10).

Taking all this into consideration, the Admiralty decided that any Task Force to be sent south would have to be a large, powerful, balanced force, and include both of the RN's operational carriers. Leach ordered that planning commence for the despatch of just such a Task Force to the Falklands. He had absolutely no authorisation or instructions from the Cabinet for such a step, but it was by no means the first time that the Admiralty had, on its own initiative, taken precautions against a deteriorating international situation without wait-

ing for governmental instructions - under Prince Louis of Battenberg they had to do so during the crisis provoked by the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, ordering the fleet to remain mobilised at the end of its routine summer manoeuvres, and then to prepare for war, all before the Cabinet and Parliament had decided what to do (11). Not until 31 March did Leach receive permission to put the fleet on an initial alert status, after he had convinced the Prime Minister and Cabinet (thanks to the planning already instigated) that Britain could mobilise a large Task Force within a few days (by 5 April). The Cabinet had just begun to realise that the crisis was rapidly deteriorating. Only by the evening of 1 April did the possibility that the Argentines would really invade the islands come to the fore; London appealed to Washington to intervene diplomatically; President Reagan himself responded swiftly and called President Galtieri, but to no avail. The Cabinet meeting finally broke up in the early hours of 2 April; the politicians still seem not to have fully grasped what the situation was, for they made no attempt to make use of the one diplomatic instrument left to them, and the one which just might have caused the Argentines to pause and re-consider their actions - an ultimatum. The Ministers who went home after the

Cabinet meeting may have been dazed by events, but Adm Leach, who had also attended, most definitely was not: he went straight to fleet headquarters and immediately issued the command "The task force is to be made ready and sailed"; instructions were also sent to the Flag Officer, First Flotilla, then exercising off Gibraltar, to "consolidate his task group" and "prepare covertly to go south". Again, Leach was acting on his own initiative, without any hint of permission from the Cabinet; and the Argentines had not actually landed when Leach issued his orders (12). It was a classic display of initiative and personal responsibility in the highest traditions of the service.

Though the invasion occurred in the early hours of the morning, London time, the government did not receive independent confirmation until 16h00 London time. Faced by what was inarguably an act of war, threatened by a total loss of international credibility should they not react, confronted by the palpable absurdity of recalling the SSNs sent to deter Argentine military action because the Argentines had engaged in military action, assured by the absolute confidence and enthusiasm of the RN (though no attempt was made to disguise the difficulties involved), surrounded by a furious people and Parliament who would demand action or

resignation, the Cabinet, at a special emergency session that evening attended by all the Service Chiefs, formally authorised the despatch of the Task Force. In addition it was decided to freeze all Argentine assets in Britain, to ban all imports, to suspend export credits, to ask the United States and European Economic Community (EEC) to follow suit, and to mobilise the United Nations. The next day, addressing an outraged Parliament, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher formally proclaimed the object, as Mahan would have termed it, for the diplomats and Task Force; "to see the islands returned to British administration" (13).

Appropriate instructions were dispatched to the British Ambassador to the United Nations, Sir Anthony Parsons, who then moved swiftly, getting a British resolution accepted and passed by the United Nations Security Council in only 48 hours. The resolution (Security Council Resolution 502) called on Argentina to withdraw its forces from the Falklands, urged both sides to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis, and to respect the United Nations Charter. This last reference was of great importance, for the Charter embodied both the right of self-determination (Article 1), which was the principle which Britain had long employed as her central claim to the Falklands, and the right of

self-defence (Article 51), which justified and legitimised any resort to force Britain might regard as necessary. No matter what she did, Britain could not violate Resolution 502. By contrast, Argentina could only adhere to 502 by withdrawing from the islands; any other course involved its violation. Buenos Aires had made the mistake of assuming that her act would be accepted as a fait accompli, and had foolishly made no preparation for a diplomatic offensive to support the invasion. Once the Argentines woke up, it was too late; any Resolution suggested to the Security Council that was more favourable to Argentina could be, and was, vetoed by Britain. Of course, all this had little material effect, but propagandistically it was of enormous value for Britain, and flung Argentina into a diplomatic defensive from which she could not recover. Britain's success in persuading her partners and allies to impose sanctions on Argentina reinforced the effect (14).

The mobilisation and despatch of the Task Force (given the code-name Operation Corporate) provided a dramatic illustration of many of Mahan's elements of sea power, and an affirmation of their continued validity today. Units of the Task Force, including the carriers HMS Hermes and Invincible, began to put to sea on Monday, 5 April. But the Navy's planning

had made it clear that there were not, in the Navy itself, enough transports, supply vessels or tankers to form and, especially, support, the Task Force. So the government began to rapidly requisition merchant vessels to form part of the Fleet, and charter others to provide support outside the potential war zone (see Table II). As the requirements for war are very different from peacetime, many of the requisitioned ships required mod and alterations. which were undertaken in va lockyards in record time. Luxury liners became troopships (Canberra, Queen Elizabeth II) or hospital ships (Uganda), lost their luxury fitments and gained helicopter decks (many and varied were the ships fitted with helicopter decks); the Container ships Atlantic Conveyer and Atlantic Causeway received more extensive modifications to convert them into aircraft ferries; while the roll-on, roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry Elk, thanks to the zeal and enthusiasm of its Captain, acquired two 40mm anti-aircraft guns. All the requisitioned merchant ships were assigned Naval parties to ensure liaison and co-ordination, otherwise retaining their Merchant crews. The exceptions were the Trawlers Pict, Cordella, Farnella, Junella, and Northella which were converted to mine-sweepers, commissioned in the Royal Navy, and manned entirely by RN crews. At the same time, the assault ship Intrepid, on the

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verge of being reduced to the reserve, was swiftly re-activated; other warships already in reserve were soon to be brought up to full operational status to replace those sent south; and the Fleet Air Arm hastily commissioned new squadrons to meet the need. Likewise, the Royal Air Force rushed through various modifications to various aircraft types (15). As the ships were completed, they were sent south to the rendezvous point at Ascension. All this would have been impossible if the Physical Conformation of Britain had not encouraged the development of a sizeable Merchant Marine, if there had not been the seafaring population to man the ships and the sea-connected population to convert and victual them, if there had not been the dockyards to carry out this work, and if the government had not had the ability and will to initiate and manage such work. The key role of the character of government in sea power is also, negatively, illustrated by the fact that had defence minister Nott's planned naval cuts been implemented, Britain would not have been able to send any Task Force south (16).

In the midst of all this frantic activity the British government, on 7 April, announced that a 200-nautical mile (nm) radius Maritime Exclusion Zone (MEZ) would come into force around the Falklands as of 04h00 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) on

TABLE TWO: MERCHANT SHIPS REQUISITIONS AND CHARTERED FOR *OPERATION CORPORATE*, 1982

NAME	DISPLACEMENT (TONS)	TYPE	OWNER
Queen Elizabeth II	67 000	Liner	Cunard
Canberra	44 807	Liner	P & O
Uganda	16 907	Liner	P & O
Norland	12 000	Ro-Ro Ferry	P & O
Tor Caledonia	10 000	Ro-Ro Ferry	Whitwill
St Edmunds	9 000	Ro-Ro Ferry	Sealink
Nordic Ferry	6 500	Ro-Ro Ferry	Townsend Thoresen
Baltic Ferry	6 500	Ro-Ro Ferry	Townsend Thoresen
Elk (1)	5 463	Ro-Ro Ferry	P & O
Europic	4 190	Ro-Ro Ferry	Townsend Thoresen
Atlantic Conveyor (2)	14 946	Container Ship	Cunard
Atlantic Causeway (2)	14 946	Container Ship	Cunard
Contender Bezant (2)	11 000	Container Ship	Red Sea Containers
Saxonia	8 000	Freighter	Cunard
Lycaon (3)	11 804	Freighter	China Mutual Steamship
Geestport (3)	9 750	Freighter	-
British Enterprise	1 600	N. Sea Oil Rig Support Ship	B.U.E.
Stena Seaspread	6 061	N. Sea Oil Rig Support Ship	Stena
Stena Inspector	7 000	N. Sea Oil Rig Support Ship	Stena
Pict (4)	1 478	Trawler	United Trawler
Cordella (4)	1 238	Trawler	J. Marr
Parnella (4)	1 307	Trawler	J. Marr
Junella (4)	1 61[illegible]	Trawler	J. Marr
Northella (4)	1 238	Trawler	J. Marr
Salvageman	1 568	Ocean Tug	United Towing

NAME	DISPLACE-MENT (TONS)	TYPE	OWNER
Yorkshireman	689	Ocean Tug	United Towing
Irishman	689	Ocean Tug	United Towing
Wimpey Seahorse	1 599	Ocean Tug	Wimpey Marine
St Helena	3 150	Cargo Liner	United Intl Bank
Iris (3)	3 870	Cable Ship	British Telecom
Scottish Eagle (3)	33 000	Tanker	King Line
Alvega (3)	33 000	Tanker	Finance for Shipping Limited
Balder London	33 000	Tanker	Lloyds of London
Fort Toronto	19 982	Water Tanker	Canadian Pacific
Eburna (3)	19 763	Tanker	Shell
G.A. Walker (3)	18 774	Tanker	Canadian Pacific
Dart (3)	15 650	Tanker	BP
Test (3)	15 650	Tanker	BP
Tay (3)	15 650	Tanker	BP
Trent (3)	15 649	Tanker	BP
Wye (3)	15 649	Tanker	BP
Esk (3)	15 643	Tanker	BP
Avon (3)	15 640	Tanker	BP
Anco Charger (3)	15 974	Tanker	P & E

NOTES: (1) Armed with 2 x 40 mm guns

(2) Converted to act as aircraft ferries

(3) Chartered, *not requisitioned*

(4) Converted to Minesweepers, RN crews

Source: Hastings and Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands, pp. 349-351

12 April. This carried the implication that British SSNs would be on station by that time - and, in fact, one (believed to be HMS Spartan) was. But also, in fact, the MEZ was not immediately enforced: the SSN discovered the ARA Cabo San Antonio laying mines off Port Stanley, but was refused permission by the Cabinet to attack. One of the advantages of despatching a Task Force was that it could act as a symbol of determination and as an explicit threat, without necessarily entangling the country in a war; London did not want to narrow its options prematurely, and still believed that the crisis could be resolved short of war (17).

As previously indicated, the rendervous point for the fleet was Ascension Island, where stores were distributed and re-stashed, and shortfalls made up from the stocks flown in by the RAF, for many of the early ships had left Britain without all their necessary supplies - they had been sent off in haste in order to prevent the world from coming to accept the Argentine operation as a fait accompli, and so opposing British attempts to regain the islands. The error of Suez (1956), that is, taking too long to retaliate and so allowing contrary forces to mobilise, was not repeated. Some ships (including the carriers which arrived there on 17 April) spent hours at Ascension; others (primarily the amphibious

ships) spent weeks.

Contrary to popular belief, there were actually two Task Forces despatched to the Falklands - Task Forces 317 and 324 (see Tables III and IV). The former, commanded by the Flag Officer, First Flotilla, Rear-Admiral John 'Sandy' Woodward, comprised all Surface ships, air and land forces. The fleet which formed the core of TF317 was itself composed of three main elements: the Carrier Battle Group, the Amphibious Group, and the Supply and Support Group or Fleet Train. The Carrier Battle Group was centred on the Hermes (flagship) and Invincible, accompanied by the cruiser Bristol; the flagship having embarked an air group of 12 Sea Harrier Vertical/Short Take-off or Landing (V/STOL) fighter-reconaissance-strike aircraft and 18 Sea King anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and assault helicopters, while Invincible carried 8 Sea Harriers and 15 Sea Kings. Rear-Adm. Woodward commanded this Group in person.

The Amphibious Group, commanded by Commodore Michael Clapp, was centred on the assault ships HMS Fearless and Intrepid, each equipped as a floating headquarters and each capable of carrying approximately 600 troops as well as 4 Utility Landing Craft (LCU), each of which was able to carry a load of 100 tons;

TABLE THREE

WARSHIPS AND AUXILIARIES IN TF 317, 1982

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
HMS Hermes 25.4.82	CVS/CVL 'Hermes'	28 700 tons	-	2 x Quad Seacat SAM	-	30 F/W and H	28	1350
HMS Invincible 25.4.82	CVS/CVL 'Invincible'	19 500 tons	-	1 x Twin Sea Dart SAM	-	23 F/W and H	28	1000 *
HMS Bristol 23.5.82	CLG 'Type 82'	7 100 tons	1 x 115 mm 2 x 20 mm	1 x Twin Sea Dart SAM	1 x Ikara Launcher	Landing platform for small helicopter	28	407
HMS Antrim 17.4.82 HMS Glamorgan 25.4.82	CLGM 'Country'	6 200 tons	2 x 115 mm 2 x 20 mm	1xTwin Seaslug SAM 2xQuad Seacat SAM 4xExocet SSM	-	1 H	30	471
HMS Cardiff 23.5.82 HMS Coventry 20.4.82 HMS Exeter 19.5.82 HMS Glasgow 20.4.82 HMS Sheffield 20.4.82	DDGH 'Type 42'	4 100 tons	1 x 115 mm 2 x 20 mm	1 x Twin Sea Dart SAM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes (except Sheffield)	1 H	29	270
HMS Brilliant 20.4.82 HMS Broadsword 25.4.82	FFGH 'Type 22'	4 000 tons	2 x 40 mm	2 x Sextruple Sea Wolf SAM 4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	2 H	30	223

* Excluding Air Crew

NAME		TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
HMS Active HMS Alacrity HMS Ambuscade HMS Antelope HMS Ardent HMS Arrow HMS Avenger	23.5.82 25.4.82 18.5.82 18.5.82 13.5.82 20.4.82 23.5.82	FFGH 'Type 21'	3 250 tons	1 x 115 mm 2 x 20 mm	1 x Quad Seacat SAM 4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	1 H	30	175
HMS Argonaut HMS Minerva HMS Penelope	13.5.82 23.5.82 25.5.82	FFGH 'Leander' Batch 2	3 200 tons	2 x 40 mm	1 x Quad Seacat SAM 4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	1 H	28	273
HMS Andromeda	23.5.82	FFGH 'Leander' Batch 3	2 962 tons	2 x 40 mm	1 x Sextuple Sea Wolf SAM 4 x Exocet SSM	2 x Triple Torpedo Tubes	1 H	28	260
HMS Plymouth HMS Yarmouth	17.4.82 17.4.82	FFGH 'Type 12' ('Rothesay')	2 800 tons	2 x 115 mm	1 x Quad Seacat SAM	1 x Limbo 3-barrelled Depth Charge Mortar	1 H	30	235
HMS Endurance		Ice Patrol Ship	3 600 tons	2 x 20 mm	-	-	2 H	14.5	119
HMS Hecla HMS Hydra	9.5.82 14.5.82	Survey Ship (Hospital Ship) 'Hecla'	2 945 tons	-	-	-	1 H	14	127
HMS Herald	15.5.82	Survey Ship (Hospital Ship) Improved Hecla	2 945 tons	-	-		1 H	14	128

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANY : SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
HMS Fearless 13.5.82 HMS Intrepid 13.5.82	LPD	12 120 tons 16 950 tons, dock flooded	2 x 40 mm	4 x Quad Seacat	-	5 H (No hangar) dock flooded	21	580 *
RFA Sir Bedivere RFA Sir Galahad RFA Sir Geraint RFA Sir Percivale RFA Sir Tristram RFA Sir Lancelot All 8.5.82	LSL	5 674 tons (except Sir Lancelot: 5 500 tons)	2 x 40 mm (not carried in peacetime, mounted for Falklands)	-	-	Helicopter Deck, No Hangar	17	58 *
RFA Fort Austin 26.4.82 RFA Fort Grange 26.5.82	AEFS	23 600 tons	-	-	-	4 H	22	221
RFA Resource 25.4.82 RFA Regent 8.5.82	AEFS	22 890 tons	2 x 40 mm (not carried peacetime)	-	-	4 H	21	171
RFA Stromness 13.5.82	AVS/AFS	16 792 tons	-	-	-	1 H	18	151
RFA Engadine 2.6.82	Helicopter Support Ship	9 000 tons	-	-	-	2 - 4 H	14.5	113 war time

* Excluding troops

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	GUNS	MISSILES	ANTI-SUBMARINE WEAPONS	AIRCRAFT	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
RFA Olmeda 25.4.82 RFA Olna 23.5.82	AOF (L)	36 000 tons	-	-	-	4 H	19	87
RFA *Tidespring* 17.4.82 RFA Tidepool 13.5.82	AOF (L)	27 400 tons	-	-	-	4 H	18.5	110
RFA Blue Rover 2.5.82	AOF (S)	11 522 tons	-	-	-	1 H	19	47
RFA Bayleaf 9.6.82	AOS	40 000 tons	-	-	-	-	16	?
RFA Pearleaf 4.5.82	AOS	25 790 tons	-	-	-	-	16	55

NOTES: 1. Data correct for period of Falklands War; many ships have since been modified.
2. Date under name indicates when ship arrived in operational area.
3. Abbreviations:

AOF (L)	Large Fleet Tankers
AOF (S)	Small Fleet Tankers
AOS	Support Tankers
AFS	Fleet Replenishment Ships
AVS/AFS	Stores Support Ships
CLG	Guided Missile Light Cruiser
CLGH	Helicopter-Carrying Guided Missile Light Cruiser
CVS/CVL	Anti-Submarine Carrier/Light Fleet Carrier
DDGH	Helicopter-Carrying Guided Missile Destroyer
FFGH	Helicopter-Carrying Guided Missile Frigate
LPD	Assault Ships
LSL	Landing Ships, Logistic

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships, 1981-82, pp. 561-581;
Hast ogs and Jenkins, pp. 346-351

TABLE FOUR

COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE

NAME	TYPE	FULL-LOAD DISPLACEMENT	SUBMERGED DISPLACEMENT	TORPEDO TUBES	SPEED (KNOTS)	CREW
Onyx	SS 'Oberon'	2 030 tons	2 410 tons	6 x 533 mm bow 2 x 533 mm stern 24 x Torpedoes carried	12 Surfaced 17 Dived	32
Conqueror Courageous Valiant	SSN 'Valiant/ Churchill'	4 400 tons	4 900 tons	6 x 533 mm bow 26 Reloads	28 Dived	103
Spartan Splendid	SSN 'Swiftsure'	4 200 tons	4 500 tons	5 x 533 mm bow 20 Reloads	30 Dived	97

NOTES: SS - Patrol Submarine (Diesel Electric)

SSN - Fleet Submarine (Nuclear)

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships, 1981-82, pp. 558-560
Hastings and Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands, pp. 348-349

in addition, 4 Vehicle and Personnel Landing Craft (LCVP) were embarked, each capable of carrying a 5 ton load; Fearless was flagship. Ultimately, the Amphibious Group was also to include RFAs Sir Bedivere, Sir Galahad, Sir Geraint, Sir Lancelot, Sir Percivale and Sir Tristram, which were Landing Ship Logistics (LSLs) each able to carry 534 troops, as well as the requisitioned merchant ships Canberra, Norland, Europic Ferry and Elk, and the supply ship RFA Fort Austin.

The Fleet Train was composed of the chartered ships, and those requisitioned vessels and RFAs not specifically attached to either of the other two groups, and included the comprehensively equipped maintenance and repair ship Stena Seaspread and the hospital squadron which, in addition to Uganda, was composed of the converted survey ships HMS Hydra, Hecla and Herald. It fell under the overall command of the Commodore, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Captain S. C. Dunlop RFA.

The light cruisers HMS Antrim and Glamorgan, and the destroyers and frigates, were divided among the above three Groups on an 'as needed' basis.

The land element of TF317 was composed, initially, of the 3rd Commando Brigade, RM (40, 42, and 45

Commandos, RM; 29 Commando Regiment, Royal Artillery; the Commando Logistics Regiment; 3rd Commando Brigade Air Squadron; and Headquarters and Air Defence Units) augmented by elements of the Special Boat Squadron (SBS) and by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, the Parachute Regiment, a Rapier Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) Battery, and elements of the Special Air Service (SAS), all from the Army; and later, reinforcement followed in the shape of the Army's 5th Infantry Brigade.

The aviation element of the Task Force was composed of the FAA [RN] aircraft embarked on the various ships, totalling some 171 fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft from 16 squadrons, and of the long-range aircraft of the RAF based on Ascension: Victor air-to-air refuelling (AAR) tankers, Vulcan bombers, Nimrod maritime reconaissance aircraft and Hercules transports. Some RAF Harriers, later replaced by Phantoms, and RAF and RN helicopters, were based at Ascension for defence and transport tasks. Ascension was linked to Britain by RAF VC10s and Hercules and by chartered and requisitioned civil aircraft.

nd of TF324 was vested in Vice-Admiral R. R. ..ires, Flag Officer Submarines, control being exercised by means of satellite communications.

Co-ordination between the two Task Forces, and overall responsibility for the conduct of operations, resided in Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, the Commander-in-Chief Fleet, in the command bunker at Fleet Headquarters (HMS Warrior), Northwood, near London.

The fleet was thus clearly a powerful and balanced force, however it was disturbingly weak in two important areas. Firstly, there was the lack of embarked fighter cover: initially TF 317 possessed a mere 20 Sea Harriers with which to oppose the much larger Argentine aviation, as well as to attack Argentine ground and naval forces. Secondly, there was the total lack of embarked Air-borne Early Warning (AEW) capability. The RN's last conventional carrier, HMS Ark Royal, had possessed such capability provided by Gannet AEW aircraft; but these could not operate from the Hermes and Invincible, and no suitable replacements had been ordered. The result was a serious deficiency in the Task Force's low level radar coverage, which was to have grave results.

In the meantime Argentina, taking the declaration of the MEZ very seriously, resorted to air transport to reinforce and re-supply its garrison in the Falklands, only risking the occasional transport,

and international efforts continued to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis, key figures involved being United States Secretary of State Alexander Haig, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Peruvian President Belaunde Terry. However, it was virtually impossible for either Britain or Argentina to compromise without suffering a severe blow to their prestige and credibility.

The Carrier Battle Group spent only a short time at Ascension before moving on into the South Atlantic; the Amphibious Group, however, remained several weeks at the island, awaiting the arrival of various ships, stores and to give the embarked Marines and Paratroopers landing and live-firing exercises. The first element of the fleet to see action, however, was a small Task Group detached from the main body and despatched towards South Georgia: it comprised HMS Antrim, Plymouth, Endurance, RFA Tidespring, later reinforced by HMS Brilliant; 'M' Company, 42 Commando, D Squadron SAS, and some SBS. Reconnaissance by SSN and long-range aircraft from Ascension indicated only a small Argentine garrison was on the island. Strictly speaking, South Georgia could have been ignored, allowed to 'wither on the vine' like many Japanese island outposts in the Pacific war, because its re-capture would automatically follow victory in the Falklands.

However, there were very good political reasons to re-capture South Gerogia first, and war is, after all, a continuation of politics by other means. Firstly, it would increase the pressure on Buenos Aires (London still hoped that Argentina would back down and withdraw), would emphasise Britain's determination to regain its lost territory, and would again make the point that South Georgia was a completely separate issue from the Falklands: it was a corollary of Lt. Mills' disregard of Governor Hunt's surrender. Nor was the operation lacking in military reasons: it would provide valuable first hand experience of operations in the South Atlantic, and would secure several excellent harbours far removed from most Argentine threats in which chartered and requistioned merchantmen and RFS could rendezvous and transfer men and stores.

The operation to re-capture South Gerogia began on 22 April and rapidly proved to be far more difficult than imagined, due to the opposition of Mother Nature, not the Argentines. An attempt to place an SAS reconaissance party on the island during the 22nd was frustrated by appalling weather which caused two of the Group's helicopters to crash; miraculously, no one was killed and, equally miraculously, a third helicopter managed to rescue all the stranded personnel. The next day an

attempted SBS reconaissance was frustrated by ice floes, which caused excessive delays and forced the cancellation of the mission. Another SAS attempt, on the same day, had to be abandoned for the same reason. On the 24th, as the British pondered on what to do next, information was received indicating that an ARA submarine was in the vicinity. It was agreed that it would probably attempt to re-supply the Argentine garrison centred on Grytviken before any attempt to attack the Task Group (as, on the previous day, an Argentine C-130 had overflown the British ships, the ARA must have known of the Task Group's existence), so, at 08h00 (here, and hereafter, local time) 25 April Antrim's helicopter was launched on an ASW patrol. It detected the submarine on the surface near Grytviken, and immediately attacked with depth charges, inflicting sufficient damage to prevent the boat from diving, following up with machine-gun fire. The other ships then launched helicopters, which attacked with machine-guns and missiles, inflicting yet further damage. The submarine, soon to be identified as the ARA Santa Fe, reached Grytviken but was seriously damaged and immediately abandoned by its crew. The British immediately seized the opportunity to strike while the Argentines were still shaken. Unfortunately, most of the Marines were some 200 miles away on Tidespring; however, there

were enough Marines, SAS and SBS aboard the warships to form a scratch force some 75 strong, which was landed by helicopter while the warships commenced a bombardment designed to demoralise and not kill the Argentines. Aided by the magnifying and echoing effect of the mountains and glaciers, it succeeded totally. The Argentines surrendered without a shot. South Georgia had been recaptured (18).

While the Task Group had been active off South Georgia, the British government had, on 23 April, made an important announcement (though it seems to have been largely ignored by the media): following Article 51 of the UN Charter, London emphasised that:

> "... any approach on the part of the Argentine warships ... which could amount to a threat to interfere with the mission of British Forces in the South Atlantic will encounter the appropriate response" (19).

Following the re-capture of South Georgia the British proclaimed the establishment of a Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) surrounding the Falklands, encompassing the airspace as well as the seas, which would come into force on 30 April. It was simultaneously another notch in the escalating pressure on Argentina and a logical military step.

The Argentines, however, had not been passive in the

face of this escalating British pressure. On the Falklands themselves they had established a garrison of about 11,000 men (2,000 on West Falkland divided between Fox Bay and Port Howard; 9,000 on East Falkland, mostly at Post Stanley, with a strong garrison at Goose Green and detachments elsewhere), supported by 2 Chinook heavy, 3 Puma medium, 9 UH-1 Huey light/medium and 2 A.109 light helicopters. Due to the inadequacies of Port Stanley airfield - only one, short runway - neither the FAA nor CANA based any of their major aircraft types there. The FAA presence was restricted to 24 Pucaras, based at Port Stanley with detachments at Goose Green and Pebble Island, while the CANA deployed only some 6 MB 339 light strike aircraft and 4 T-34 Mentor armed trainers to Port Stanley, together with some PNA light transports on Pebble Island.

At sea, the entire operational fleet was deployed, designated Task Force 79, which was subdivided into three, later four, Task Groups. The most important of these, designated TG 79.1, was centred on the carrier ARA Vienticino de Mayo (which reportedly carried an air group of 8 A-4 Skyhawk, 6 S-2 Tracker, and 4 SH-3 Sea King), apparently escorted by the ARA Hercules, Santissima Trinidad, Drummond, Granville and possibly two of the older destroyers. This Group seems to have been deployed to the north-

west of the Falklands. Next in importance was TG 79.3, composed of the ARA *General Belgrano*, *Hipolito Bouchard* and *Piedra Buena* and deployed south-southwest of the islands. The size and composition of TG 79.2 (and, later the fourth Group, presumably known as TG 79.4) are unknown; it is known that they were positioned west of the islands.

On the mainland, both the FAA and CANA had concentrated their major striking forces on the airfields in the south of the country, some 400 miles from the islands. This, however, was well within the capabilitites of the *Mirages*, *Daggers*, *Skyhawks* and *Canberras*, and the *Super Etendards* could refuel from the FAA's two KC-130 tankers - as could the *Skyhawks* (20).

The object, to use Mahan's terminology, for the British fleet was to restore the islands to British rule. The option of a naval blockade was ruled out because it would excessively expose the Task Force to the dangers of attrition by the weather and enemy action, as well as having grave political drawbacks: it would cause disquiet in Britain, and increase the time and possibility for international opinion to swing in favour of Argentina. This then, left only one method (assuming that Argentina would not suddenly give in to diplomatic pressure) by which

the fleet could fulfil this object: a successful amphibious landing. But, as Corbett pointed out, activities such as amphibious landings are exercises in the use of command of the sea, and are predicated on a prior achievement of command of the sea, and, in the modern era, the air also. So first the British had to seize command of the sea and air. And while engaged in seizing command, the British would have to protect their own forces as effectively as possible, especially the crucially important aircraft carriers, without which the campaign could not be attained. To this end, TF 317's Carrier Batt. adopted the traditional system of defence in depth, proven during the Pacific War and perfected since. This was composed of outer, middle and inner zones of defence. Normally, the outer zone is composed of carrier fighters and AEW aircraft, the latter guiding the former onto their targets. However, due to lack of AEW, Rear-Adm. Woodward was forced to revert to the Pacific War system of Radar Pickets - surface ships equipped with long-range radar deployed towards the main threat on the remote fringes of the fleet, these then providing the guidance for the fighter Combat Air Patrols (CAPs). This role naturally fell upon the Group's 'Type 42' destroyers. The middle defence zone was provided by the medium-range Sea Dart SAMs of the Type 42s, HMS Invincible and

Bristol, Seaslug SAMs of HMS Antrim and Glamorgan, and the 115 mm guns of the cruisers, destroyers and frigates. The inner zone was provided by the ships' various point-defence SAMs (Seacat and Sea Wolf, the latter also an anti-missile system), 40 mm and 20 mm anti-aircraft guns and even 7.62 mm machine-guns. Passive defence against missiles was provided by CHAFF - short-range rockets which scattered clouds of silver threads to jam the incoming missiles' radar seeker heads. Rear-Adm. Woodward's intention was to provoke the Argentine aviation into attacking the Carrier Battle Group and then attriting it on the defence screen. Similarly, he hoped to simultaneously provoke the ARA into seeking to engage the British, and then use TF 324's SSNs and a specially designated Surface Action Group within the Carrier Group to destroy the Argentine fleet, so gaining both naval and air supremacy.

To this end, and because negotiations showed little progress, the main naval campaign was initiated on 1 May. In the early hours of the morning, in a record-breaking mission, and after multiple AARs, an RAF Vulcan bombed Port Stanley in an attempt to knock out the runway. In this the mission was a failure, only one bomb actually hitting the runway and that doing little damage. However, extensive damage was caused to airport facilities and aircraft

based there. At dawn, Invincible flew off a CAP while Hermes launched its entire air group of 12 Sea Harriers on strike missions against Argentine positions, 9 attacking Port Stanley airfield and 3 Goose Green. To the surprise and relief of the British, no aircraft were lost. Later that morning HMS Glamorgan, Arrow and Alacrity bombarded Argentine positions around Port Stanley (including the airfield) at a range of 12 miles, with their 115 mm guns. These operations were both defensive - to neutralise the airfield and aircraft at Port Stanley - and offensive - to inflict as much damage as possible on the Argentines - as well as to provoke Argentine retaliation. These operations confirmed the wisdom of the Argentines in not basing any of their high-performance jets on the island: they would have been too vulnerable while on the ground. They also succeeded in provoking Argentine air reaction: the FAA despatched 4 Mirages or Daggers (henceforth both these types will be referred to as *'Mirages' for convenience) and* 2 *Canberras against* the ships that had bombarded Port Stanley. The Mirages strafed the withdrawing ships, inflicting only slight damage, before being 'bounced' by a Sea Harrier CAP which shot down two Mirages for no loss; a third Mirage was shot down over Port Stanley by the Argentine Army. A second CAP intercepted the Canberras and shot one down; the other retreated.

However, the RN decided that all future bombardments would take place at night (21).

What of the ARA and its TF 79? Throughout this period the submarines of TF 324 were primarily engaged in seeking the component Task Groups of TF 79, especially TG 79.1 with the carrier. The British had been unable to locate TG 79.1, but during the course of 1 May HMS Conqueror located TG 79.3, with the General Belgrano, at long range, on sonar; by early afternoon the submarine gained visual contact, reporting TG 79.3's position and proceeding to shadow it. The General Belgrano and her escorts were some 20 to 30 miles outside the TEZ. This, however, was irrelevant: the cruiser was, by its very presence, a threat to the Task Force, both in itself, and as one component of a probable co-ordinated twin- or multi-prong attack involving the other units in TF 79, including the carrier. It could also (and, as the Argentines later admitted, did) provide guidance for Argentine aircraft attacking the British ships. And Britain had warned, no less than nine days earlier, that any Argentine vessel perceived as a threat would "meet the appropriate response" (22). Moreover as the second most powerful and important unit in the ARA, the General Belgrano offered the British a real opportunity to strike hard at the ARA and so make a

major step towards command of the sea, without which they could not fulfil the object of their mission. Thus the RN requested from the Cabinet (because the General Belgrano was outside the TEZ) permission to attack; faced by a unanimous Naval recommendation, the Cabinet concurred. At approximately 16h00 local time, Conqueror fired three torpedoes (of the Mark 8 type, orginally designed in 1927), two of which hit their target, mortally wounding the cruiser, which sank about an hour later with the loss of 321 men. Conqueror, meantime, had instituted evasive action while the destroyers *Hipolito Bouchard* and *Piedra Buena* counter-attacked with depth charges, though to no effect. The destroyers then left the scene. This was not a cowardly or callous abandonment of the stricken ship or its crew, but one of the harsh necessities of naval warfare. To have stopped to pick up survivors of the sinking cruiser would have made the destroyers 'sitting ducks' for the hostile submarine. It is unlikely that Conqueror would have attacked them had they rescued survivors, but there was absolutely no way the Argentine Captains would have been able to know that, and they had to act according to what they knew. Understandably they acted strictly according 'to the book'; all they can be criticised for is perhaps adhering too closely to it (23). The sinking of the General

Belgrano came as a terrible shock to the ARA; that the British SSNs were dangerous had been known to the Argentine Naval Command; that they would prove to be so effective had not been anticipated; TG 79.3 seems to have had no idea that it had been shadowed for over 30 hours. The full impact upon the ARA was not to become visible for another two days.

Since the end of the war the sinking of the cruiser has come under criticism from certain quarters. It has been claimed that TG 79.3 had been moving away from the British Task Force, and thus posed no threat to it, and therefore should not have been attacked. This argument is both absurd and ill-informed, for three reasons: firstly, the General Belgrano's apparent withdrawal could simply have been the adoption of a new 'leg' in an anti-submarine zig-zag course; secondly, the General Belgrano appears to have been holding its position south-west of the Falklands, and this would not have been achieved by remaining stationary, but by periodic reversals of course to keep itself within a specific area (the cruiser might very well have also maintained a zig-zag while in this 'holding pattern'); and thirdly, course reversal is a long-established tactic by means of which enemy shadowers can be evaded and the enemy command deceived. For example, during the opening phases of the Battle of

Leyte Gulf on 24 October 1944, Adm Kurita, commanding the main element (Force A) of the attacking Japanese fleet (which, like the Argentine Navy in the Falklands, though on a much larger scale, was deployed in several different widely-separated forces approaching the Americans from different directions), seeking to throw off his American shadowers and end United States Naval Air attacks on his ships, reversed his fleet's course for an hour and a half. The American reconaissance pilots reported this, and the American fleet command accepted it, as a retreat. The main United States Carrier Task Force then allowed itself to be decoyed away from the main battle arena. Kurita, in the interim, resumed his normal course and succeeded in surprising the rest of the American fleet in Leyte Gulf; only a combination of skill, luck and great courage saved the Americans from disaster, and they still lost a small aircraft carrier, two destroyers and a frigate (24). From the point of view of the RN, the direction in which the General Belgrano was heading when she was torpedoed was of absolutely no relevance whatsoever. Clearly, there were just too many credible explanation for the cruiser's course - assuming, of course, the Conqueror could have reported it, communications with submerged submarines in contact with the enemy in a war zone is no easy matter - and it would have been extremely

foolish to view it as retreating.

It has also been claimed that the sinking of the General Belgrano was the act which ended all hopes of a peaceful settlement to the crisis, that it marked the beginning of armed hostilities; it has also even been argued that it was purposely done to prevent a peaceful settlement. These arguments are also absurd. Argentina had, before 1 May, rejected a proposed peace plan; the plan under discussion on 2 May was virtually identical to the rejected plan; it is very difficult to believe that the Argentines would have accepted something they had already rejected only a little while before. And, unsurprisingly, the 'new' proposals were rejected - but on 6 May, four days after the sinking of the cruiser, four days which contained important events which undoubtedly had much impact on Buenos Aires' thinking. Had the sinking of the General Belgrano been the event which led Argentina to reject the peace plan, they would have announced their decision on the 3rd or, at the latest, 4 May. The time gap between the sinking and the announcement is just too great to make the 'Conqueror torpedoed peace' argument credible. Nor was the sinking the first act of war, or a major escalation of the crisis. Quite apart from the fact that the Argentine invasions of 2 and 3 April had been acts of war, and

disregarding the attack on the ARA Sante Fe off South Georgia on 25 April, full scale fighting had already erupted on 1 May with the British attacks on Port Stanley and the Argentine response. Finally, if the British government had not wanted to 'give peace a chance', why had they vetoed an attack on the ARA Cabo San Antonio on 12 April? This makes sense only in terms of a desire to give diplomats a chance to resolve the crisis peacefully (25).

What of TG 79.1 and the Vienticino de Mayo? The movements of the carrier and its escorts are unclear, and it is also unclear whether or not they were ever located by the British, some reports claiming that an SSN did discover them, only to lose its quarry when the Group sailed across shallows where the SSN could not follow. A British popular magazine claims that an S-2 Tracker from the Vienticino de Mayo located the British carriers just before midnight, 1 May, and that the embarked A-4 Skyhawks were then made ready for a dawn strike (the Super Etendards had not, at that time, been cleared for carrier operation and had had to remain ashore). In the meantime, a Sea Harrier from Invincible located TG 79.1 just after midnight, 2 May. However, with dawn, the wind dropped, rendering the carrier incapable of launching her fully-laden Skyhawks, forcing the postponement of the attack.

Following the sinking of the General Belgrano, the carrier was ordered to return to port (26). It is known that TG 79.1 was ordered back to port on 4 May, and there are indications that the Argentine carrier did try to launch an air strike against the British carriers (27). But the wind can hardly have stayed dead for over three days, certainly not in a region marked by constant and strong winds; nor is it conceivable that the British would have ignored such a threat for the same period of time. So, while it is possible that the above account is largely accurate, it is certain that the dates are incorrect; these events, if they occured, must have done so on 2/3 or 3/4 May. Assuming the account is accurate (apart from the dates) why didn't the British carriers, whose Sea Harriers did not require wind over the flight-deck to launch, strike first? Because that would have been an unnecessary and risky deviation from Woodward's operative intention of attriting the attacking Argentines on all the Battle Group's defences, especially as any strike from the carrier could be co-ordinated with attacks from land bases as well. In fact, Woodward confronted a situation analagous to, though on a much smaller scale than, that faced by the United States Admiral Raymond A. Spruance in the June 1944 Battle of the Philippines Sea. Confronted both by large Japanese carrier- and shore-based air forces

Spruance, instead of immediately attacking the Japanese ships when they were discovered, held his aricraft back, so releasing all his fighters for CAPs. He thus allowed the Japanese aircraft to attack him, inflicting severe attrition with his CAPs and anti-aircraft fire from the carriers' escorts, in return for insignificant losses. In the meantime, the United States submarines attacked the Japanese fleet, sinking two carriers; then, with the Japanese air forces broken and the remaining carriers deprived of a cover, Spruance unleashed his aviators: they sank a further carrier and three tankers, and seriously damaged three aircraft carriers and a heavy cruiser. Woodward's thinking probably ran along similar lines (28).

Given that Britain had two carriers in the war and Argentina only one; that the Skyhawks, though tough, reliable and proven attack aircraft were not, and had never been intended to be, fighters, and thus were incapable of maintaining credible CAPs against Sea Harriers; and that the British had several SSNs available; there can be no doubt that the Argentine decision to withdraw the Vienticino de Mayo was the only correct one. Whether it was also correct to withdraw the whole of the fleet at the same time is altogether a different matter.

Matters had not remained frozen while the Vienticino de Mayo and its escorts had been manoeuvring north-west of the islands, and 3 May had seen further action. On the night of 2/3 May an RN helicopter patrol gained a contact on its radar; another helicopter was launched to investigate, and was fired on, so a third helicopter, armed with Sea Skua air-to-surface missiles, was launched in support. This attacked the target (later identified as the large patrol vessel ARA Commodoro Somellera), which then blew up and sank (it is believed that the ship was carrying mines and that the missiles detonated them). A fourth helicopter was then launched to seek survivors, this gaining a radar contact on what is mistakenly thought to be the hulk of the Comodoro Somellera, its error only becoming apparent when it, too, was fired on. The helicopter promptly instituted evasive action and attacked the vessel with Sea Skuas, inflicting sever damage on the ARA Alferez Sobral, sister to the Comodoro Somellera (29).

May 4 saw dramatic action, but events did not transpire to the advantage of the British. The day began with another ultra-long range Vulcan raid on Port Stanley airfield, but though it added to the infrastructural damage there, it totally failed to score any hits on the runway, which was still being

used (nocturnally) by FAA and CANA transport aircraft, and by the locally based Pucaras, MB 339s and T-34 Mentors. Dawn saw another Sea Harrier attack, this time only on Goose Green, by three aircraft: but one was shot down and the pilot killed. Nor was that all, for the CANA was seeking revenge for the loss of the General Belgrano. Its pilots had been making practice attacks on the Hercules and Santissima Trinidad, which were virtually identical to the 'Type 42s' with TF 317, in order to discover their weak spots. At the same time, its technicians had been integrating the five available AM 39 air-launched Exocet missiles with the six Super Etendards (the arms embargo had caught the remaining missiles and aircraft ordered by Argentina). By 4 May, all was ready, so, around 05h00, a CANA SP-2 Neptune reconaissance aircraft was sent on a mission to find the British Fleet. It located a 'medium-sized' target at 07h00, and the Super Etendards were launched, being guided to the vicinity of the target of the Neptune. Flying at low level, the strike aircraft had to increase altitude for a brief period ('pop-up') to acquire the target on their own radar, after which they returned to low level and, having come within range of the target, they launched their missiles, broke away, rendezvous'd with FAA KC-130 tankers, and returned to base (30).

The first missile struck the 'Type 42' HMS Sheffield, deployed as a radar picket; controversy exists as to whether or not the missile warhead exploded, though the Captain and crew of the victim are adamant that it did. The result was that the Sheffield, which had detected the missile only seconds before impact, began to burn fiercly and uncontrollably. Despite heroic efforts and the unstinting support of HMS Arrow, which came alongside the now stationery Sheffield and remained there, despite a report of an ARA submarine in the area, in flagrant disregard of 'the book', the fires could not be contained and the Sheffield had to be abandoned. She finally sank, in heavy weather, while under tow, some days later; 21 of her crew had been killed. The second Exocet had missed HMS Yarmouth (31).

The destruction of the Sheffield was a strategic, as well as a tactical, surprise to the British as they had believed that, due to the French arms embargo, none of the Argentine AM 39 Exocets were, or could be made, operational. It thus represented a severe shock to the RN and clearly illustrated that the war was far from one-sided. It also provided a glaring example of the consequences of the lack of AEW and of the 'Type 42s' well-known weakness in short range low-level air defence capability (both resulting

from economy-minded political decisions taken in disregard of naval advice). Tactics were immediately altered to cope with the threat. Thereafter, if a missile attack was suspected, all ships in the area would immediately fire CHAFF (unfortunately the merchantmen were not equipped with it) to distract the missile. The Carriers reinforced the effect by tasking helicopters to act as 'live decoys' to lure any missiles away from the irreplaceable 'flattops'. Only two (later three) ships in the Task Force were equipped with active anti-missile systems - the Sea Wolf SAM. The were HMS Broadsword and Brilliant (later joined by the Andromeda) and one was assigned to each carrier to act as 'goal-keepers', that is, to shoot down any Exocets that penetrated the outer and middle defence zones and headed for the carriers. Back in Britain, on the very day that the Sheffield was struck, a crash programme, at full war tempo, was launched to provide AEW compatible to the RN's new carriers by mating a powerful radar to the airframe of the Sea King helicopter : this was achieved in a mere eleven weeks but, in the event, was too late to see action in the war (32).

For the Argentines, the destruction of the Sheffield provided a massive boost in morale, and seemed to indicate that they had a real chance of winning the war after all. As a result, and as previously

related, they rejected, on 6 May, and for the second time, the Peruvian peace offer, even though the British War Cabinet, shocked by the loss of Sheffield, had apparently considered accepting it. May 6 also brought more bad news for the British - two Sea Harriers collided in very bad weather and were lost with their pilots; TF 317 had only 17 left. However, it had now become clear that the sinking of the General Belgrano had won the British Command of the Sea. Unfortunately, it was also clear that the FAA and CANA were refusing to oblige the British and come out and attack the Task Force on the latter's terms. In short, Command of the Air remained to be won. Determined to re-affirm Britain's hold on the strategic and operative initiative and to maximise the defensive capability of the Task Force, the War Cabinet on 7 May expanded the TEZ to within a mere 12 miles of the Argentine mainland. The fleet now had plenty room within which to manoeuvre and fight without political restrictions. In addition, the despatch of re-inforcements for the Task Force, in the shape of extra Sea Harriers accompanied by RAF Harrier GR.3 fighter bombers, was ordered (33).

The following day London authorised the sailing of the Amphibious Group south from Ascension, with the landing planned for the period 18-22 May. The RN

began to step up the pressure again: on 9 May the 'Type 42' Coventry, screened by Broadsword, closed to within 12 miles of Port Stanley to disrupt air traffic into the airport; in the early hours of the morning the destroyers detected a blockade-running C-130 Hercules escorted by two A-4 Skyhawks, and opened fire with Sea Dart SAMs, downing both Skyhawks, though the Hercules escaped and landed safely. Shortly afterwards another Sea Dart accounted for an Argentine Army Puma helicopter. Later that morning the Argentine trawler Narwhal, which had disregarded warnings given ten days earlier to leave the area, was sighted and strafed by a Sea Harrier, then being boarded (apparently by SBS) and discovered to be a spy ship, carrying an ARA officer. The crew were made prisoner, the severely damaged vessel sinking the next day while under tow (34).

With the Amphibious Group now approaching, reconaissance of likely landing sites, their approaches and hinterland, became a matter of great importance. SAS and SBS teams had been inserted onto the Falklands by helicopter and submarine since, apparently, the first week of May. Such activities were now stepped up and complemented by other activities. After much debate, the RN, RM and Army had agreed, by 8 May, that the landing take

place at San Carlos. Though far from Port Stanley, it had many advantages. It was out of range of Argentine artillery, possessed (according to SBS reports) no Argentine garrison (though there was an outpost on Fanning Head), was a protected anchorage, the surrounding hills not merely ameliorating the effect of winter gales but also making the task of attacking aircraft more difficult and dangerous as well as rendering the feared Exocet unusable. Moreover, the restricted waters would make it very dangerous for any Argentine submarine that should attempt to penetrate the anchorage. Finally, the Argentines had not laid any mines at San Carlos, either on land or at sea.

It was, however, essential to reconnoitre the whole of the Falkland Sound, from the sea, in a final check of the suitability of taking the Amphibious Group into it. This was achieved by sending HMS Alacrity through the Sound on the night of 10/11 May, an extremely daring and dangerous move, given the grave lack of manoeuvreing room available to the frigate should it encounter either Argentine mines or shore batteries. The risk paid off handsomely; not only was the reconaissance highly successful and reassuring to the British Staff planners, but the frigate discovered an Argentine blockade-running supply ship (later identified as the ARA Islas de

los Estados and destroyed her with a single 115 mm shell - the unfortunate vessel appears to have been carrying ammunition and/or fuel, and exploded immediately. Also on the night of 10 May, RN warships resumed their bombardments of Argentine positions around Port Stanley, a programme that was to continue, and increase in intensity, until the end of the war (35).

May 12 saw the first Argentine air attack since the destruction of the Sheffield eight days earlier: HMS Glasgow, screened by Brilliant, in what had become known as a '22-42 Combo', was bombarding Argentine shore targets, by day (though under cloud cover), when both ships were attacked by three waves each of four A-4 Skyhawks. Of the first wave, Brilliant shot down two with Sea Wolf, a third crashed into the sea while taking evasive action, while the fourth dropped its bombs, missed and broke away damaged, the pilot ejecting over Port Stanley (perversely the abandoned Skyhawk apparently refused to crash and had to be shot down by Argentine AA). The second wave managed to release their bombs, suffering no casualties (it seems that the fully automatic Sea Wolf Fire Control System - FCS - could not decide on which aircraft to engage first and so failed to operate: work began immediately on modifying FCS to allow manual override) but scoring

only one hit: the bomb passed straight through Glasgow and out the other side without exploding. The third wave broke off the attack. Glasgow, however, had to temporarily retire for repairs (36).

That same day the Queen Elizabeth II sailed from Southampton carrying the 3,500 troops of the 5th Infantry Brigade. There was, however, a threat to the proposed invasion: the existence of a group of Aregntine aircraft, including Pucaras, at the airstrip on Pebble Island. This threat was eliminated, following the infiltration of an SAS reconaissance party by helicopter and canoe, by a heliborne SAS raid backed-up with naval gunfire support from Glamorgan on the night of 14 May; all eleven Argentine aircraft on the airstrip, including six Pucaras, were destroyed, and Pebble Island was shown to be too exposed and vulnerable for further employment by the Argentines (37).

The same day as this raid, Sea Harriers commenced a series of attacks on troop concentrations around Port Stanley which were to continue for three successive days. On 16 May Sea Harriers attacked the requisitioned Argentine cargo ship Rio Carcarania off Port King, using bombs and rockets, causing the crew to abandon ship, while the transport ARA Bahia Buen Suceso was strafed (but not

bombed, for fear of harming civilians) at Fox Bay, apparently being crippled (38). May 16 also saw the most mysterious single incident of the war, still unexplained: the forced-landing of an RN Sea King in Chile, close to the Argentine border. Originally believing themselves to be on the Argentine side of the frontier, the crew destroyed their helicopter and instituted survival and evasion procedures, giving themselves up only when they discovered they were in Chile. There was absolutely no possibility that this helicopter had been on routine duties; it must have been employed on a special mission; the most probable explanation is that it landed a team of SAS to monitor and report Argentine air movements near their bases, in order to give early warning of attacks.

On 18 May the Amphibious Group rendezvoused with the Carrier Battle Group, bringing with it the converted Container Ship Atlantic Conveyor, which had embarked 8 Sea Harrier and 6 Harrier GR 3. These critically needed reinforcements were immediately flown off and joined both the carriers; the following day another 4 Harrier GR 3s arrived on the carriers, having flown from Britain via Ascension by means of AAR. Rear-Adm Woodward now had 25 Sea Harriers for air-to-air combat and 10 Harrier GR 3s for air-to-ground combat (each type was capable of backing-up the

other in its primary role if necessary) - a total of 35 high performance jets. The Argentines still had at least 129, not counting their numerous light strike, COIN and armed trainer aricraft. Moreover, though command of the sea had been won and was being constantly exercised, command of the air had not; the situation was, to apply Corbett's classification to aviation, one of 'command in dispute', in which both combatants operate with high levels of risk. Nevertheless, the British made the final preparations and plans for the invasion, Rear-Adm Woodward augmenting the Amphibious Group with the cruiser Antrim and six frigates from the Carrier Group, in order to provide naval gun-fire support and air defence. The British would, in complete violation of the conventional wisdom concerning amphibious operations, have to seek to establish working control of the air (to adopt another of Corbett's classifications) over the beachhead during the course of the invasion; there was no other choice (39).

Careful planning was undertaken in order to minimise the air threat during both the approach phase and the actual landing. To these ends, it was decided that the Amphibious Group would sail in a very tight formation, so that the two 'Type 22s' could provide effective cover with their Sea Wolf SAMs; that the

landing would be preceded by Special Forces decoy operations to distract Argentine attention from the designated beachhead; that the final approach and landing would take place under the cover of night; that the disembarked troops would immediately seize the high ground surrounding the anchorage, the Army's *Rapier SAMs then being* swiftly deployed to help protect it, this to be achieved before daybreak; and that the ships themselves would be so deployed as to minimise the danger. So it was that the Amphibious Group of 19 ships (7 Amphibious Ships, 4 requisitioned merchantmen, 1 RFA and 7 escorts) approached the Falklands Sound under the cover of heavy mist on 20 May. After nightfall, the diversionary operations began, with a helicopter-inserted SAS group attacking the Argentine garrison at Goose Green (the nearest to San Carlos) from the south, creating as much noise as possible; it successfully fixed Argentine attention in the wrong direction. Tragically, during this phase of operations, an RN *Sea King* fully laden with SAS suffered from a birdstrike and crashed into the sea, killing 21 including 19 SAS (that Regiment's worst single disaster since 1945); there were 9 survivors (40).

The Amphibious Group reached its objective in the early hours of the morning of 21 May. Its

commander, Commodore Clapp, had the enormous advantage of having been an FAA [RN] pilot and squadron commander specialising in anti-shipping strikes, and thus was fully aware of both the dangers facing his ships and the difficulties that would confront the Argentine pilots. As a result, he had been able to plan the deployment of his vessels so as to minimise the dangers to the key amphibious and transport ships and maximise the difficulties for the Argentines. Not all the ships in the Group could be accommodated in San Carlos Water so, as it was crucial that the 3rd Commando Brigade be landed as swiftly as possible, Clapp ordered that Canberra and Norland be among those vessels deployed in the Water. This was, given the size and conspicousness of these two ships, a risk, but a calculated one. While the amphibious and transport vessels entered San Carlos Water, or took up position immediately outside, the escorts established a 'Gunline' outside in Falkland Sound, this being an arc of warships deployed from north to south covering the Sound itself and the entrances to both San Carlos Water and Port San Carlos (itself formed by the estuary of the San Carlos River). The Gunline formed a barrier, both physically and psychologically, to the attacking Argentine pilots, which would have to be passed if they wished to reach the precious amphibious and transport ships in

San Carlos Water and Port San Carlos (41).

As the Amphibious Group approached its objective, the Argentine OP at Fanning Head was 'taken out' by SBS supported by naval gun-fire. Then began the process of disembarkation; despite delays, most of the troops had been successfully landed by dawn. Dawn also revealed a hitherto undiscovered Argentine detachment which, pausing only to shoot down two RM light helicopters (killing three of the four men aboard: the only British casaulties of the landing) and report the invasion, rapidly retreated eastwards. An Argentine aircraft from Port Stanley soon confirmed the detachment's report. The landing had come as a complete surprise, tactically and operationally (though not, of course, strategically), to the Argentines, especially as they had ruled out the San Carlos area as being an impossible site for amphibious operations. This was, however, the moment for which Argentine's aviation assets had been so carefully husbanded. But they faced another defence-in-depth system. As with the Carrier Battle Group, the outer zone was comprised of radar pickets which detected the attacking aircraft and guided the Sea Harrier CAPs onto them. To cover the Amphibious Group there were three CAPs, each of two Sea Harriers, one CAP each to the north, west and south; they were relieved every twenty minutes. The

middle zone was provided by the guns and SAMs of the Gunline and the Army Rapier SAMs deployed ashore; the inner zone was made up of various automatic weapons (usually machine-guns, but some vessels carried 40 mm AA guns) mounted on the amphibious and transport ships themselves (including the *requisitioned merchant vessels*) as well as Seacat SAMs on Fearless and Intrepid, and hand-held Blowpipe SAMs on most of the rest as well as ashore. In addition, other Sea Harriers were frequently despatched on reconnaissance sorties to guard against any attempt by the ARA's surface fleet to interefere in the operation (42).

All the elements of the Group's defences were swiftly put to the test, for the Argentine aviation reacted in great strength, with wave after wave of MB 339s, Pucaras and T-34s from Port Stanley, and especially Mirages and Skyhawks from the mainland. They attacked in sufficient numbers so as to swamp the CAPs, a process aided by Argentine radar deployed on the Falklands, many of the attacking aircraft thus being able to avoid the Sea Harriers. Those that did not or could not, however, suffered very badly: so much so that, at the end of the day, Argentina's national radio referred to the dark-coloured Sea Harriers as 'the Black Death', while Argentine pilots were apparently ordered to avoid

them; certainly, thereafter, attacking Argentine aircraft were noticed to abort their missions if they saw the Sea Harriers in time. Those aircraft which evaded the CAPs then dropped to low level to evade the Sea Dart SAMs, deadly to medium- and high-altitude flying aircraft. The Argentine pilots then, as Clapp had intended, encountered the Gunline, which, inevitably, they attacked - because they had to. But the ships on the Gunline were expendable; it was the Amphibious vessels which were not. And, at the Gunline, and beyond in the Water, the Argentines encountered fierce barrages of AA and SAM fire. Unsurprisingly, they nicknamed these restricted waters 'Death Valley'; but they pressed home their attacks - on the Gunline - with great courage and determination, so that the British nicknamed the area 'Bomb Alley'. HMS Antrim, Brilliant and Broadsword were hit by bombs that did not explode; HMS Argonaut suffered severe damage in spite of the fact that the bombs which struck her did not explode, and only a stroke of good luck saved her from running aground and being written off. HMS Ardent was not so lucky; positioned at the extreme southern end of the Gunline, she was hit aft by bombs which did explode and inflict mortal damage, sinking soon afterwards with the loss of 24 men. Yet not one of the amphibious or transport ships was damaged, and unloading continued in

between the air raids; by nightfall some 4,000 men had been landed. And the Argentines suffered heavily, the British claiming to have destroyed 9 Mirages, 5 Skyhawks, and 3 Pucaras (after the war, the British Ministry of Defence - MoD - reduced these claims to 13, 8 of which were credited to Sea Harriers). Whatever the exact figures, these losses, from a total of 72 Argentine sorties, represented an appalling attrition rate. Nor were the British solely on the defensive: during the day RAF Harriers attacked Goose Green, claiming 4 helicopters on the ground (later reduced to 2 by the MoD), losing one Harrier to a SAM (the pilot ejected *was taken prisoner*), while the FAA [RN] was also active: two helicopters attacked the Rio Carcarania with missiles, inflicting mortal damage; it sank by mid-day. Sometime in this period the ARA Bahia Buen Suceso was also sunk by a helicopter-launched missile (43).

The events of 21 May have been much misunderstood. With regard to air-to-air combat, it has frequently been claimed that no dogfights occured because the Argentine pilots lacked the fuel to engage in them (44). This, in fact, was not so; as previously indicated, the Falklands were well within the combat radius of the Mirages and Skyhawks. Moreover, because the Carrier Battle Group had to be kept from

unneccessary danger, the Sea Harriers had a considerable distance to cover before they reached their CAP position. The consequence was that the Sea Harriers had no more loiter or combat time over the battle zone than the Argentines. No dogfights occured quite simply because the Argentine pilots were inexperienced and, most importantly, poorly trained. They repeatedly made the same basic mistakes, all through the war, giving no sign of learning any lessons. They almost always launched their air-to-air missiles whilst out of range of their opponents; their formation was too tight, with the result that the wingmen were more concerned to avoid collision with their leaders than in watching their tails, consequently there was no mutual support; and finally, they repeatedly turned away from the Sea Harriers, and not, as the hard-learned principles of aerial warfare require, towards them. The Argentines persisted in thinking that they could out-run the Sea Harriers, forgetting that, though subsonic, the Sea Harriers possess a phenomenal acceleration which allows them to catch any aircraft that seeks to break away from them. A turn towards the Sea Harriers would not have allowed the Argentine pilots to shoot any down, for the Sea Harrier can outmanoeuvre any other fixed-wing aircraft in existence; but it would have made the job of the British pilots more difficult, and saved

some Argentine aircraft (45).

The Argentines had identical problems with regard to their air-to-surface tactics. That the bombs failed to explode so often was not, as is often claimed, the result of good British luck or poor or incompetent Argentine armourers back at base, but again the consequence of inexperience, poor training (especially with regard to the FAA) and bad tactics. Ironically, these factors were compounded by the undoubted courage and determination of the Argentine pilots. They continually launched their attacks outside the parameters of their weapon systems: in other words, at too low an altitude and too close to the target. Thus the bombs did not have adequate time to arm themselves before impact, and so merely acted as solid projectiles - streamlined cannon-balls, so to speak. And, in fact, the bombs often skipped across the surface of the water just like cannon-balls, and frequently bounced over the intended target. It was not good British luck that Antrim, Broadsword and Brilliant suffered only minor damage, but good Argentine luck that their unarmed, inert, projectiles did so much damage to Argonaut (which remained immobilised for over four days - but nevertheless continued to participate in the defence of the anchorage). A key factor explaining why the Argentines flew too low was the defensive fire of the

British ships: by skimming the surface they minimised its effect. Bombs were released too close to their target in order to maximise the chances of a hit. These problems could have been overcome had the Argentines flown at higher altitudes, but that would have greatly increased their losses. The correct tactics would have been to engage in 'toss-bombing' (in which the aircraft suddenly climbs, releasing its bombs as it does so, and then breaks away, without passing over or too near the target, the bombs continue in a parabolic arc, gaining the necessary time to fuse themselves properly), or to 'pop-up' at the end of the attack run, minimising the exposure of the aircraft to defensive fire, yet ensuring that the bombs are released within their parameters. Either way, however, the Argentines' accuracy would have deteriorated, and fewer British ships would have been hit (46).

The British, naturally, expected the air attacks to resume on the morning of 22 May. To their amazement and delight, they did not. There was not a single Argentine attack on the Amphibious Group or beachhead all day. For the FAA command had committed a major operative error: it had not held back a reserve from the first day's onslaught. And after the damage and casualties suffered on the

21st, and the unexpected fierceness of the defensive fire, the Argentine squadrons required re-organisation and revitalisation. This mistake granted the British an incredible 36 hours respite from attack. All through the 22nd the British continued to land men by both helicopter and landing craft; the beachhead was firmly consolidated, especially with regard to air defences; by the end of the day there were no less than 5,000 men ashore in four separate strongpoints encompassing some 10 square miles in extent. That evening the Canberra and the other transport ships (thought not the specialist amphibious vessels) were escorted out to the safety of the open ocean, their mission completed. Henceforth, all supply ships would enter San Carlos Water in the evening, and depart before dawn. Also during the course of this day, a patrolling Sea Harrier had detected an Argentine patrol boat, PNA Rio Iguazu in Choiseul Sound, and promptly strafed it, driving it aground, causing it to be a total wreck (47).

May 23 saw the resumption of the battle, with offensive actions by both sides. Prowling Sea Harriers discovered and destroyed three Argentine helicopters, while the frigates Brilliant and Yarmouth trapped the old Falklands trawler Monsunen, which had been requisitioned by the Argentines, and

drove it ashore. It was later refloated and requisitioned by the British. And the Argentine aviation returned in strength; but it was too late to destroy the invasion; all the attacking pilots could do was to delay its progress and exact the maximum possible cost for it. Yet the Argentines continued to employ their poor and inappropriate tactics as before; they appeared to have learnt nothing from the previous fighting. HMS Glasgow was hit by an inert bomb, but the Argentines were to be lucky with HMS Antelope. Though the two bombs which hit her were also inert, one exploded while experts were attempting to defuse it; this triggered uncontrollable fires which finally caused the frigate to blow up spectacularly and ultimately to sink the next day. In return, the British claimed 7 Argentine aircraft, not including the helicopters (48).

On the 24th the Argentines again returned in strength, and again adhered to their improper tactics. This time, however, they tried to ignore the Gunline and concentrate on the amphibious ships, scoring hits with (inevitably) inert bombs on the RFAs Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot. But these had already unloaded all their vital stores; as with those other ships hit by inert weaponry (except the unfortunate Antelope), the bombs were removed and

dropped over the side. On their side, the Argentines lost at least 8 aircraft - 5 Mirages and 3 Skyhawks (the British MoD later claimed 18 kills for that day, but 12 seems more likely) (49).

May 25 being Argetina's national day, the British expected a 'maximum effort' from the FAA and CANA. They were not to be disappointed. Though attacks were launched on the ships at San Carlos (they were all ineffective) it is significant that the main focus was elsewhere. Twelve miles north of the Falklands Sound HMS Coventry and Broadsword had been acting as a '22-42 Combo' since 22 May; Coventry had controlled several successful Sea Harrier interceptions in its role as radar picket. During the course of this day Coventry had also destroyed 3 Skyhawks attempting to reach San Carlos. Then, in the evening, the 'combo' itself was attacked by 2 Skyhawks which came in low over the land in order to mask the warships' radar: Broadsword was the target. As usual, the Argentines released their bombs too low and too close to the target, with the inevitable result that they did not arm and bounced over the target - with one exception: this bomb penetrated Broadsword's hull after striking the sea, exited through the flight deck, sliced through the nose of the frigate's helicopter, and ll harmlessly into the sea. Both Skyhawks were seen to be hit by AA

fire. Only a few minutes later, however, a second pair of Skyhawks appeared, also from off the land, only this time headed for Coventry. Broadsword's Sea Wolf SAMs locked onto the approaching aircraft, only for Coventry to swing in front of the frigate, preventing the firing of the SAMs. And, unlike their colleagues of a few minutes before, these Argentine pilots had learned from the events of the preceding days: they released their bombs within the weapons' parameters, so that they had enough time to arm themselves. Coventry was hit by no less than three 1,000 lb bombs, all of which exploded, tearing out much of her port side, and causing her to capsize and sink within 15 minutes with the loss of 19 men. Only two of the four Skyhawks which attacked the 'combo' returned to base (50).

The Argentines also, as Rear-Adm Woodward guessed, sought more important targets: the carriers. The destruction or disablement of one or both of these provided the only certain means of winning the war open to the Argentines. So, to this end, CANA launched two Super Etendards, each carrying an Exocet, and accompanied by two other aircraft acting as AAF tankers, and sent them north around the Falklands (unlike the previous sortie, which had come round the south of the islands) to find the Carrier Battle Group. This they succeeded in

doing, but while still over thirty miles from the carriers they were detected by HMS Ambuscade, apparently acting as a radar picket, or perhaps part of an outer anti-submarine screen, which immediately alerted the fleet and opened fire with all weapons. The Exocets were launched, but all warships fired CHAFF, and the carriers flew off decoy helicopters; these measures successfully confused the Exocets' guidance mechanisms. Unfortunately, the Carrier Battle Group was accompanied by the Atlantic Conveyor, which did not carry CHAFF. The Exocets locked on to this large and clear target, and scored direct hits, initiating many internal explosions from the ammunition carried aboard. Atlantic Conveyor had to be abandoned, 12 men being lost, including the Captain. The ship burned fiercely for several days before finally sinking. Large quantities of important stores for the land forces were lost with the ship, but most important of all was the loss of 3 Chinook and 6 Wessex helicopters carried aboard; only one of each had been flown off before the missiles struck. This was a severe blow to the mobility of the land forces. Thus it was clear that 25 May was the worst day, up to that time, for the British, both in terms of lives and equipment lost (51).

It was also, however, the last day of the Battle of

the Falkland Sound (also known as the Battle of San Carlos). On the 26th, no new attacks came. British operative art and tactics had triumphed; those of the Argentines had failed. The Royal Navy had attrited the Argentine aviation more rapidly than the latter could attrite the RN. The Argentines had suffered an average loss rate of 50%, rising as high as 60% for some missions. It was a level of attrition which it was impossible to maintain. The power of Argentine aviation was largely broken by the Battle. It also marked the first time that a Navy, operating under only limited air cover and relying heavily on its ships own weapons systems, had defeated a land-based Air Force. The British now, by and large, enjoyed working control of the air (to adopt another of Corbett's categories), and, under its cover, the troops could now commence their advance from the beachhead. Except on one day, the Argentine aviation was henceforth only to engage in intermittent and largely ineffective hit-and-run raids. Ironically, the most effective of these occurred on 27 May, the day that the British ground forces commenced their advance, and was the first raid on the beachhead itself, being carried out by 5 Skyhawks, which killed 8 men and destroyed an ammunition dump. However, two of the Skyhawks were shot down, and there were no further [illegible] on the beachhead (52).

Having won, and exercised, command of the sea and working control of the air, the fleet henceforth acted in a supporting role to the ground forces, providing supplies, support, transport, flank protection, air cover, and hospital services. The primarily naval aspect of the war was largely over. And, in fact, the next major task for TG 317 was transport. On 28 May the Queen Elizabeth II, after a high-speed solo dash well away from the shipping lanes in order to avoid the danger of Argentine submarines (the British never relaxed their anti-submarine precautions until well after the fighting finished) arrived at Cumberland Bay, South Georgia. Her passengers comprised the 5th Infantry Brigade (2nd Battalion, Scots Guards, 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, 1st/7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, plus supporting units) and the Land Forces Commander, Major-General Jeremy Moore RM, and his staff. The troops were transferred to Canberra and Norland for conveyance to the Falklands, Maj-Gen Moore and his staff going by means of HMS Antrim, for greater speed. Moore arrived there on 30 May, the 5th Brigade following and disembarking at San Carlos on 1 June; the operation was completed without a single interruption from Argentine aviation (53).

The RN also demonstrated its support role - again, on the 28th, when HMS Arrow lent gunfire support to the attack of the 2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment on the Argentine garrison at Goose Green. Unfortunately, at a critical moment Arrow's one and only 115 mm gun jammed. However, this was soon cleared, and to make up for the problems this had caused the 'Paras' Arrow did not withdraw, as originally intended, at dawn, but remained for two full hours after daybreak. The final stages of the battle were considerably assisted by strikes by RAF Harriers operating off the carriers (54).

May 30 saw the final attack on the Carrier Battle Group with AM 39 Exocets. Two Super Etendards (one carrying the last Exocet), accompanied by four FAA Skyhawks, and using AAR, sought to surprise the British by attacking from the west. They failed; though the Super Etendards successfully launched the missile, it was (in an incredible feat) shot down by HMS Avenger's 115 mm gun; two of the Skyhawks were also downed ('splashed' in naval jargon) by defensive fire. The British sustained neither damage nor casualties (55).

The RAF Harriers were frequently in action throughout the remainder of the war, some 30 strikes in all being made against Argentine positions, usually by

pairs of aircraft, on 21, 26, 29, 30 May, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 June. Four aircraft were lost (three to AA and SAMs, one in an accident); to replace them, two pairs of aircraft were flown direct to the Task Force, one pair each on 1 and 8 June. Vulcans from Ascension attempted to knock out the Argentine radar on the Falklands with special raids on 30 May and 8 June, but only temporary success was achieved. On 11 June there occured the last Vulcan raid of the war, on Port Stanley airfield, though this time there was no intent to damage the runway (56). Argentine positions in and around Port Stanley were also subject to constant nocturnal naval bombardments, while to improve response to Army requests for helicopter lift and to increase flexibility, the RN assault helicopter squadrons were re-deployed ashore to San Carlos on 3 June, remaining based there for the rest of the war. The helicopter base also served as a Forward Operating Location (FOL) for both Harriers awaiting requests for ground support and Sea Harriers refuelling after their (now extended) CAPs. Both types, however, remained based aboard the carriers (57).

The 5th Infantry Brigade was made responsible for the southern flank of the advance on the main Argentine positions on the hills around Port Stanley. Its elements were shuttled forward from

Goose Green to Fitzroy by Landing Craft, the trawler *Monsunen*, and the occasionally available helicopter (5G). This, however, was not adequate; nor could the Brigade emulate the superbly fit Marines and 'Paras' of 3rd Commando Brigade, who had overcome the problem of lack of helicopter lift by the simple expedient of walking ('yomping' in RM jargon) across the island; so, to speed up the advance, a major amphibious lift was decided upon. On the night of 5 June HMS Intrepid carried the Scots Guards from San Carlos around the coast to Lively Island, there launching her LCUs which carried the troops, in appalling weather, on to Bluff Cove (seized earlier by helicopter). The Intrepid withdrew to San Carlos, the RN being most concerned about intelligence reports indicating the deployment (via blockade-running aircraft) of a land-based MM 38 Exocet system at Port Stanley. The next night Fearless sailed, carrying the Welsh Guards; the plan was for Intrepid's LCUs, left at Bluff Cove, to rendezvous with Fearless and help take off her passengers. However, the weather was so bad that it prevented the LCUs from sailing from Bluff Cove. So Fearless, which had waited as long as was safe, launched the two LCUs she carried, both full of troops. She then returned to San Carlos, with 300 Guardsmen still aboard. Following this it was decided not to risk the assault ships again; the

troops and the remaining supplies were to be moved forward in the LSLs. The vessels assigned the task where RFAs Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad, which sailed independently of each other. No escort was provided for the anchorage at Fitzroy (the point closest to Bluff Cove that craft the size of LSLs could reach) was so constricted that any ship caught in it would be a 'sitting duck', provision of an escort would thus only create another potential target. The whole operation was a calculated risk. It was hoped that both vessels could, and would, be unloaded before any air attack could occur - if any occurred. For Argentine air activity had been sparse and ineffective, and the RN had landed supplies for the northern advance axis in Teal Inlet without attracting a single attack. These calculations and hopes were to prove misplaced. Sir Tristram arrived during the early hours of 8 June, and immediately began to unload its stores at Fitzroy. Sir Galahad reached Fitzroy at 07h00. However, the embarked Welsh Guards, totally unfamiliar with the requirements of amphibious warfare, did not understand the urgent necessity for them to disembark immediately at Fitzroy; they wished to go to Bluff Cove, and, as there were no spare LCUs available to take them there, they decided to wait for them (Bluff Cove is 4 miles by sea from Fitzroy; by land, given that a long detour

was required because the retreating Argentines had blown the bridge, the distance was 12 miles). So the troops stayed aboard, regardless of warnings and urgings from Royal Marines at Fitzroy.

The ships were clearly visible to Argentine OPs in the hills to the north. Their reports triggered the last significant Argentine air operations of the war. By approximately 13h10 two Skyhawks and two Mirages appeared over Fitzroy and attacked the ships, achieving total tactical surprise. Moreover, these pilots had also learnt from previous experience and attacked within the parameters of their weapons. The initial target being Sir Tristram, which had, however, unloaded virtually all its cargo; the ship was hit aft, the exploding bomb starting fires which seriously damaged her superstructure. Sir Galahad came next, but she was still full of men and stores; the bombs which hit her detonated ammunition and ignited fuel carried aboard, turning the ship into an inferno. The British lost 56 dead, 51 of them aboard Sir Galahad. In terms of casualties, it was the worst single day of the war for the British, though in terms of its effect on the campaign it was not as serious as 25 May. The Argentines naturally believed they had inflicted much heavier damage and casualties than in reality, and so concluded that the entire southern

th' st had been totally dislocated. The British, despite the anguish caused at home, purposely decided not to disabuse the Argentines of their error. The result was that when the 5th Brigade resumed its advance only three days later, the Argentines were taken completely by surprise. Sir Tristram was salvaged and ultimately sent back to Britain for repair; Sir Galahad was damaged beyond repair and eventually towed out to sea and sunk as a war grave, it being too dangerous to retrieve the bodies aboard.

This was not the only air attack of the day. At around 13h30 HMS Plymouth came under attack from 5 Mirages while in Falkland Sound. These Argentines, however, continued to display the poor tactics that were all too typical of the Argentine aviation: they scored four hits with 1,000 lb bombs, none of which exploded; one did, however, hit a depth charge on Plymouth's stern, causing it to explode and starting fires aft. These were, however, put out within 90 minutes. The frigate suffered no fatalities and had, moreover, shot down two of her attackers. Later that afternoon another formation of four Mirages attacked and mortally damaged an independently operating LCU, killing six of its crew. The Mirages were 'bounced' immediately afterwards by a Sea Harrier CAP, which shot down

three of the Mirages; the fourth crashed into a hillside. Total Argentine losses for the day were seven aircraft (59). With the events of 8 June the Argentine aviation bowed out of the war; thereafter it undertook no significant missions against the British. Nocturnal blockade running flights into Port Stanley by both the FAA and CANA continued, however, to the end.

The final series of battles on the hills and ridges around Port Stanley received heavy and accurate naval gunfire support, which was directed by the Naval Gunfire Support Officers attached to all the British units. As one 115 mm gun could lay down a barrage equivalent to that from six Army 105 mm field guns, this was of great value to the troops. It was at the end of one of these bombardment operations, in the very early hours of 12 June, that the report of a land-based Exocet system at Port Stanley was proven to be true; a missile was fired at HMS Glamorgan as it withdrew back towards the fleet. Glamorgan detected the missile, turned stern-on to the threat, fired CHAFF and launched a SAM; but this Exocet was not to be confused or destroyed: it scored a direct hit on the upper deck abreast the helicopter hangar, killing 13 men, wrecking the hangar and helicopter and seriously damaging the galleys. Nevertheless, the ship was

able to work up to 2[illegible] kts and remained fully operational (60). She was also the last naval casualty of the war; two days later, on 14 June, the Argentines surrendered. In Port Stanley harbour, the British discovered (in addition to the hospital ship Bahia Paraiso, protected under the Geneva Convention) two fully operational Argentine vessels, the patrol boat PNA Islas Malvinas and the requisitioned Oil Rig Support Vessel Yehuin; both were immediately commissioned into the RN, the former as HMS Tiger Bay. The Object of the war, to return the islands to British administration, had been fulfilled.

For Britain, the campaign had been a model of how a limited war should be fought. The political and military aspects of the war were well integrated. Each step in the escalation of British pressure - the despatch of the fleet, the proclamation of the MEZ, the re-taking of South Georgia, the April 23 "appropriate response" warning, the proclamation of the TEZ up to the commencement of general hostilities and beyond - was simultaneously a political action and a logical and sensible military step (and vice versa). Not until 20 May was the option of a purely political settlement irrevocably abandoned - for, after the 20th, with the landings at San Carlos, the necessary concomitants of a

peaceful settlement (for example, a ceasefire), hitherto perfectly reconcilable with the operations of the Task Force, became antipathetic to them. Having realised that the only way to fulfil their stated Object was by combat, the British Government adhered firmly to this course throughout. At the highest level of responsibility in London, civil-military relations remained excellent. The political leadership established a clear Object for the Task Force, defined the area in which the conflict was to occur and, so having fulfilled its reponsibilities, was content to allow the Services' Chiefs and their subordinates to fulfill theirs. There was no significant political interference in the conduct of the fighting, and advice from the Service and especially Naval Chiefs was carefully considered and often acted upon. The actual strategy of the campaign conducted by the RN, with the support of the other services, was extremely daring - it had to be daring, given the enormous geostrategic difficulties facing the British. The operative deployment of the Carrier Battle Group was, by contrast, cautious - but this was the classic mode of carrier operations, and a reflection of the over-riding importance of ensuring the continuous availability of these vessels. Without carriers, no long-range naval operation can take place. The tactics of the Carrier Battle Group

were, on the other hand, continuously aggressive, always seeking to provoke an Argentine reaction and bring them to battle so that they could be destroyed. The operative deployment of the Amphibious Group was exceedingly - almost recklessly - daring, and virtually unprecedented in the modern history of amphibious warfare. Tactically, the deployment of the Amphibious ships was, sensibly, cautious, maximum use being made of geography to protect them. Their escorts, however, were subject to a daring deployment also at the tactical level. Except for the tactical-level risk of sending Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad to Fitzroy, this daring paid off triumphantly at all levels. In comparison to the activities of TF 317, those of TF 324 remain shrouded in secrecy. The SSNs proved as deadly as they had been thought to be, and it seems that the submarines in the South Atlantic were employed aggressively and imaginatively - in addition to sinking the General Belgrano, they blockaded the Argentine coast (by so doing giving new life to the Napoleonic concept of the close blockade which many had, hitherto, regarded as totally impractical in the era of air power and Fast Attack Craft), landed Special Forces, and many had acted as submerged radar pickets to give early warning to TF 317 of approaching Argentine raids. For the RN, and so for Britain, the South Atlantic was a triumph over the

enemy, the weather, and the facts of geography. The Navy's standards of training, seamanship, technical skills and leadership, its tactics, operative art, and strategy were all tested to the full - and found equal to the task.

The picture with regard to the Argentines was not nearly so bright. The problem of civil-military relations did not exist in Argentina; the military were the government. However, there was the problem of relations within the Argentine Armed Services. Co-ordination between the Army, Navy and Air Force proved extremely poor. The system of government in Argentina did nothing to help - because the country was ruled by the Armed Forces' Chiefs, there was no superior political authority to enforce co-ordination or to ascertain just how much effort to devote to the war. As a result, there was nothing the junta could do to prevent the Navy's virtual withdrawal from the conflict after the loss of the Belgrano. Had the members of the junta separated themselves from the actual running of the Armed Forces, and appointed new Chiefs of Staff to take over the professional control of the Services, they would have become such a higher political authority. But this they failed to do, and so fell uncomfortably between two very different stools, with the result that they performed very poorly both

as political and military leaders.

Effective higher political leadership was especially required in Argentina because of the extreme form of inter-Service rivalry in that country, a consequence of the military's long involvement in politics, the different Services following different political lines. For example, the Navy is traditionally more conservative than the Army. Add to this the country's history of coups, the possibility of actual combat between the Armed Forces becomes apparent. And, indeed, such inter-Service fighting has taken place - for example, all three of the Argentine Armed Forces engaged each other in a brief shooting war during 1962; the FAA carrying out air attacks on CANA bases! Given that the junior Officers of 1962 were the middle-ranking Officers of 1982, it is little wonder that Argentine inter-Service co-operation was so poor. The FAA flew virtually no missions in support of the Argentine garrison in the Islands, and the FAA and CANA appear to have frequently undertaken missions against the British Task Force without consulting each other, thus sacrificing the advantages that co-ordinated operations would have brought (61).

Strategically, Argentina has often been criticised for not waiting until John Nott's proposed (and

since cancelled) Naval cuts had rendered the RN incapable of responding, but this is both unfair and inappropriate. The geostrategic difficulties facing the British appeared insurmountable, and not only to Buenos Aires - some senior United States Naval Officers also felt that the task was impossible. Even in Britain, the Chiefs of the Army and the RAF had their doubts; only the RN was confident it could be done. Once it became clear that the British were going to attempt to re-take the islands, the Armada Republica Argentina adopted, at the strategic level, an offensive posture and seemed set to challenge the British fleet for command of the sea. However, the operative deployment of the fleet was very poor - the division of, at the most, 12 (Guerrico was out of action because of damage sustained at South Georgia) available major surface combatants into three, later four Task Groups, represented an unwise dispersal of effort. And to assign a unit as significant and important as the General Belgrano only two escorts was an invitation to disaster. While a good case could be made for a pincer attack on the British Task Force, it should have involved no more than two Task Groups, thus permitting concentration of force and effort and simultaneously providing the high-value units (the carrier and cruiser) with adequate escorts. Following the sinking of the General Belgrano the ARA adopted a

purely negative strategy of 'fleet-in-being', which guaranteed the preservation of the surface fleet but also contributed nothing to the defence of the islands. As previously indicated, there can be no doubt that the ARA was correct to withdraw the carrier to safety; the same arguments could be applied to cover the Hercules and Santissima Trinidad, that fleet's only DDGHs; Drummond and Granville were too small, too slow to be able to operate independently; and Rosales and Almirante Storni had not been sufficiently modernised. But that still left the four DDGs, whose Exocets gave them a credible surface warfare capability against the opposing British, and whose formidable gun batteries gave them the ability to threaten the British support, amphibious and transport ships and to bombard the actual beachhead itself. Moreover, the ships themselves were expendable, as four modern replacement destroyers were at advanced stages of construction in Germany. Thus, these DDGs could *have been used offensively in 'Tokyo Express'* type operations - that is, sorties to attack the beachhead under the cover of night, withdrawing before dawn and receiving land-based air cover after daybreak. Maximum exploitation of the twelve mile 'free zone' between the coast and the start of the TEZ, and of the length of the Argentine coastline, could have allowed these ships to evade the

blockading SSNs. Of course, the attempt might have failed, but at least the surface fleet would have been seen to have made a serious attempt to aid the Argentine aviation and ground forces.

The Argentine submarine squadron did not perform much better; the use of submarines as transports to support isolated garrisons is a well-established procedure but the decision by the Captain of the Santa Fe to enter Grytviken in daylight displayed poor tactical judgement: he should have waited for the cover of night. Only one other Argentine submarine was apparently operational during the war, and it at least tried to attack the British ships, but found itself effectively neutralised by the constant British ASW operations.

The CANA, by contrast, and thanks to the Super Etendard/Exocet combination, was the most effective element of the Argentine armed forces with regard to damage inflicted on the British; at least one other ship was sunk by CANA Skyhawks; CANA pilots also tended to be better trained than FAA ones. Finally, though not directly related to this account, the Marine Infantry on the Falklands (the 5th Marine Infantry Battalion) fought well. However, taking all factors into consideration it cannot be doubted that the strategic and operative performance of the

ARA was very poor.

At the strategic level the FAA performed more effectively than the ARA. Its decision not to respond in any significant way to the provocations of the Carrier Battle Group, but rather to wait for the appearance of the crucial Amphibious Group, was inarguably wise, and demonstrated a refusal to play into the hands of the British. However, it was all set to naught by poor operative art and tactics (as already indicated) and by poor and turgid staff work, which prevented effective de-briefing of returning pilots, and the dissemination of information on any tactical lessons learnt by the survivors - hence the almost total adherence to incorrect tactics until the end of the war. Nevertheless, to its credit, the FAA was prepared to exert itself, and take risks, in the defence of the islands, and suffered heavily as a result, losses including 27 Mirages, 39 Skyhawks (plus another 6 from CANA) and 3 Canberras (total combined FAA/CANA/PNA aircraft losses in the air and on the ground, numbered some 117, of which 32 fell to Sea Harriers, no Sea Harrier was lost in air-to-air combat) totalling some 55% of Argentina's high-performance combat jet fleet. No Air Force could absorb such losses and continue any effective level of operations; by the end of the war the FAA was a

severely battered and clearly defeated force (62).

In general terms, the South Atlantic War re-affirmed the continued validity of the lessons of the Pacific War; illustrated the importance of a clearly defined Object to be achieved, and of leaving the handling of the actual fighting to the professionals whose task it is; and clearly revealed that many of Mahan's and Corbett's ideas and concepts are still applicable today.

NOTES

1. Dobson, C., Muller, J. and Payne, R., The Falklands Conflict, Coronet Books, London, 1982, pp. 13-14; The Heineman World Atlas, Heineman, London, 1979; Sunday Express Magazine Team War In The Falklands (hereafter War In The Falklands), Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1982, p. 7.

2. Hastings, M., and Jenkins, S., The Battle For The Falklands, Michael Joseph London, 1983, pp. 1-7.

3. Ibid., pp. 7-9.

4. Ibid., p.15: Falklands Islands Review ... Chairman The Rt Hon the Lord Franks (hereafter, The Franks Report), Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1983, pp. 4-5.

5. The Franks Report, ibid., pp. 5-19; Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 28-29, 32.

6. The Franks Report, ibid., pp. 20-24, 34-35; Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 44-45; Speed, Sea Change, Ashgrove Press Bath, 1982, pp. 110.

7. The Franks Report, ibid., pp. 36-39; quote on p. 41.

8. Ibid., pp. 48-67; Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 54-55, 64-65; Scheina, R.L., "Argentina's Navy in the Falklands War", in Moore, J (ed) Jane's Naval Review 1983-84, Jane's Publishing, London, 1983, pp. 22-23; Till, G., et.al., Maritime Strategy in the Nuclear Age, Macmillan, London, 1984, pp. 239-240; to prevent confusion, the British Marines (official title : Royal Marines) will be referred to as Marines or RMs, while the Argentine Marines (official title: Cuerpo de Infanteria de Marina) will be referred to as Marine Infantry.

9. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 72-74; Till, ibid., p. 243; Eddy, P., Linklater, M. with Gillman, P., The Falklands War, Sphere, London, 1982, pp. 7-22, 81-94; War In The Falklands, pp. 11-25; quotation in Till, p. 243.

10. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 61-66; English, M., "Ascension - Stepping Stone to the Falklands", Air Pictorial, Vol.44, No.II, November 1982, p. 434 and "Operation 'Black Buck'", in Air Pictorial, Vol.44, No.6, June 1982, pp. 211-

213; Huertas, S.M., "South Atlantic Air War", Air International, Vol.24, No.5, May, 1983, p. 223; Jane's Fighting Ships 1981-82, Jane's publishing London, 1981, pp. 25-33; Perrett, B., Weapons Of The Falklands Conflict, Blandford Press, Poole, 1982, pp. 35-39; Richardson, D., Naval Armament, pp. 88-96; Campbell, R.K., Sea Power and South Africa, Institute for Stratigic Studies University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 1984, p. 18.

11. de Chair, D., The Sea is Strong, George G. Harrap, London, 1961, pp. 158-160.

12. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 66-71, orders quoted p. 71.

13. Ibid., pp. 74-80; Thatcher quoted p.80.

14. Ibid., pp. 99-103.

15. "The Falklands Crisis", in Armed Forces, July, 1982, pp. 297-211. The correct abbreviation for Fleet Air Arm is FAA; however, to prevent confusion with the *Fuerza Aerea Argentina*, it will be referred to, in this account, as FAA [RN].

16. Refer to Part 1, Ch. III., pp. 67-69, above.

17. Ibid., p. 209; Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 124-125.

18. "The Falklands Crisis"., ibid; "The Quality of our People", in Armed Forces, March 1983, p. 83; *Jane's Fighting Ships*, op.cit., pp. 552, 561-562, 571-572; Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 114-134, 348-349, 351-353; Critchley, M. (ed.), Falklands: Task Force Portfolio, Vol. 2, Maritime Books, Liskeard, n.d., pp. 92-94; Ladd, J.D., SBS: Invisible Raiders, Arms and Armour Press, London, 1983, pp. 219-222; March, P.R., "Team Lynx", in Airextra, no. 45, Sept.-Nov. 1984, pp. 31-32.

19. Till, et.al., op.cit., p. 253; Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 126-131.

20. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 146-147, 177-178; Scheina, op.cit., pp. 23-24; "Carrier Operations in the Falklands", in War Machine, Vol. 2, No. 24, p. 477; Till, et.al., ibid., pp. 248-249; *Campbell, op.cit., p. 15; Ethell, J.*, "Flying the Pucara", in Air Progress, Vol. 45, No. 5, May 1983, p. 41; Ethell, J. and O'Leary, M., "The Other Side - Argentine Air War", in Air

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31. Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 151-155.

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34. Ibid., pp. 157-158, 169.

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36. Ibid., pp. 158-159; Underwood, op.cit., pp. 128-130; "The Falklands Conflict", in Armed Forces, August 1982, p. 250.

37. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 186-187; "The Falklands Conflict", ibid., Ladd, op.cit., pp. 230-231.

38. "The Falklands Conflict", ibid., Jackson, P., "Task Force Air Force", in Air International, Vol. 24, No. 5, May 1983, p. 227.

39. Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 189-190; Jackson, P., "Strike Force South", in Air International, Vol. 24, No. 4, April 1983, p. 169-170; and see Part I, Ch. III, pp. 75-78 above.

40. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 195-196; Ladd, op.cit., pp. 232, 236; Underwood, op.cit., p. 24.

41. Underwood, ibid., pp. 7-15.

42. Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 196-197, 206; Ladd, op.cit., p. 233.

43. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 200-213; "The Falklands Conflict", op.cit., pp. 251-252.

44. See, for examples, Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 206-207 and Eddy, Linklater and Gillman, op.cit., pp. 202-203.

45. Personal communication, Captain Worth, op.cit.

46. Worth, ibid., Perrett, op.cit., pp. 92-94; Underwood, op.cit., pp. 89-92. Ardent may have been hit by the better trained CANA pilots.

47. Hastings and jenkins, op.cit., pp. 213-214; "The Falklands Conflict", op.cit., p. 252; Ward, N.D., "Reflections on the Falklands War - II", in Air Pictorial, Vol. 46, No. 6, June 1984, p. 223.

48. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 214-216; Fricker, J., "The Falklands Air Claims and Losses Analysed", in Air International, Vol. 24, No. 5, May 1983, p. 249.

49. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 216-219; War in the Falklands, op.cit., p. 71; Fricker, ibid.

50. Critchley, op.cit., p. 73; Underwood, op.cit., pp. 71-74; Worth, op.cit.

51. Critchley, ibid., p. 91; Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 227-228.

52. Fricker, op.cit. p. 249; Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 221-222; Parrett, op.cit., pp. 94-95.

53. Critchley, op.cit., pp. 85-86; Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 269-271.

54. Frost, J., 2 Para Falklands, Sphere, London, 1984, pp. 59-95; Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 233-253.

55. Ethell and O'Leary, op.cit., pp. 296-297; Jackson, "Strike Force South", op.cit., p. 171.

57. Underwood, op.cit., pp. 100-107.

58. Frost, op.cit., pp. 111-119.

59. Critchley, op.cit., p. 50; Hastings and Jenkins, op.cit., pp. 262-284.

60. Hastings and Jenkins, ibid., pp. 235-298.

61. Guilmartin Jr, J.F., "The South Atlantic War: Lessons and Analytical Guideposts" in Brown J. and Snyder, W.P. (eds.), The Regionalization of Warfare, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1985, p. 60.

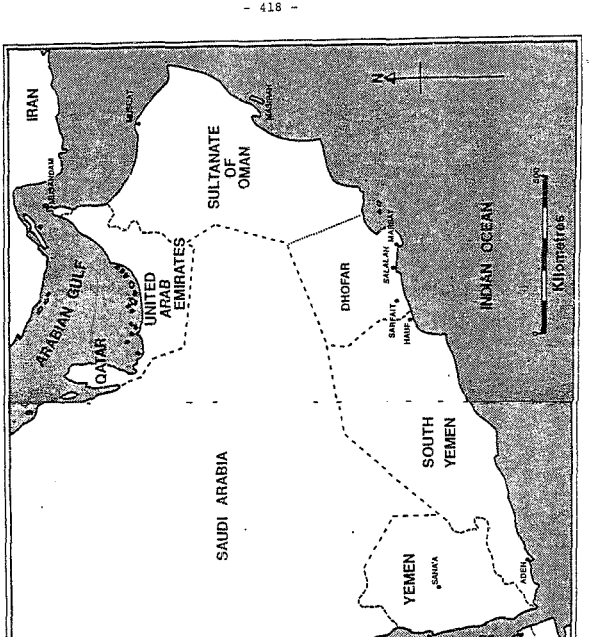
62. Campbell, op.cit., pp. 14-16; Parrett, op.cit., pp. 92-94.

CHAPTER 10: CASE STUDY III

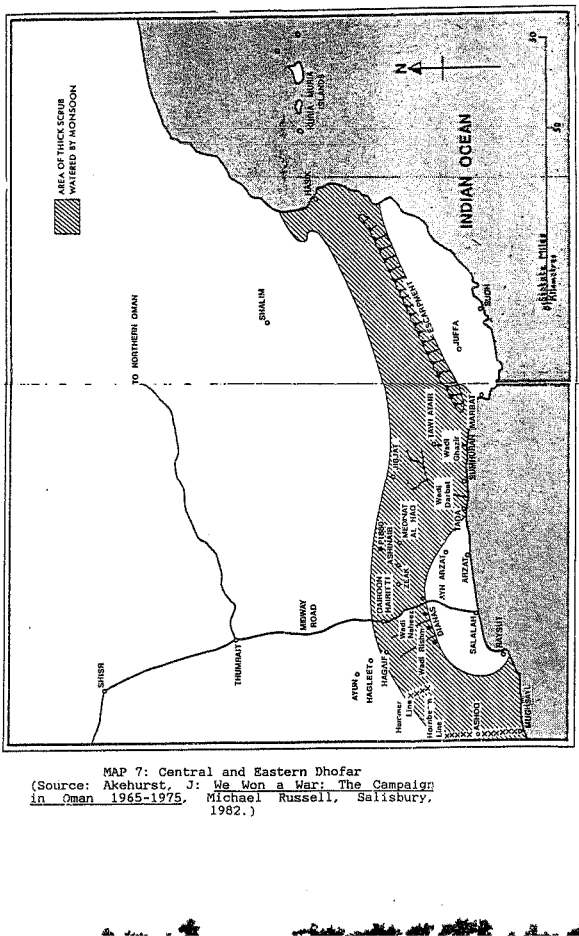
INSURGENCY AND COUNTER INSURGENCY IN DHOFAR

The Sultanate of Oman occupies the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula, and is bordered by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman. Though separated from the rest of the country by intervening territory belonging to the UAE, the critically important Musandam Peninsula, which forms the southern shore of the extremely strategic Straits of Hormuz, is also part of Oman (See Ma)

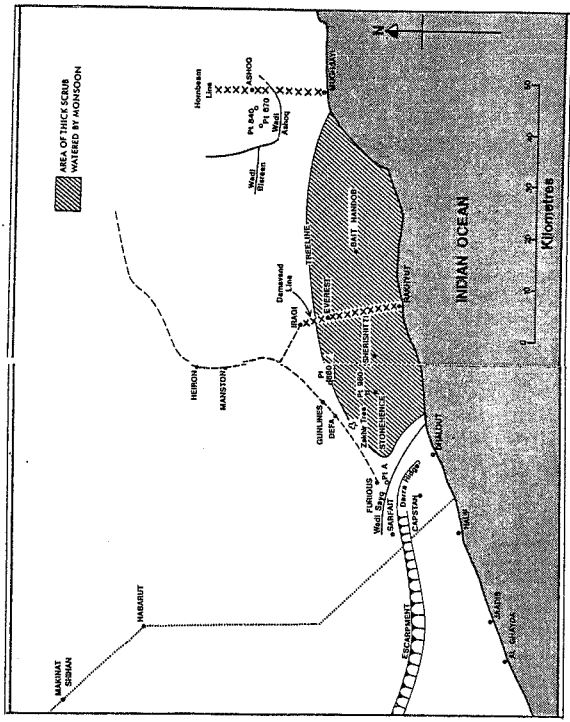
The province of Oman with which this study is primarily concerned is Dhofar, located in the extreme south-west of the Sultanate, bordering the PDRY and separated from Oman proper by some four to five hundred miles of virtually trackless desert. Roughly the size of Wales, Dhofar, at the time of the war, contained about 50,000 people of many and varied origins, most of whom lived on the coastal plain. These included the dominant Kathiri tribesmen, a few Asians (mostly businessmen), descendants of Zanzibaris (Oman and Zanzibar once possessed very close political links) and the survivors of African slaves (slavery having been abolished in the Sultanate in 1920). The interior highlands, or



MAP 6: Oman and the Arabian Peninsula
(Source: Akehurst, J: We Won a War: The Campaign in Oman 1965-1975, Michael Russell, Salisbury, 1982.)


AREA OF THICK SCRUB WATERED BY MONSOON
INDIAN OCEAN
TO NORTHERN OMAN
SHALIM
SHISR
TRIMPHAIT
MERKAT
MIDWAY ROAD
HASIK
RAS SARBAT
RAS DARBAT
RAS SHERBITHAT
JUFFA
SADH
AYIN o HAGLEET o
HAGAR
DARBOON
AYINO
AYIN ARZAL
ARZAT
SALALAH
RAYSUT
MUGHSAIL
Hamer Line
Hamer Line
Wadi Hamer
Wadi Hamer
Wadi Darbat
Wadi Darbat
Wadi Darbat

MAP 8: Western Dhofar
(Source: Akehurst, J: We won a War: The Campaign in Oman 1965-1975. Michael Russell, Salisbury, 1982.)



Jebel, were occupied by tribesmen, known as Qara or Jebelis, of obscure but possibly Ethiopian and/or Somali ancestry; they are most definitely not Arabs, and speak their own, non-literary language, known simply as Jebeli, and unrelated to Arabic. The Jebelis are divided into many tribes, each with clearly defined territories, and each tribe is nomadic (not from choice but from the need to search for water) within these boundaries, but not beyond them. All the Highland tribes are cattle and camel breeders. In total, they number about 10,000. Finally, beyond the Jebel, the interior desert is occupied by a truly nomadic grouping of camel and goat breeders known as the Mahra. Despite their polyglot origins, all the inhabitants of Dhofar were distinct from the people of northern Oman, who are regarded as foreigners. This attitude was reciprocated by the Northerners (1).

Geographically, Dhofar is most diverse. On the coast lies the plain of Salalah, named after the provincial capital situated in it. It is some twenty-five miles long by, at its broadest, seven miles wide. Basically fertile, it had once been the granary of Arabia, but, by the nineteen sixties, had fallen into deep decay. Elsewhere the coast was composed of sheer cliffs or, as in the case at Rakhyut, a narrow gravel plain. Inland the ground

rises steeply to form the Jebel massif, which runs parallel to the sea some 150 miles down to the border with the PDRY. Averaging approximately 3,000 feet in height - being some 2,000 feet high behind Salalah, rising to some 4,000 feet around Sarfait near the PDRY border - the massif or plateau is quite broad (approximately nine miles wide) in the centre, but narrow in both east and west. Indeed, in the far west near the PDRY border the plateau proper fades away, being replaced by a series of escarpments that fall down to the sea. The nature of the plateau varies widely: in the east, the soil is scanty and there is little water or vegetation; the western escarpments are covered with grass and camel bush; in contrast the central region is lush, with excellent, rich, deep grass cover creating the impression of a series of rolling downs. This is because of the south-west monsoon, known as the Khareef, which lasts from June to September every year, bringing cloud, fog, and an average of thirty inches of drizzling rain to the coastal region. In some places the effects of the monsoon penetrate as much as 30 kilometres inland, in others only a few hundred metres. This weather has formed the basic geomorphology of the region, being responsible for the carving of the great wadis that gash the massif and run down to the sea or coastal plain. Beginning imperceptibly in the north, they rapidly become deep

and steep-sided, and widen until, at their end, they may be several hundred yards in width. Retaining much of the moisture of the Khareef, these wadis are very densely covered in bush - so dense as to closely resemble a jungle. After the monsoon, the Jebelis graze their herds on the rich grasses of the plateau; as the water-holes dry up and the grass is consumed they move down into the wadis for water and grazing, spending the Khareef in them, living in caves in the limestone walls. Movement in the monsoon is difficult and dangerous due to the fact that the soil turns to mud. For the Jebelis it is a time of misery, food shortages, illness, and hope - for the rains refill the waterholes and restore the grazing. The wadis also act as channels of communication, primarily on the north-south axis, though tributary finger wadis provide access to the plateau on the east-west axis. Movement is, however, very difficult off the established paths.

Lying on the fringe of the monsoon is the watershed or Gatn, the highest point on the plateau. Deriving some moisture from the Khareef, the Gatn is covered by small bushes and rocks, but is basically flat. On the other side of the Gatn is the gentle, northern slope of the massif, composed of the Negd. This is totally unaffected by the monsoon and is thus both dry and pastureless, and has been

described as "moon country"; it, too, is riven by wadis, but these are dry, sand-filled, boulder-strewn and on nothing like the scale of their southern counterparts. The northern slopes, and the Negd, finally fade into a considerable gravel plain which in turn disappears into the sand sea of the infamous Empty Quarter (2).

Thus, from the military point of view, Dhofar was a very difficult environment; one could swiftly find oneself moving from an arid zone, with its requirement for long-range open desert style warfare, to bush country with its more restricted horizons and shorter range combats, to the very dense vegetation of a wadi, with its very close range jungle style of warfare. Furthermore, the presence of the wadis made east-west movement difficult. And lack of water was a problem on much of the Jebel, especially towards the end of the dry season. However, due to the limestone geology of the region, large underground lakes existed under the plateau, fed by the monsoon and accessible to modern drilling methods.

Politically, Dhofar only came under the rule of the Sultans of Oman in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, though their authority was purely nominal until the last quarter of the century. Thereafter the province was perfunctorily

administered by means of a series of Walis (governors) who employed the old and virtually standard method of divide et impera. In 1932 the then Sultan, Taimur ibn Faisal, abdicated in favour of his son, Said, who then ruled until 1970. Sultan Said ibn Taimur was very much a traditionalist, and looked upon concepts of 'development' with great suspicion. In the early 1950s he took up a more or less permanent residence in his palace at Salalah (he had a Dhofari wife). He virtually banned the development of education and medical services, regarding them as subversive (an opinion that did have more than a grain of truth with regard to education in much of the Arab world), and refused to permit the introduction of modern agricultural methods - especially damaging to Dhofar, with its fertile plain around Salalah. Dhofar he treated as a private fief, imposing extra restrictions upon it; heavy taxes were levied on the province's imports and exports, while trade in any items of significance became Sultanic monopolies. Trivially, Said banned trousers, smoking, sunglasses, transistor radios, bicycles, football, dancing, music, cameras, gas cookers and dolls. To maintain control, he continued the time-honoured policy of encouraging tribal factionalism and, in addition, gravely undermined the authority of the tribal Sheikhs. The result was the almost total stagnation

of the local economy (3).

Thus it was little wonder that ambitious young Dhofaris left their homes and migrated to the upper, oil rich, Persian Gulf seeking work (often as soldiers or policemen). There, in a time of increasing turmoil in the Arab world, they were exposed to ideologies unknown at home - Nasserism, Baathism, Arab nationalism, and ultimately, Marxism-Leninism.

In short, the situation in Dhofar, by the early nineteen sixties, offered nothing less than a classical situation for the establishment of an insurgency. It was remote from the centres of power (though the Sultan resided in Salalah, the central government still operated from Muscat, a thousand kilometres to the north), subject to very scanty supervision (prior to 1964 the Sultan even excluded his own regular Armed Forces from the province, relying on armed tribal irregulars or askars, by no means all Dhofaris (4)), occupied by peoples distinct from those of the north, and with whom relations had never been good (there is a northern Omani saying: "If your path is blocked by a snake and a Dhofari, kill the Dhofari first" (5)), who had major and genuine grievances against the government that could not be accomodated within the existing

political structures as they functioned at that time, and all in an area which would provide excellent geographical cover for any bands of insurgents that might take the field against the government. All that was lacking was a secure rear base area in a friendly neighbouring state. And, as will be seen, that too came into being in the course of time. Rarely has an insurgent movement had a more promising political, economic, cultural and geographical environment to operate in.

So it came to be, by 1960-61, that there existed within Dhofar no less than three clandestine organisations (albeit loosely organised): the then largely apolitical League of Dhofari Soldiers, which grouped former or serving Dhofari members of Gulf (including Oman) armed and police forces; a Dhofar branch of the Arab Nationalist Movement (which had been founded at the American University in Beirut in 1950 by George Habash and Wadi Haddad, and sought the unification of the Arab world, the destruction of Israel, and the eradication of 'Western Imperialism' from the Middle East); and a so-called Dhofar Benevolent Society, which had split from the Arab Nationalist Movement in 1961 in order to prepare the ground for insurrection in the province, operating under the guise of helping the poor and raising funds for mosques (6).

Kuwait, despite the existence of these organisations, the initial outbreak came in the form of a tribal revolt: disaffected members of the Bait Kathir tribe, under the leadership of their Sheikh, Musallim ibn Nufl, demonstrated their displeasure at Sultan Said's rule by blowing up an oil exploration vehicle in 1962 and subsequent, intermittent, sniping at the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) patrols. SAF reaction forced Musallim ibn Nufl to flee to Iraq, where he and several dozen Dhofaris received military training before returning to Dhofar via Saudi Arabia, which provided him with arms, money and transport. In 1964, under pressure from the Kuwait branch of the Arab Nationalist Movement, and with encouragement from Cairo, the three organisations and the Bait Kathir rebels merged to form the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) (7).

The new DLF held its first Congress from 1-9 June 1965 in the Wadi al Kabir in Central Dhofar, an event which saw the election of an eighteen-man executive and the formal proclamatiopn of the revolt. Despite these impressive sounding proceedings, the DLF was, at this time, extremely weak, seeming to pose little threat to the government and receiving only a trickle of aid from abroad (from Egypt, Kuwait and Iraq in the main). Even though

the SAF garrison for the whole of Dhofar comprised only a single infantry battalion, the Sultan's troops retained total freedom of movement on the Jebel, whereas the rebels were forced to spend most of their time on the run. Nevertheless, the DLF did divide Dhofar, on a geographical basis, into three operational zones, areas or Fronts - West, Centre and East. At this stage the rebellion was still primarily a 'national' one, that is, a Dhofari revolt against what was seen as an Omani domination, with little ideological content (8).

Despite this initial weakness, the DLF managed to infiltrate the Dhofar Force, one of the Sultan's units of askars, that existed separatedly from, and independent of, the SAF. And on 26 April 1966 the DLF members within the Force attempted to assassinate Sultan Said during a parade. The attempt failed, but Said's reaction directly aided the DLF: he forbade Dhofaris to go abroad to work. This, of course, created a major economic grievance which directly touched many Dhofaris, especially those of military age. Unable to support their families, and with nothing else to do many joined the rebels. DLF recruitment was further stimulated by Said's policy of indiscriminate reprisals. For example, in the early days the DLF often blew up the wells at Ayn Arzat, disrupting the water supply

to the Sultan's gardens at Mamurah; Said would respond by sending punitive raids up along the Midway Road (the only road linking Dhofar to northern Oman, and which traverses the Jebel in the process) into a tribal area totally different from that encompassing Ayn Arzat, and so against tribes that could not possibly have been involved in the attacks. They were presumably punished because they were within easiest reach. Though this gratuitous assistance from the Sultan greatly benefitted the DLF, the nature of the conflict was actually transformed dramatically by a series of events in the outside world (9).

Firstly, the Israelis' overwhelming triumph against the armed forces of the major Arab states, and especially Egypt, in June 1967, convulsed the Arab world. Nasserism suffered an irreparable blow. In the aftermath of the war, the Arab Nationalist Movement radicalised very swiftly. In November of the same year, Britain abandoned Aden, leaving it in the hands of the Marxist 'National Liberation Front', which promptly established the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen (PRSY - subsequently re-named, on 30 November 1970, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, PDRY). This had three direct consequences for the Dhofar rebels. Firstly it boosted morale and damaged the standing

and credibility of the Sultan - if the British lacked the will to hold on to their own colony of Aden, how much less likely were they to continue to support their ally, Sultan Said. Secondly, it aided and promoted the radicalisation of the DLF. Thirdly, once the PRSY had established and consolidated its rule in the Hadramaut (the Yemeni territory bordering Dhofar), it provided the insurgents with a secure rear base area (10).

That all these events had had a profound impact on the *struggle in Dhofar was confirmed by* the September 1968 Second Congress of the DLF. Held in the Wadi Hamrin in central Dhofar, it was attended by approximately sixty-five delegates. Of the eighteen DLF leaders elected in 1965, only three were re-elected. A new, twenty-five strong, 'General Command' was established, composed overwhelmingly of hard-core Marxist-Leninists from several different tribal backgrounds. With the backing and support of the National Front (the 'Liberation' had been discarded after independence) in the PRSY, the 'General Command' adopted a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the situation and a programme for action. 'Scientific Socialism' became *the official ideology of the movement.* This was made clear by the official communique issued at the end of the Congress, which condemned "the

ideological confusion which has characterised the Arab revolution in its struggle for liberation" and "the presence of bourgeois forces in the leadership of the Arab national democratic liberation movement", and announced the Front's intention "to adopt a comprehensive revolutionary strategy for the whole of the occupied Arab Gulf by linking the struggle in Dhofar with the mass struggle in the Gulf - this being the fine destiny of the revolution in Dhofar" and "to work towards the unification of the revolutionary weapon of the popular masses in the occupied Arab Gulf as the sound and revolutionary prelude to the unity of the area itself", this all requiring "constant struggle, multiplying its revolutionary efforts against colonialism and the bourgeoisie, overturning the old Social order, and creating a state of poor workers in place of the bourgeois reactionary state". The communique also expressed support for the "struggles" against Israel and Rhodesia, and proclaimed opposition to "racial oppression" in the United States of America. To symbolise the transformation, the title DLF was discarded in favour of a new one: the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG). Those of the old members of the DLF who could not and would not adopt the new line were forced out of the Front, being labelled "bourgeois deviationists". Amongst them was Musallim ibn Nufl.

They continued to exist on the Jebel, separate from the PFLOAG, for another couple of years; they retained for themselves the old title: DFL (11).

The practical consequences of these developments was the initiation of a standard Marxist-Leninist 'War of National Liberation'. Underground cells were established throughout the Jebel, as were 'discussion groups', by means of which communist propaganda was disseminated amongst the Jebeli people. Valuable assistance became available, initially from the People's Republic of China, in the form of medical aid, training, advice and weapons. The arms PFLOAG received from China were both modern and ideally suited to the form of war the Front sought to wage. The basic types supplied were the AK-47 assault rifle (capable of, and usually employed with, fully automatic fire) with an effective range of 200 metres; the RPG-7 bazooka, effective out to 300 metres against vehicles but possessing a maximum range of 900 metres, the 75 mm and 82 mm Recoilless Rifles (RCLs), surprisingly accurate at 6,000 to 7,000 metres; and the man-portable version of the 122 mm Katyusha rocket, with a range of 11,000 metres (but inaccurate at that distance). Then there were the mortars: usually the Chinese 60 mm, the Russian 81 mm and the Chinese 82 mm (which could also fire 81 mm bombs). All these

weapons were rugged, reliable, cheap, man-transportable, yet effective (12). They also gave the PFLOAG a considerable advantage over the SAF, which was still largely armed with bolt action rifles and other Second World War surplus arms and equipment (13).

With the new doctrine, leadership, arms and training, the PFLOAG, whose fighting forces had shown increasing aggression and ability all through 1968, launched a major offensive in early 1969. Outgunned with regard to infantry weapons, lacking the familiarity with the terrain that PFLOAG possessed, and short of men (there was still only one Battalion for the whole of Dhofar), the SAF found itself very effectively hustled off the Jebel. In the first half of the year, the towns of Dhalqut and Madhub fell to PFLOAG; in August, the administrative centre of western Dhofar, Rakhyut, fell. The Sultan's Wali, Hamid ibn Said, was captured and shot "for being a British agent". The Dhofar capital, Salalah, itself came under increasing attack, until by November it was effectively under siege. Moreover, from September 1969 onwards, the PFLOAG made major attempts to cut Dhofar's only road link to the north, the 'Midway Road' from Salalah to Thumrait. In addition to extensive mine-laying and frequent ambushes, heavy attacks were made on SAF

positions covering the Jebel section of the road. Another key target for the PFLOAG was the Royal Air Force (RAF) manned and protected airbase at Salalah, the air being the only secure way into the town by the end of the year, and air superiority one of the SAF's few advantages over PFLOAG. This threat led to an increase in the number of RAF troops guarding the base.

By 1970, despite not having been able to permanently cut the Midway Road, the PFLOAG completely controlled the Jebel, the SAF not daring to spend more than 24 hours on it at a time. Morale in the SAF, defeated on the Jebel, surrounded by invisible and intangible enemies, hemmed in by mines, and taking constant casualties, was low, and defeatism was rife, even amongst many of the junior officers. The Sultan's writ ran only in Salalah and (theoretically) the coastal towns of Taqa and Mirbat - but these latter were both infiltrated by the PFLOAG underground and remained officialy under the Sultan's flag largely because this suited PFLOAG. They served the rebels as sources of food, equipment and even rest for their combatants! Not that the PFLOAG had any difficulty moving weapons and supply caravans into Dhofar from the PRSY - in fact, they were able to ship suppplies into Rakhyut by sea, using the supply vessel Saut ash-Shaab ('Voice of

the People'). It was clear to everyone that the PFLOAG was well on the way to victory (14).

Secure, by and large, in their 'liberated area', the PFLOAG proceeded to revolutionise Dhofari society. Militarily, the PFLOAG structure followed closely, but not slavishly, the classical model created by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh, and also employed by Ho Chi Minh and Vo-Nguyen Giap. The underground organisation provided food, shelter and intelligence for the fighting elements, and exercised control over the people. The fighting elements comprised two types. Firstly there was the militia (known as the 'Popular Guard') composed of part-time fighters, local tribesmen in fact, and directly equivalent to the 'second level' (the village squads) in the classical model. Then there was the 'People's Liberation Army' of full-time, regular, insurgents, who combined the functions of the regional and main forces ('third' and 'fourth' levels) in the classical structure. Overall Headquarters was located in Hauf, just inside the PRSY. These were linked by radio to the subordinate operational Headquarters within Dhofar, known as 'Regiments', of which there were three, one for each of the three sections of Dhofar. These Regiments in turn controlled smaller groups, detachments and cells, which acted as the truly operational elements.

However, communications from Regimental level down were almost totally dependent on runners (there were a few captured walkie-talkies), this necessitating a firm territorialisation of the PLA as well as militia units. Communications thus formed one of the few significant military weaknesses of the PFLOAG (15).

The quality of the PFLOAG's fighting men, invariably known to the SAF as the adoo (Arabic for enemy) was extremely high. Brave, eager for battle, possessing a superb eye for terrain, well camouflaged by their dull clothing and brown skins, and (tactically) highly mobile, they were formidable foes. This can clearly be seen from the following description by a British officer who fought against them:

> "As for my own feelings for the adoo, I was always most impressed by them. I only really came to grips with them once in a major engagement ... but was of course involved incidently in several other contacts. Their personal mobility was superb and their eye for ground was faultless. Whenever we moved they seemed to be watching us and waiting for a tactical mistake to exploit. If the opportunity came they pounced. Often it was only our superior firepower from guns or aircraft that enabled us to extract ourselves and they were continually moving round to try to outflank us. They fought until they won, or could escape, or fought to the death. The occasions when adoo surrendered when once engaged were rare indeed, even when seriously wounded. Their only weakness was one of organisation and control. Their communications were poor and this made them unable to react effectively as a fighting formation to any initiative by

> the SAF commander on the ground. Although flexible as individuals and in small groups they seemed unable to change their approach once they were committed.
>
> "They lived on what they could carry and ammunition, or rather the lack of it, was the only reason for breaking off many a fight. Having seen some of the waterholes they depended upon I know how little water they needed to survive.
>
> "As men the adoo were truly remarkable. It would be an honour to command such a group" (16).

They were thoroughly skilled in all the tricks of insurgency warfare, as an extract from an SAS briefing, (describing how the PFLOAG launched mortar attacks on Salalah, which was out of range of the Jebel) makes clear:

> "The adoo move out from the cover of their hills by night on to the plain until they are within range, fire off some shells or bombs and then scurry back into the shelter of the Jebel before the SAF artillery can range in on them. The adoo patrol will come out one night and set up the heavy base plate position, covering the plate itself with sand. The next night they return with the barrel and bipod and the exact amount of bombs to be fired. They fire them off, dismantle the mortar, kick sand over the baseplate, which can be used another night, and flee. By the time the SAF shells are bursting around the firing position the crew are well into the shelter of the Jebel" (17).

Clearly highly capable, "... with anything like fair odds [they] would usually come off best in combat with SAF. Only air support and SAF's superior artillery and mortar firepower swung the balance" (18). The adoo did not fear the SAF soldiers; it

was the artillery and, above all, the aircraft that they feared (19). By the period 1970/71 the PFLOAG was able to deploy some 2,000 PLA (regular) insurgents and as many as 4,000 militia. By contrast, the total strength of the SAF (in the whole of the county, not just Dhofar) in early 1970 was 2,500 men (21). So, on top of everything else (and unusually for a counter-insurgency campaign) the SAF were outnumbered.

Politically, PFLOAG sought to achieve a revolutionary transformation of Dhofari society. This was the direct responsibility of the Party.

Firstly, the traditional authorities on the Jebel - the Sheikhs, the religious judges (Qadis), and other notables - were deposed, being replaced by 'popular councils' which were (of course) dominated by PFLOAG cadres. Having achieved this, the revolutionary programme was implemented, operating simultaneously on several fronts - 'mass education', 'emancipation of women', collectivisation, anti-tribalism and the attack on religious belief. All these were closely interlinked with each other.

'Mass education' involved several elements. There was the programme for the dissemination of Arabic translations of the "revolutionary classics" -

Lenin's State and Revolution and Imperialism; The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels; writings of Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara - as well as texts from the Marxist-Leninist Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). These works, along with the PFLOAG's own, formed the basis for the political education of Party cadres and for discussions and lectures. However, all this required a level of literacy that only a few Dhofaris possessed. Thus a literacy programme was launched, which simultaneously served as a means of political indoctrination, this being achieved by means of the 'alphabet of the revolution', in which every letter was associated with a word possessing revolutionary connotations - for examples, F for *fellah* (peasant), M for *mujatma* (society) and T for tabaqa (class). Finally, and essential for the long-term success of the revolution, the Front targeted the children. In 1970 it set up a 'Lenin School' in Hauf. At first, parental permission was sought before children were sent to Hauf, but this was rarely forthcoming. So compulsion was adopted, and children were forcibly taken across the border. There, in addition to subjects such as mathematics and languages, they were taught history (Marxist-Leninist, naturally) and politics. Military training was part of the curriculum. Later, in April 1972, the PFLOAG set up a second school, the

'9 June School', for the older children, with a similar curriculum to the first. By early 1973 they contained altogether some 850 children, a quarter of them girls. According to Halliday (a supporter of PFLOAG) the main purpose of these schools were "to educate the children to understand the revolution, and to teach them basic technical skills" (22). Thoroughly indoctrinated by this process, the children (usually teenagers) returned to Dhofar aflame with Marxist-Leninist zeal and determined to further the revolutionisation of their society. The most important, however, of the PFLOAG's 'educational institutions' was the 'Revolutionary Camp', for the basic training of new cadres. Founded in 1970 it contained 52 young men and 18 young women, and was manned by five cadres (at least one of which, the Women's political Commissar, was not a Dhofari: she came from a well-to-do background in the Gulf and had been educated at the American University of Beirut). Halliday provides a breakdown of a typical day:

> "The day at the camp began at dawn, around 5:00 am, when members arose, assembled in the central part and saluted the PFLOAG flag. After breakfast, in cooking which the whole camp participated, there were usually four hours of military training, on the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare in the mountain areas and in towns, and the use of weapons and explosives. After lunch there was a literacy class, followed by two more hours of military training, until it was time for supper at sunset around 5:00 pm. After supper were four hours of political

> education, following the condensed twenty-five point course prepared for basic political instruction" (23).

'Education' was, as in all Marxist-Leninist Revolutions, a political tool of prime importance to the Front. One twelve year old girl, named Amina, when asked by Halliday what she had learned in the PFLOAG school, replied: "I've learnt literacy, politics and revolution", and when asked if she missed her parents, responded "I don't think about my parents, I think about the revolution ..." (24). To complement these activities, Radio Aden sent forth a constant stream of PFLOAG propaganda.

Perhaps even more significant, in terms of its immediate impact on Dhofari society, was the programme to emancipate women. This was promoted by recruiting women into the PFLOAG and organising them into cells. Again, this was an approach adopted after 1968. PFLOAG argued that women had been doubly repressed: firstly, by the social system; secondly, by the men. This argument was developed in the text, 'Women and the Revolution in the Gulf':

> "If we name a human being in whom, in all class societies, all forms of oppression and exploitation are centred, that being is woman ... We can point to other victims of suffering and exploitation by capitalism: workers suffer, and farmers do too. But a woman-worker or a woman-farmer in addition to her sufferings under the relations of feudalist or capitalist production also suffers from her position inside marriage and in the family she was

> in before that. Moreover, she suffers from the oppression of society in general, since society imposes on her traditions and old customs which paralyse her activity and deprive her of the sensation of being a human being" (25).

Thus, PFLOAG launched a programme to 'educate' women, using the women's cells as the prime instrument, in addition to sending girls to Hauf. Polygamy was banned, equal rights of divorce between men and women proclaimed, and arranged marriages attacked. A central institution of Dhofari marriage, the so-called 'bride price' (dowry) was forcibly reduced to a token level in 1970. This latter measure complemented and aided the campaign against tribalism, in that the 'bride price' prevented men from poorer tribes marrying girls from richer ones. Likewise, the use of women's cells aided the 'mass education' programme (26).

These programmes, under the guise of an apparently praiseworthy initiative, provided the Front with a means to directly assault some of the most fundamental, personal and private relationships within Dhofari (or any other) society. Indeed, at one point PFLOAG actually denounced the family as an obsolete "bourgeois manifestation" (27). It effectively meant that all aspects of private life were politicised and thereby made legitimate PFLOAG intervention and control. 'Emancipation' acted as a

cover under which freedom could be abolished. Furthermore, though not as free as Western women, Dhofari women, prior to the revolution were probably the most free in all of Arabia: as even Halliday admits, they had the right to own property (including cattle) within marriage; they could easily initiate divorce proceedings, and re-marry with no stigma attached; could work outside the family; could travel freely without their husbands; and were not socially segregated (28).

Collectivisation, which commenced in 1968 but was fully enforced by a decree of the PFLOAG Third Congress of 1971, saw the aboliton of private property, not merely in land but also in housing, livestock and wells, the villages being re-organised into agricultural communes on the lines of those in China and Viet Nam. This programme also served several purposes: it acted as an instrument of anti-tribalism, by ending inter-tribal rivalries over land and water; and it gravely eroded the autonomy of the individual and the family and so increased considerably the Front's control over the day-to-day lives of the people. Most basically of all, collectivisation was adopted because the PFLOAG ideology required it, quite irrespective of whether it fitted local conditions (29).

Anti-tribalism itself was a central policy of PFLOAG, because tribal rivalries could disrupt the war effort, and especially because tribalism was a most 'reactionary' phenomenon, and as a 'progressive' movement the Front was ideologically required to destroy it and move the people to a *'higher level' of social development. Finally, the* destruction of tribalism would eliminate alternate authority structures to those of PFLOAG and further tighten its control of the people. Thus the Front waged a constant campaign to weaken, if not destroy, tribalism and the institutions sustaining it. Hence the aforementioned policies concerning the *'bride price' and collectivisation of land and water.* Hence the policy of mixing up all the regulars of the PLA without regard to tribe - indeed, they were often posted far from their own tribal area. A special agency was constituted to spearhead the assault on tribalism - the 'Committee for the Solution of Popular Problems'. One was set up in *each of Dhofar's three sectors, and also served the* function of 'People's Courts'. The PFLOAG's own views of these developments were set out in the text 'Achievements on the Road to Revolution':

> "[Tribalism] contributed to the division of the people and was a source of real hatred and anger among the masses, leading to tribal conflicts and wars and to the prevalence of revenge as well as to other social problems such as marriage *conflicts. The revolution has laid down a* revolutionary and decisive solution to all

> such issues. It has banned revenge, and intervened to solve many tribal problems. The revolution has succeeded in turning men from blind allegiance to their tribe into a sound revolutionary allegiance to the revolution" (30).

While tribalism did, and does, have certain grave flaws, it also had certain great advantages: the old, the weak, the very young were accorded special care and attention; while leadership was by no means hereditary nor arbitrary - even the most powerful Sheikhs had to proceed by consultation and consensus, not by decree. The bitterness caused by the Sultan's arbitrary behaviour can thus be guessed. PFLOAG's anti-tribalism policy effectively threatened to destroy the indigenous system of social welfare at a time when the Front was totally unable to provide any substitute (like a welfare state) and, of course, to abolish traditional Dhofari freedoms.

Finally, there was the attack on religious belief. This was not a publicly proclaimed policy - indeed, the PFLOAG professed belief in religious toleration and claimed that there was no contradiction between Islam and socialism (31). But, in fact and in practice, the Front was militantly atheist - again, from ideological necessity. Atheism is not a fringe belief of Marxism: it is absolutely central, for it springs from the concept of historical materialism.

Reject atheism, and one rejects historical materialism, and one no longer has Marxism. So, in addition to the aforementioned deposition of the Qadis, PFLOAG banned not only prayer and the worship of God, but any mention of God - even the widely used phrase Al Hamdu l'Illah ('by the Grace of God'). Of course, in the absence of any PFLOAG cadre or PLA member, the Dhofaris, even those in the 'Popular Guard' (militia) continued their religious observances (32).

Rebellion against Sultan Said, and freedom for Dhofar, were genuinely popular causes; revolutionising Dhofari society was not. It was resisted. The Front thus created instruments to enforce its policies and tighten its grip upon the people. These were the Idaarat (literally, 'administrative group'). Though lesser sanctions were available and sometimes used - for example, seizing the tribesman's cattle until they acquiesced to the latest PFLOAG decree (33) - the Idaarat usually resorted to Terror. Thus, two elderly Sheikhs who were openly contemptuous of Marxism-Leninism had their eyes burnt out with a red hot knife by an Idaarat in front on their assembled tribesmen, who were then berated for belief in Islam (34). Other tortures commonly used by the Idaarat were the application of fire to the back or genitals; while a

not uncommon means of execution was to cast the ideological recalcitrant off the top of a cliff (35). Moreover, the 'Committees for the Solution of Popular Problems' swiftly earned themselves grim reputations for deciding judgement and sentence (invariably execution) before trial (36). Furthermore, the PFLOAG, like all 'Popular' movements, operated on the basis of institutionalised distrust not only of the people, but also of its own members - to give a minor example, PLA Observation Posts never contained fewer than three men, for fear that one might persuade the other to defect with him (37).

Dhofar thus provides a classic illustration of how a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement exploits a genuinely popular cause as a means of entrenching itself within, and gaining dominance over, its target society, in order to implement a revolutionary programme that, far from being popular, is actually detested and resented. Nevertheless, by early 1970 the position of the PFLOAG was not only unshaken, but appeared unshakeable.

Indeed, for the Government, matters seemed to be in a state of constant deterioration, for in June 1970, a new revolutionary organisation, the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the

Arabian Gulf (NDPLOAG) launched attacks on the SAF garrisons at Izki and Nizua, in north central Oman - far from Dhofar. Fortunately, intelligence gained from prisoners swiftly led to the arrest of NDPLOAG's leading cadres and the seizure of its main arms cache. NDPLOAG never recovered from these reverses. Nevertheless, the possibility of insurgency spreading to northern Oman was alarming (38).

It was at this time and against this background that two major political events occurred. Firstly, in June 1970, the Conservative Party swept to power in Britain, replacing the Labour administration that had abandoned Aden. The Conservatives were determined to prevent Communists exploiting Britain's imminent military withdrawal from the Gulf: PFLOAG had to be defeated. Just over a month later, on 23 July, Sultan Said was deposed in a coup by his son, Qaboos ibn Said. The coincidence in timing of these two events is, of course, highly suggestive. Halliday flatly states that the British were totally responsible for the coup; Jeapes implies that it was purely indigenous (40); Akehurst refers to "assistance from individuals and sources which may never be made known" (41). Kelly's account, which assigns responsibility to a combination of domestic Omani politics coupled with

British assistance, is probably the most accurate (42). Certainly, the coup could not have taken place had the British opposed it; and equally certainly there were genuine indigenous sources (not least Qaboos himself) promoting it.

Qaboos had been well educated in both the Arab and Western traditions, having been deeply grounded in the Koran, and thoroughly tutored by an old Arab Scholar (who became his adviser on moral affairs after he ascended the throne), in addition to being trained at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (and actually commissioned into a British Regiment). After a short tour of duty with his Regiment, his father despatched him on a 'grand tour' of Britain, to familiarise himself with all the workings of a modern state. Intelligent, shrewd, thoughtful, on his return home in 1964 Qaboos was virtually placed under house arrest by his father, who now feared him as a rival. Qaboos endured this for seven years before acting. Deposed, Said formalised the situation by abdicating, and retired to London, where he died in 1972 (43).

Qaboos had not wasted his inactive years; he came to power with a set of fully worked out policies, top priority going to winning the war. Since 1967 oil revenues had been flowing into the Sultan's treasury

(albeit not to anywhere near the extent found in the Gulf states). Said had hoarded them; Qaboos was determined to spend them on winning the war and developing his country. He immediately ordered the expansion and re-equipment of the SAF, especially the Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF) and Navy (SON), accepted offers of increased military assistance from Britain, and announced ambitious plans for development, especially in the fields of education and medicine. Amnesty was granted to those insurgents who wished to stop fighting, and to make it possible for them to accept this offer, a unilateral two-month ceasefire was proclaimed. Little wonder that the news of the coup and the subsequent proclamations was greeted by national rejoicing: in Salalah, bonfires were lit in the streets (44).

The PFLOAG professed to be unsurprised and undisturbed by the coup: it was a "... not unexpected ... long-term plan, drawn up by British imperialism ..." (45). In fact, Sultan Qaboos had completely transformed the political framework of the war, and, by devoting half of Oman's annual revenue (at that time) of £300 million to defence, began to transform the military framework as well. To demonstrate the importance he assigned to Dhofar, he appointed his close friend, confidant, and prime

mover in the coup, Sheikh Baraik ibn Hamood, as Wali of the province. Britain despatched the Commanding Officer (CO) and Operations Officer of the Special Air Service (SAS) to Dhofar to advise on the best strategy to win the war. Meanwhile, the PFLOAG took advantage of the cease-fire to pour arms and supplies into Dhofar.

The announcement of the reforms, amnesty and cease-fire soon began to take effect. Older members of the rump DLF still existing in the Jebel, including Musaliim ibn Nufl, surrendered voluntarily. Then, in September, alienated by the revolutionary programmes of the PFLOAG and now presented, for the first time, with a realistic alternative, the remaining DLF (in the eastern sector) turned against the Front. The PLA attempted to disarm them; a battle ensued; and 24 veteran fighters, led by the DLF's deputy Commander of the eastern area, Salim Mubarak, left the Jebel and surrendered to the Sultan. It was a turning point in the war. PFLOAG re-acted with increased repression and terror on the Jebel, as it tried to stem the increasing number of defections to the Sultan. In the months following the DLF/PFLOAG clash, over 300 Dhofaris were to be killed by the Front (47).

The CO of the SAS, Lt.Col. John Watts, was concerned

to develop a strategy that would result in victory with British assistance, while carefully avoiding 'Anglicisation' of the war. In short, the idea was to help the SAF help itself. It was clear that the SAF had to get back on to, and stay on, the Jebel. Civil development would be impossible otherwise. But this simple necessity was not easy to achieve: with the population on the Jebel totally infiltrated and dominated by PFLOAG, any SAF position there would simply be an isolated post in enemy territory. Moreover, quite apart from PFLOAG pressures, the Dhofaris saw the SAF as a foreign army of occupation, composed, as it was (and depending on the unit) of either Baluchi or northern Omani rank-and-file, and overwhelmingly of British officers (and NCOs in the more technically demanding units). The Baluchis were recruited from Baluchistan in Pakistan (Baluchistan had been part of Oman until 1958 when it was sold to Pakistan, Oman retaining the right to recruit soldiers there), and ultimately provided two of Oman's (by 1974) six Infantry Battalions. Excellent soldiers, especially in defence, and strict Moslems, they had the drawback of speaking virtually no Arabic (let alone Jebeli). The northern Omanis were usually well-disciplined, experienced and cheerful, though prone to abrupt drops in morale if matters were not progressing well; however, the mutual rivalry and distrust of

the Northerners and Dhofaris has already been mentioned. Finally, the British officers and NCOs, though highly respected by the Dhofaris, were also the most alien element of the SAF. Rarely have Security Forces faced such severe, and apparently insurmountable, problems as the SAF vis-a-vis the PFLOAG in 1970 (48).

In summary, Watts had to suggest a strategy which would:

(i) break PFLOAG's control over the people;
(ii) get the SAF permanently back onto the Jebel;
(iii) overcome the natural antipathy between the Dhofaris and the SAF; and
(iv) allow and promote Civil development.

All in such a manner that would make maximum possible use of minimum possible British involvement. A key factor in achieving these aims would be the SAS.

The 22nd Special Air Service Regiment, usually known simply as the SAS, had already established itself as a crucial element in the British approach to Counter-Insurgency during the campaigns in Malaya (1950-59), and Borneo (1963-66), and had gained much experience in co-operating with, and fighting alongside, various indigenous tribes. The Regiment's basic unit was, and is, the patrol, usually of four

men, of which one is always a highly skilled signaller, and another a very highly trained medic; one member of the patrol is a linguist in the predominant indigenous language (in the case of Dhofar, Arabic); each patrol member has at least two specialities. Four patrols form a Troop (usually 16 men, not always with an officer); four Troops plus a small Headquarters form a Squadron (6 officers and 72 men); and four Squadrons, plus support, training and other elements form the Regiment. Trained to a very high level of physical fitness, combat skills, individual initiative and independent thinking, the SAS possesses unique qualities of enormous value in any Counter-Insurgency campaign, though Counter-Insurgency is by no means its only function (49).

The strategy Watts proposed to achieve victory in Dhofar contained five elements, and so became known as the 'Five Fronts':

(i) Intelligence
(ii) Information
(iii) Medical Assistance
(iv) Veterinary Assistance
(v) Raising Dhofaris to fight for the Sultan.

The SAS would play a vital role in all five of these 'Fronts'. Rapidly accepted by both Britain and Oman, the whole package was code-named 'Operation Storm' (50). A Troop (in this case of nineteen men)

was soon despatched to Dhofar, where they established an Intelligence Cell, an Information Service, and two Civil Action Teams (CAT), one each at Taqa and Mirbat (51).

The Intelligence Cell was initially commanded by *Warrant Officer Birrell of the SAS, fluent in Arabic* and expert at extracting information from those he interviewed, and including two Intelligence Corps NCOs, whose was to collate and analyse the results of all's endeavours, and any other intelligence that came their way. The Cell's first priority was to try and build up a picture of PFLOAG organisation and activity - the SAF having virtually no idea of how the PFLOAG was structured and worked. Now, however, there were defectors from the Jebel, and with information from these and from refugees from PFLOAG domination (often men of influence, such as Sheikhs), a picture was slowly put together. Nevertheless, it still required no less than three months of very intense work before a bare outline of the Front's organisation and command structure could be assembled. Many more months were to pass before the details became known (52). Intelligence continued to operate to the same pattern throughout the war: interrogating defectors, civilians, refugees, prisoners, informers; analysing captured documents, field reports by SAF and SAS patrols, and

the results of aerial reconnaissance; and collating all the results in order to discover the PFLOAG structure, command, intentions, fears, weaknesses, strengths, supply dumps, unit locations and so on. Later in the war, the responsibility for Intelligence was transferred to the Headquarters of the SAF in Dhofar, the SAS retaining only a small cell for their own use.

Information Services were also established, and initially run by, the SAS. As with the Intelligence Cell, the activities of the Information Services underwent little change, except quantitatively, throughout the rest of the war. The Information campaign in Dhofar was based on one fundamental rule: the Government must tell the truth. Lies would inevitably be found out, and destroy the credibility of the Government's campaign. To prevent any risk of this happening, 'black' propaganda (i.e. material ostensibly originating with the enemy) was forbidden. So, too, was anything that could be construed as being 'grey'. It was recognised that this approach would inescapably be long-term in effect; but once it succeeded, it would succeed totally. And, ultimately, this is exactly what happened. For example, in the crucial 'Battle for the air waves' Radio Dhofar came to totally rout Radio Aden.

However there were, initially, two major problems with the radio branch of Information Services. Firstly, Radio Dhofar in 1970 possessed only a small transmitter that had been hastily installed in an old shack, and which lacked the range and power to cover the whole Jebel. Secondly, while radios were common on the coastal plain, they were very rare on the Jebel. The first problem was ultimately solved by the construction of a large and powerful modern radio station. The second was solved remarkably easily - at a second attempt. At first, Information Services (headed at this time by an SAS Corporal, John Lane) bought up several hundred cheap transistor radios and issued them free to those tribesmen who came down to trade on the plain. However, PLA pickets guarding the routes back up to the Jebel confiscated them with little difficulty. So the tactics were altered: instead of handing the radios out free, they were sold cheaply in the souk (market). Having paid for them with their own money, the tribesmen were determined to keep them. Attempts by PFLOAG to seize the radios were resented and increased the Front's unpopularity. Moreover, they were only partially successful, enough radios getting through to ensure that the 'Jebel Telegraph' would spread the Government's view, even though PFLOAG still controlled the Jebel. The Information war was not, however, unidimensional. A weekly

newspaper was started, and proved popular. Even more successful was a most simple innovation: notice boards. The towns still held by the Sultan were surrounded by perimeter barbed wire, which was pierced by gates. Everyone coming in was searched for weapons, everyone going out for excessive food or medical supplies. This process took time and resulted in queues. The notice boards were set up by these gates, and carried the latest news, leaflets, pictures and photographs. Naturally, those standing in the queues read and re-read all the material present to while away the time. Finally, leaflets were frequently dropped over the Jebel by the SOAF, these being used to present the Government's point of view, announce new Government policies, or provide safe conducts to any wishing to defect.

These were the means employed, but what were intentions of the campaign? These numbered, in the main, two. Firstly, to encourage the SAF and discourage the PFLOAG by emphasising SAF victories and minimising defeats (telling the truth does not preclude one from putting a favourable interpretation on events). Victories proved the inevitability of the Sultan's victory; defeats were merely temporary set-backs. The people, PFLOAG and SAF alike had to be convinced of the Government's

unshakeable determination to win. Secondly, to present the cause the SAF was fighting for. This was not merely the (very real) programme of reforms; PFLOAG's militant atheism had provided the Government with a far more profound issue on which to make a stand: the defence of Islam. The Government and SAF adopted as their slogan 'Islam is our way. Freedom is our aim' (it had been thought up by the SAS after extensive consultation with Dhofari defectors: it was so successful that some years later, a senior British officer was to be told by a Dhofari that it was an ancient Dhofari saying!). Using Islam, the SAF sought to drive a wedge not only between PFLOAG and the people, but also between the 'soft-core' non-atheist 'Popular Guard' militia and the 'hard core' PLA and PFLOAG cadres, and ultimately to divide and break up even the 'hard core': after all, they too had been raised in Islam. To promote this, the official line in the SAF and SAS, vigorously upheld, was that the enemy was not evil, merely mistaken. PFLOAG deaths were regrettable (far better that they return to the fold of true believers than they should suffer eternal damnation) and were regretted. Voluntary Surrenders were to be welcomed, and were welcomed, as long lost brothers - with joy and honour. Indeed, the word 'surrender' was not used (except as the source of the initial letter in the English acronym used by

the British to describe defectors: SEP - Surrendered Enemy Personnel). SEPs were not even interrogated in the formal sense: they were usually only asked a few questions and then allowed to join those of their fellow tribesmen already supporting the Sultan. After a couple of days they would usually, voluntarily, tell everything they knew. All this, it must be ressed, took time to come to fruition. Also, as with Intelligence, reponsibility for Information Services was ultimately transferred from the SAS to another agency, in this case a branch of the Civilian Government (53).

The Civil Action Teams at Taqa and Mirbat were simply standard SAS four-man patrols, concerned with implementing the veterinary and medical aspects of the strategy. The SAS could not, out of its own resources, provide veterinary assistance, but actively supported and encouraged those who could. A Vet was attached to the SAS Troop in Dhofar, and programmes were launched to upgrade the quality of the tribesmen's livestock. A model farm was established outside Salalah, and prize Cockerels imported to upgrade the local fowls. Unfortunately, in the course of their duties, the Cockerels contracted Fowl Pest from the local Hens, and swiftly perished! Ultimately, two prize Bulls were imported to service Dhofari cattle (there were some

initial problems because the bulls were too big and heavy for some of the local cows, with consequences that caused much hilarity on the part of the tribesmen). These activities were also, of course, stepped up dramatically during the course of the war and later handed over to the Civilian agencies (54).

Medical assistance was, however, very definitely within the purview of the SAS, with their highly trained medics backed up by a Medical Officer (MO) based in Salalah. Each CAT set up its own clinic, both being visited regularly by the MO. Communication between the towns was safest and most rapid by air: movement overland was slow (half a day to Taqa), cross-country (because the roads were so heavily mined), and required heavy escort (armoured cars, and a company of infantry) (55). The CAT medics were faced by some problems: being 'Franks' (the Arab term for Europeans since the Crusades) and, of course, Infidels, the local men were initially very reluctant to let the medics see their womenfolk. Only men and boys came to the clinic, the medics having to make house-calls to see the women, and often they were not allowed to touch their patients. Resort to medical help was also discouraged by the local belief that man's fate is predetermined: if you fell ill, it was Allah's will; if you stayed healthy, it was Allah kareem ('God is

merciful'). Additionally, there was the initial, and very natural, distrust of modern medicine. On the other hand, due to the previous absolute lack of modern medical help, even basic treatments produced dramatic results. Many Dhofaris suffered from ailments which, while minor in themselves, led, if not treated (as they had not been), to serious consequences, such as blindness and deafness. Quite literally, after the arrival of the CATs, the blind began to see and the deaf to hear. Medical assistance in disputed areas and combat zones was to remain a primary SAS responsibility to the end of the war, though once an area was secured responsibility was immediately transferred to civilian agencies (56).

Despite the increasing success of the CATs, and their increasing acceptance by the people, the SAS received little friendliness and less information. The CAT commander in Taqa summed it up:

> "Locals won't say a word to you more'n they have to. There's no wali, y'see, so they come to us for everything, but they're frightened to open up ..... [Inteligence is] Hard to come by. Locals don't like talking at all" (57).

Both Taqa and Mirbat were infiltrated by, and contained, secret PFLOAG cells. The Sultan's flag flew over these towns, but the Front controlled the people living in them.

It was essential to destroy this covert control. And that was one of the key purposes of the fifth 'Front' of Operation Storm: the raising of Dhofaris to fight for the Sultan. This was doubly essential: firstly, to create a force which bridged the gap between the local people and the 'foreign' SAF; and secondly, one which was intimately familiar with PFLOAG structures and procedures, so enabling it to uncover and destroy their Cells and bring security to the people. This, however, required extra SAS, so when the original Troop finished its tour of duty in February 1971, it was replaced by an entire Squadron. For cover purposes, this was officially referred to as the British Army Training Team (BATT): the title or initials of the SAS were almost never used in Oman or Dhofar, and the famous 'winged dagger' badge never displayed.

The men who would provide the local Dhofari units, to be known as Firqats ('company') were the defectors (SEPs) from the DLF and PFLOAG. They were ready, willing, and able; of proven toughness and ability; needing only limited re-training and thoroughly acquainted with PFLOAG's methods of subversion and control. Moreover, they often knew personally many PFLOAG and PLA cadres, greatly increasing the chances of further defections, and granting the SAF, for the first time, the ability to

out-think and out-manoeuvre the enemy.

The SAS proposals for the Firqats, that they be well armed, full-time, paid but irregular fighting formations, the SAS patrols attached to provide co-ordination with the SAF (and especially the artillery and SOAF), to arrange for the necessary logistic support, to augment Firqat firepower, and to act as CATs among the civilians in zones still disputed with, or recently liberated from, PFLOAG. all to be autonomous yet subordinate to SAF command, were submitted to both the Commander, Dhofar, and to the Commander, Sultan's Armed Forces (CSAF). The CSAF especially gave enthusiastic support.

The first Firqat to be raised, the Firqat Salahadin (named in honour of the great opponent of the Crusaders) was, in emulation of the PLA, multi-tribal; its commander was Salim Mubarak, one of the DLF SEPs. Initially, it was composed of just 32 chosen men (fortunately: the SAF, undergoing expansion, was desperately short of arms and equipment, and could spare only 110 semi-automatic FN rifles for the Firqats; heavier weapons - machine guns, rocket launchers, mortars - being provided and manned by the SAS/BATTs) and intensively trained at Mirbat by an entire SAS Troop. It must be stressed that the SAS/BATT were purely advisers and

assistants, who had to use persuasion on the Firqat leadership; giving orders was totally out of the question. It was to prove an often frustrating position.

Having been trained, the first mission of the Firqat was to destroy the covert PFLOAG Cells in Mirbat and Taqa. Salim Mubarak, using his contacts, had identified the four men who formed the Front's town directorate in Mirbat; other contacts identified the town directorate in Taqa. Mubarak struck one afternoon, arresting the Mirbat directorate; by evening they had identified another 25 PFLOAG agents in the town. Mubarak publicly announced that he knew the identities of all PFLOAG operatives in the town; if they publicly confessed and renounced the Front next morning, they would be pardoned; otherwise they would be arrested. (Flight, of course, was impossible, given the perimeter fence and patrols.) The following morning the Firqat assembled all the townsfolk in the square. There, one after another, no less than forty people came forward, confessed and denounced PFLOAG in a process that lasted over four hours. The PFLOAG orgnisation in Mirbat was totaly destroyed; they lost all control over the people, and never regained it. The surliness towards the SAS/CAT, noticeable previously, totally vanished - literally overnight. The

very next day Mubarak's deputy did the same thing, with the same results, in Taqa (58).

Almost simultaneously, the powerful Bait Kathir tribe announced their support for the Sultan and their desire to form their own, albeit initially small, tribal Firqat. The news was swiftly followed by more developments: there was an important defection from the PFLOAG's central area, one Sheikh Ali ibn Mahad, who provided a wealth of intelligence on adoo leaders, intra-party disputes, re-supply routes, storage caves and the effectiveness of the Information Services in his areas; and another defector reported that an entire 'Popular Guard' unit had deserted the Front and was en route north to the safety of the Negd to surrender to the SAF. Even more importantly, this unit was composed mainly of Eastern Mahra tribesmen, the Eastern Mahra being a small isolated but nevertheless important offshoot of the large and powerful tribe that straddled the border and controlled much of western Dhofar and the Hadramaut.

Action was swiftly taken on both these developments. Sheikh Ali proved, unlike most Dhofaris, to be able to read a map; he thus rapidly pin-pointed many PFLOAG weapons and supply storage sites. To confirm these locations, and point them out to the jet

pilots, Sheikh Ali was taken up, along with a jet pilot, in a helicopter: he pointed out the locations, the jet pilot noting them carefully. Later, the jet pilot returned in his own aircraft and destroyed the targets. This proved so successful that other SEPs were taken up in the helicopter, and, once they had orientated themselves, were also able to point out important targets. This soon became a standard operation, nicknamed 'Flying Finger' and great accuracy was achieved. The results were very damaging to PFLOAG. A variant of 'Flying Finger' that was less materially damaging to the Front but more psychologically stressful to its members, involved the delayed strafing of adoo meeting places. Due to lack of radios, all adoo units had to have a pre-arranged meeting place where they assembled for emergencies (signalled by warning shots) and congregated for meals. SEPs would point these out, and several days later (in case the insurgents had been alarmed by the helicopters) the Jets would launch a surprise dawn attack, trying to catch the PFLOAG at breakfast. Though very much a 'hit-or-miss' affair, it did put PFLOAG on edge. Soon, the 'Flying Finger' found itself the object of much fear on the part of PFLOAG. It also greatly improved the results of SOAF interdiction.

With regard to the Mahra defectors, a Mahra member

of the Firqat Salahadin was sent in to bring them over to the SAF. This he did most successfully, creating the nucleus (24 strong) of a third Firqat (60).

It was clearly time to take the offensive on the ground as well as in the air. Tony Jeapes, the SAS/BATT Commander, was concerned to choose an easy objective, so as to ensure success, as a defeat on their first operation could possibly shatter the confidence of the Firqat. To this end, he selected Sudh, a coastal town abandoned to the PFLOAG eighteen months earlier and subsequently garrisoned by a 50-man group commanded by a famous leader, known as Qartoob. It was just about the most easterly settlement under PFLOAG control. Moreover, the Front's garrison was rarely inside the town. Finally, in event of disaster the Firqat could still fight its way along the coast back to Mirqat. The attack would be from the sea, and involve two SAS Troops as well as the Salahadin - some 100 men in all. There was, naturally, a deception plan to confuse the PFLOAG as to the operation's true target. In order to achieve tactical surprise the assault force did not land directly at [illegible] but came ashore in a bay 4,000 yards to [illegible] west, and thereafter swung inland (voluntar[illegible]ed by two fishermen encountered on the beach, who proved

to be related to one of the Firqatmen) to reach their lying-up position north of the town. The final advance commenced an hour before dawn and the town was occupied, with no resistance, just after daybreak. Sudh was swiftly secured from external attack, with combined SAS and Firqat pickets seizing the surrounding high ground, and constructing interim defensive positions; patrols were sent out to prevent surprise attack.

But the town had also to be secured internally as well, and this mission was exclusively carried out by the Firqat. It began immediately, with the hoisting of the Sultan's flag over the old Fort in the town. Salim Mubarak then stood on the battlements and loudly harangued the silent and still-shuttered houses below, informing them of the promises of the new Sultan, of the evils of PFLOAG, of the Firqat Salahadin, and gave special emphasis to the fact that they were not merely visiting Sudh, but were there to stay, and that a permanent garrison would be provided. To conclude, he ordered all able-bodied townsmen to report to the (long-empty) Wali's house at 10 am. At ten, the Firqat proceeded through the town, rounding up all the men until they were assembled in the square. Salim Mubarak then proceeded to address them. The crowd responded with questions; Salim answered at length.

Initially surly and suspicious, the mood of the townsmen changed to friendliness. Simultaneously with this process, other Firqatmen assembled the local children and began to play with them, teaching them a little song. If they got it right, the Firqatmen rewarded them with sweets. One of the refrains of the song was: "What, what are the Salahadin?. They are the Army of Freedom!" At the conclusion of the public meeting, each head of a household was accompanied back home by a Firqatman, for coffee and to further explain the Sultan's war aims and promises. By nightfall the whole town had firmly decided to support the Sultan. PFLOAG had lost Sudh. Jeapes realised that what had happened in the town:

> "was a Communist take-over in reverse. Salim had used the methods he had been taught in [illegible]na. It was a perfectly executed example of indoctrination such as no SAF or British troops could possibly have achieved" (61).

Next, there was the problem of Qartoob's adoo outside the town. The Firqat has ascertained that he and some 24 of his men were concentrated not far from the town. Salim entered into negotiations with Qartoob the day after the capture of Sudh. That same day saw the arrival of a SAF company to form a temporary garrison (until Oman Gendarmes became available and askars could be trained); it immediately began to strengthen the town's defences.

Another arrival was the Wali of Mirbat, a leading member of the Bait Umr, whose tribal boundaries encompassed both Mirbat and Sudh, who addressed the people. The Commander, Dhofar, Col Mike Harvey, also arrived to see for himself the success of the operation. Hitherto, there had only been one infantry battalion in Dhofar at any time, and its CO had also been Commander, Dhofar. Now there were two Battalions, and so a new provincial HQ had been established with a more senior officer as Commander.

The negotiations between Salim and Qartoob were conducted via a series of messengers. On the second day of negotiations, Qartoob informed Salim that he would not come across to the Sultan, that Salim was a dupe of the Government, but that he would be forgiven if he returned to the rebels. Fortunately, Qartoob's messenger slipped up by revealing just where Qartoob was. And it soon emerged that a Bait Umr Firqatman knew the position well. Qartoob and his men swiftly found themselves surrounded by the Firqat, taken totally by surprise, and in receipt of a sharp ultimatum: talk, or die. Naturally, they agreed to talk. So the unit's seven senior men, including Qartoob and the political commissar, Salim Said Dherdhir, accompanied the Firqat back to Sudh. It must be stressed that all seven were, and remained throughout the subsequent talks, fully

armed. The ensuing talks stretched over two days, with Salim Mubarak, his deputy, and Warrant Officer Birrell arguing the Government's case. Finally, the breakthrough came in the early hours of the third day, when Commissar Dherdhir pointed to Birrell, grinned, and exclaimed: "You are a Communist!". All seven came over to the Sultan. They then sought to win over those they had left behind outside Sudh. By the 28 February (five days since liberation) no less that 36 in all had come over, all recruits for the Firqat (62).

Despite the success at Sudh, there was a difference over strategy between the SAS/BATT and the SAF. Both were agreed on the need to get on to, and dominate, the Jebel. However, the SAS sought to do this by moving into the relatively 'soft' eastern area and slowly move westwards, while the Commander, Dhofar, felt his limited resources could be best employed to try and cut PFLOAG's re-supply routes in the west, where the Front was busy expanding camel tracks into motorable roads. Another problem was with regard to the Firqats. The SAF did not trust them: they were composed almost exclusively of former PFLOAG members. Moreover, they were in constant contact with the enemy, a fact that caused anxiety to the SAF. The SAS/BATT, on the other hand, had to trust the Firqats if they were to win

the Dhofaris lost in turn. As for the contacts with the enemy, these were essential if the Firqats were to fulfill their function of persuading them to defect. This SAF-Firqat tension was to remain for most of the war.

The events of Taqa, Mirbat and especially Sudh marked a turning point in the war on the ground, transforming it from an 'ever victorious' PFLOAG advance into a stalemate. To break the stalemate in favour of the Government required a return to the Jebel by the Security Forces. That, clearly, was the next step. But before a permanent presence could be attempted, a reconnaissance in force was needed - for longer than the SAF's usual 24 hours. Ideally, this should have been launched from the northern (easy) side of the Jebel, but HQ Dhofar was very skeptical and the necessary aid was not forthcoming. So it had to be from the south - steep, difficult, and, since Sudh, carefully guarded. The only solution was to ascend the Jebel by a route regarded by the PFLOAG as impassable. A small SAS/Firqat patrol found such a route, and a major probe followed, on the night of 13 March 1971 (despite the untimely death from natural causes of Salim Mubarak), occupying the so-called 'Eagle's Nest' position on the Jebel near Mirbat. This provoked no PFLOAG reaction, so after three days the

force (which included the two SAS troops as well as the Firqat) moved westwards, to a ridge near the well of Tawi Atair. This definitely provoked reaction, the PFLOAG mounting increasingly heavy attacks and bombardments, all of which were successfully repulsed. However, the well was difficult of access, and air re-supply ended when Dhofar's one and only (1) helicopter was grounded for essential maintenance. So after 12 days the operation was ended and the force withdrew. Nevertheless, it had been an extremely valuable operation. Not one fatality had been suffered; the unprecedented time they spent on the Jebel shook PFLOAG, and there was an increase in the number of SEPs. Finally, they had been able to gauge the feelings of the local tribesmen: they were sympathetic, but frightened. An old man summed the situation up in a coversation with the SAS/BATT leader:

> "You say you will be here a long time. But what is a long time, one week, two weeks? And the geysh have never stayed here during the monsoon. The Communists are here the whole time. As soon as you leave, they will come back and punish anyone who helped you" (63).

It had shown that any permanent base on the Jebel would require an airstrip to ease air re-supply. Air transport throughout the operation had been outstanding, and was to remain so throughout the war.

The way forward was now clear, three Firqats were now in existence (the Salahadin, the Al Nasr - from the Bait Kathir - and the A'asifat - from the eastern Mahra), and more were forming, though chronic equipment shortages remained. Furthermore, HQ Dhofar was considerably more enthusiastic about the value of the Firqats. A meeting between Col Harvey and the three Firqat leaders proved highly positive, and resulted in HQ support for the SAS/BATT-Firqat strategy.

Then, on 21 April, the multi-tribal Firqat Salahadin collapsed: the Bait Umr and Bait Ma'sheni tribesmen refused to obey the orders of the Firqat's new leader, a member of the Bait Gatun. The mutineers transferred to other, tribally based Firqats, of which there were now five: the Firqat A'asifat, the Firqat Al Nasr, the western Mahra Firqat Tariq ibn Zeead - made up of tribesmen returned from the Gulf - the Bait Ma'sheni Firqat Khalid ibn Waalid, and the Bait Umr Sudh Defence Force (later re-named the Firqat Gamel Abdul Nasr). A rump Firqat Salahadin remained for some months, but finally faded away. It was, inescapably, a setback, though in retrospect probably an inevitable one. PFLOAG could enforce multi-tribalism by Idaarat terrorism; the Sultan could not. Henceforth all Firqats would be tribal, and would, if possible, be deployed in their own

tribal areas (64).

Operations, however, continued, comprising patrols and raids. One major raid saw the Firqats Salahadin and Khalid ibn Waalid, two SAS Troops, and the SAF Muscat Regiment seize the 1,500 ft high, 21,000 ft long Jebel Aram, from which an adoo 75 mm RCL had been bombarding Taqa. Though the Government forces were unable to destroy the gun, the operation saw the SAF, aided and advised by the SAS and Firqat, out-manoeuvre and out-think the PFLOAG - for the first time. This was also the last operation before the monsoon (65).

The monsoon saw, in June, the Third Congress of the PFLOAG, held at Rakhyut. In response to the new politico-military situation, PFLOAG now played down its commitment to Marxism-Leninism, proclaimed freedom of worship for Islam, abolished the old 'People's Courts', replacing them with new ones having a more liberal range of punishments, and proclaimed a six-month amnesty for any Firqatman wishing to return to the Front. Hardly any did, as PFLOAG had lost all credibility. The Congress also made many detailed decisions in an attempt to neutralise specific elements of Qaboos' development programmes: thus, the new Government schools at Taqa and Mirbat provoked a declaration of intent to

improve literacy on the Jebel. However, no decision was taken on how to achieve this. Likewise, it was decided to improve the (abysmally low) level of training of PFLOAG medics, in an attempt to counter the success of the CATs. Finally, the Front affirmed that "protracted, stubborn people's struggle is the only way to liberate the Gulf", though other modes of operation could be helpful. To this end, PFLOAG sought a "national united front". This decision resulted, in December 1971, in PFLOAG absorbing the ineffectual NDFLOAG, and the former changing its name (but not its initials) to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf. All told, it was a display of the flexibility recommended by Mao Tse-tung as being *essential for the success* of 'National Liberation Movements' (66).

The Security Forces spent the monsoon in *bringing* the Firqats to full operational strength and battle-readiness, in preparation for a major operation to seize a permanent base on the Jebel. Code-named 'Operation Jaguar', it was scheduled for October 1971, following the monsoon but overlapping with the great Islamic festival of Ramadan. This potential problem was solved with the proclamation of absolution by the senior Qadi in Dhofar, on the grounds that the Firqats and SAF were fighting a

Holy War. The Sultan, who had religious as well as secular authority, did likewise. Jaguar was, by Dhofar standards, a large operation: two SAS Squadrons (over one hundred men); two SAF companies (250 men); a pioneer platoon and a platoon of Baluch askars (another 100) and no less than five Firqats (300 Firqatmen), for a grand total of nearly 800. As the Salalah souk had been full of rumour of an impending major operation, a deception plan was, as always, essential. To this end, the impression was created of a major attack from the south on the important adoo stronghold of Wadi Darbat, which was within striking range of Taqa, Mirbat and Sudh. Twenty-four hours before the real attack, the diversionary force of two Firqats (plus SAS/BATT) went in. With the attention of PFLOAG firmly fixed on the south, the main attack commenced from the north on the morning of 2 October, The target was an old SAF airfield code-named 'Lympne', which was seized by dawn by the Firqat A'asifat and SAS after an overland march. The SOAF then poured in re-inforcements (both SAF and Firqat), weapons and supplies all through the day. Hardly any PFLOAG reaction was encountered, but the old Lympne airfield soon began to crumble under heavy usage. Because of this, the operations' commander, SAS Lt. Col. Watts, decided to move the position 7,000 yards to the west to the settlement of Jibjat, which had a

better runway. This was successfully done, despite the refusal of the exhausted A'asifat to move. PFLOAG still failed to take Jaguar seriously, so Watts sought to keep the initiative. Using SAF troops (whose forte was seizing and holding ground) to defend Jibjat, he formed the Firqats (experts at patrolling and winning hearts and minds, but poor at essentially static functions) into two groups, each accompanied by SAS. West Group, of the Firqats Khalid ibn Waalid and Salahadin, moved down the western side of Wadi Darbat from the north. Firqat A'asifat formed the East Group, to move down the eastern side. There then commenced a period of five days of fierce fighting, with the Firqats steadily advancing. On 4 October, the eastern (A'asifat) group met up with the southern diversionary group (advancing northwards). The link-up position was subject to desperate PFLOAG attacks, but on 9 October the adoo broke contact and retreated into the dense bush of the Wadi. Meanwhile, in the western group, the Firqat Khalid-ibn Waalid triumphantly established a base (initially code-named 'White City', but later re-named Medinat al Haq - 'Place of Truth') in the heart of their own Bait Ma'asheni tribal area. The time was now ripe for a follow-up assault on the shaken enemy in the Wadi. And it was at precisely this moment that the A'asifat and diversionary Firqats in the east

announced their withdrawal from combat to celebrate Ramadan - regardless of the special dispensation they received. All attempts to persuade them otherwise, whether by British Officers, SAS, or Wali Baraik's personal representative, failed. They abandoned all their hard-won gains of the previous days, including a position that dominated the Wadi and threatened the PFLOAG supply caves therein, and withdrew to Jibjat. It was a classic example of the problems that could be encountered with the Firqat, and a clear illustration of some of their weaknesses: acute selfishness, temperamentality, frequent inability to grasp the 'bigger picture', poor discipline and their 'consultation and consensus' approach to command (Firqat leaders rarely being able to issue direct orders to their followers).

However, the West Group continued to operate aggressively from White City, which rapidly proved itself an ideal base. To secure the Government's gains from the still formidable and determined local adoo, both Watts and HQ Dhofar agreed that something had to be done to interdict the PFLOAG's supply lines into the eastern area. To this end, on 2 November, a new position was established above Jebel Khaftawt, north of the Gatn, near the end of the western plateau, but before the commencement of the

mountains western area. This proved insufficient, so a second position was established further south, and then a third. All three were thoroughly mined and wired, garrisoned by the SAF and provided with detachments of SAS/BATT and Firqat Al Nasr to patrol and dominate the area. Though not linked to each other, these positions swiftly became known as the 'Leopard Line', and though they and their patrols could not stop PFLOAG re-supply, they caused the Front much inconvenience. However, the line proved impossible to maintain in the monsoon and had to be abandoned.

Simultaneously with these military developments, the Information Services launched a blitz of their own to persuade the tribesmen that the SAF were on the Jebel to stay. Words, however, by themselves, were not enough. Action was needed - wells had to be drilled, buildings erected, Civil Aid initiated. All this took time. The people especially needed water for their herds, and a market for their meat. This latter need led to a rather spectacular operation: the Firqats had encouraged the tribesmen to bring their herds to Jibjat and White City; next, the Firqats forced the Government to ship the herds to market (the compulsion being achieved by means of another mutiny). The goats were flown out, but the cattle could not be, not in sufficient numbers. So

'Operation Taurus' was born: on 28 November, covered by jets and artillery, with flanks guarded by Firqat, no less that 500 head were driven across Jebel and down to Taqa, and thence, escorted by armoured cars, along the coast to Salalah. It was a dramatic affirmation of the Government's ability to keep its promises, and a severe blow to PFLOAG prestige. Only three months before they had been supreme on the Jebel; now they could not even halt a cattle-drive.

Things had been happening elsewhere, too. By October, the SAF had been relieved of responsibility for the protection of Taqa, Mirbat and Sudh by the Oman Gendarmerie. By December, the three SAS CATs withdrew, handing over to medical teams from the Dhofar Development Department (this, unfortunately, meant a drop in the standards of medical care, but the CATs were badly needed on the Jebel), while a hospital had been opened in Salalah. To round it all off, Sultan Qaboos himself opened the new CAT buildings at White City at the end of the year.

It is clear that 1971 was a crucial year in the history of the war - hence the detail devoted to its main events. When the year dawned, PFLOAG still held the advantage; the situation was swiftly improved to one of stalemate, and then, towards the

end of the year to one of Governmental counter-attack. In Janua , only Salalah was secure; by December, not only were Salalah, Taqa, Mirbat and Sudh secure but permanent positions had been established in the Jebel. The SAF had twice as many soldiers in the province as before, and no less than 700 Dhofaris had been raised to fight for the Sultan. The foundations for medical services, agricultural development and Information Services had been laid; good long-term plans had been drawn up for development. One weakness, however, was the lack of civilian Civil Aid policy to assist the people in the period immediatlely after liberation but before development plans could come to fruition. The military operations - in Sudh, Jaguar and Leopard Line - though they had not all achieved the initial hopes vested in them had nevertheless been successful and produced a large number of important lessons. Most future operations were improved versions of these prototypes (67).

1972 saw three dramatic 'conventional' operations, two by SAF and one by PFLOAG, in addition to the continued emphasis on the 'Five Fronts'. First, in A:ril, was a SAF attempt to sever PFLOAG's supply lines near the border with Yemen. In 'Operation Simba' a heliborne assault captured Sarfait, a ridge on the western Jebel some 4,000 ft high, in a move

which took PFLOAG completely by surprise. However, geography, in the shape of a lower, intervening hill, code-named Capstan, prevented the position from dominating the narrow coastal strip. Capstan, located at the end of a plateau 1,000 ft below Sarfait and 2,000 yds wide, was too isolated to be occupied as part of the new position. Though the 'Freedom Road' which ran between Sarfait and Capstan was rendered completely useless, PFLOAG were simply able to divert their supply caravans along the coastal strip. The operation thus failed to disrupt adoo re-supply. Moreover, though Sarfait's location on top of the ridge rendered direct PFLOAG assault impossible (even if the adoo had had the inclination and the manpower) the existence (originally) of only two access routes off the position rendered SAF attack down to the coast equally impossible. Sarfait soon found itself under siege, being constantly bombarded by PFLOAG rockets and mortar bombs and PDRY artillery from across the border. Re-supply was possible only by helicopter. But the position could not be abandoned without handing PFLOAG a major victory. Sarfait was to stay under siege until the end of the war (68).

Then, in July, in an attempt to undo all that the Government had achieved in the eastern area. the PFLOAG launched a full-scale frontal attack on

Mirbat. The intention was, under the cover from air attack provided by the monsoon, to overwhelm the small garrison, occupy the town for a few hours if not a full day, harangue the people, publicly shoot the local Wali and his advisors, and then withdraw. The purpose was to totally shatter the faith of the people in the Government and SAF, and destroy the Governmental infrastructure (it had been difficult to find a volunteer for Wali at Mirbat; such events would render it impossible to find a successor). To these ends, the Front assembled no fewer than 250 members of the PLA, and all the mortars and RCLs in the eastern area, and launched the assault at dawn on 19 July. The garrison at Mirbat was composed of 8 SAS, 25 Omani Gendarmes, one Omani artilleryman, some 30 askars and the local Firqat of 60 men. However, a decoy adoo unit lured no less than 40 of the Firqatmen away on a wild goose chase, leaving an actual garrison of 84. And the askars could not really be regarded as effective. For support, the garrison had one 25-pounder (87 mm) gun howitzer, one 81 mm mortar, and one .50 calibre (12.7 mm) heavy machine gun (all fully or partially manned by the SAS). Yet, so strong was the resistance, especially fierce from the SAS and especially steadfast from the Gendarmes, that the frontal assault was halted. The PLA then sought to infiltrate around the defenders, which, due to lack of numbers,

the latter could not counter. At this crucial moment the SOAF jets appeared (despite the fact that the cloudbase was only 150 ft) and, with pin-point very low level attacks (in the face of heavy anti-aircraft machine-gun fire) halted the attack. By sheer chance a relief SAS Troop had arrived in the country the previous day, and, by even greater chance, was fully armed and ready when the alert came in. It was flown to Mirbat and swiftly counter-attacked the PLA, rapidly driving them off. The defenders lost four dead (two SAS, one Gendarme, one Omani artilleryman); the attackers, including those that later died of their wounds under inadequate medical care, nearly one hundred. It was a shattering blow to PFLOAG; morale plummeted, and large numbers of adoo voluntarily surrendered in the following months. The Front was never again able to mount any significant operation in the eastern area, and was reduced to making isolated raids or mine-laying forays (69).

Finally, at the end of the 1972 monsoon, the SAF took the offensive again, to create an improved barrier line based upon the experience gained with the abandoned Leopard Line. Unlike Leopard, the new line, code-named Hornbeam, was continuous. Driven inland from Mughsayl, ultimately to a distance of forty miles over very difficult terrain, it was

composed of a series of fortified positions placed a couple of thousand yards apart, linked by continuous barbed wire coil fence and liberally sown with anti-personnel mines. Constructed by British (and, later, Jordanian) Army Engineers, it was finally completed in August 1974, despite frequent PFLOAG attacks. It must be stressed that the fortified positions were not merely static defences; rather, they acted as patrol bases from which the SAS, Firqat and SAF operated to dominate the surrounding area. As a result of this combination of static and mobile functions, the Hornbeam Line proved a very difficult (though not impassable) obstacle to the enemy. Determined men, with careful planning and thorough preliminary reconnaissance, could still get through; but camels, the basis of the Front's supply caravans, could not. When finally completed, Hornbeam crippled PFLOAG re-supply east of the Line (70).

PFLOAG Katyusha bombardments of Salalah airfield during and after the monsoon led to a considerably smaller scale yet valuable SAF counter-action: the rockets could reach the airbase from only a small portion of the Jebel; so, in 'Operation Diana' this small portion was occupied by the SAF and four platoon bases established to hold it. These proved highly effective, and no more attacks were made on

the airstrip. In addition, they provided a new set of positions from which Security Force patrols could penetrate the Jebel. PFLOAG made many attempts to dislodge these 'Dianas', as they were called, but all to no avail (71).

Now definitely on the defensive at home, PFLOAG sought to re-gain the initiative by fomenting an uprising in northern Oman. However, the PFLOAG cadre responsible for this operation was spotted and identified by a PFLOAG defector. Alerted, the Security Forces carefully observed his movements and then, in late December, swooped in 'Operation Jason' and destroyed the insurgent network: ninety arrests were made, and many weapons seized. Nevertheless, this abortive plot persuaded Sultan Qaboos to seek further outside aid (in addition to military aid from Britain he was also receiving monetary aid from Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia): he received it from the Shah of Iran (72).

Initial Iranian aid, in the form of a Special Forces Battalion, arrived in early 1973; it was assigned to the Hornbeam Line. 1973 was also the year that the SAF expansion programme launched in 1970 finally began to come to fruition. By the end of the year, the SAF was to comprise four Omani Battalions (two of which were in Dhofar at any given time); two

Baluch Battalions (both permanently in Dhofar); an Artillery Battalion (of two Batteries, which alternated duty in Dhofar); an Armoured Car Squadron (half of which, 24 Armoured Cars, was in Dhofar at any given time); and Z Force, a mobile patrol unit which dominated the Salalah plain and prevented the adoo from crossing it to attack the town or base. Then there were the detachments of the Oman Gendarmerie.

The British contingent comprised approximately 600 Officers and NCOs attached to the SAF (about half being seconded personnel and the other half contract personnel); the SAS Squadron; the RAF Regiment garrison at the airbase; a detachment of Royal Engineers; and a Field Surgical Team (alternately supplied by the Army and RAF) to handle all casualties.

The Navy had also been expanded to comprise a Flagship and three Fast Patrol Boats, as well as armed Dhows and some transports, and was now able to establish an effective blockade of the Dhofar coast (though the PFLOAG ship, Saut-ash Shaab had, in fact, been sunk by the SOAF as early as July 1970). Most important was the expansion of the SOAF. In addition to the long-standing Squadron of Strike-master Jets (which though operated as fighter-

bombers were actually training aircraft), the helicopter force had been considerably expanded from a solitary machine to a full Squadron, revolutionising the SAF's ability to wage the war. In addition, to exploit the many rough airstrips in Dhofar, the SOAF deployed four Skyvan transport and two Defender liaison and communications relay aircraft.

The command structure was expanded and revised in parallel with these developments. HQ Dhofar was expanded to full Brigade status, and all SON and SOAF Units in the province directly subordinated to it. Though under CSAF for administrative and organisational purposes, for the day-to-day conduct of the war the Brigade was subordinated to the Dhofar Development Committee. This, chaired by the provincial Wali Sheikh Baraik, was also composed of the Brigadier Dhofar, the Head of the Development Department, the Town Clerk of Salalah, the Head of Intelligence, the Head of the Civil Aid Department, and (a 1974 addition) the Chief Police Officer. The DDC thus provided the essential orchestration of the civilian, intelligence and military efforts; upheld, in fact, the principle that the military was supporting the Civil Power (and not vice versa); and re-affirmed, in practice, that it was an Omani war fought with British assistance, and not a British

war via a puppet regime. The DDC met regularly every week, hearing reports, discussing developments, deciding policy and promulgating decisions. This command structure was not to alter for the rest of the war (73).

On the other side, important changes had also occurred with regard to PFLOAG's external support: the USSR had replaced the PRC as the Front's main source of arms and assistance. The USSR had provided 'unofficial' propaganda support for the Front since the beginning of 1969, and had begun providing active assistance via Iraq and especially the PDRY in 1971. As the PRC ran down support for subversive movements in the Gulf in favour of good conventional relations with the region, so the USSR stepped up its aid. PFLOAG thus came totally under Soviet influence (74).

The expansion of the SAF and especially the SOAF allowed a dramatic expansion in the activities of the SAS/BATT and Firqats. The creation of the Firqats now, and for the rest of the war, followed a set pattern. A new Firqat would be raised and trained; tribal problems (if any) sorted out; and a leader established (Firqats were very dependant on the quality of their leadership). Then a base would be chosen by the Firqatmen, in conjunction with the

SAF. Should it offer good prospects for overland access and drilled water, it would be agreed to. The SAF would then mount a major operation to seize the position, sometimes employing a full battalion. The Firqat and as many SAS/BATT as could be spared would then move in and commence operations, patrolling and striving to dominate the surrounding country. Meanwhile, the Engineers would drive a track across the Jebel from the north (because of its much easier access), along which a drilling rig would be brought. This would attract the local tribesmen to the base, seeking to water their cattle; given the acute shortage of water on the Jebel, this was something PFLOAG could not prevent. The SAF force would then withdraw except for the smallest possible detachment that could defend the position with Firqat assistance. The SAS/CAT would set up a clinic, and buildings would be constructed to house it, as well as a school, a shop (subsidised by the Government and run by the Firqat) and a Mosque. Once all this had been successfully achieved and consolidated, and the local adoo largely neutralised, the SAS/BATT would withdraw, handing over, on the military side, to the HQ Firqat Forces (created to take the heavy burden of administering the Firqats off the SAS) and, on the civil side, to the civilian Civil Aid Department (created to bridge the gap between the SAS civil aid

and the completion of the Development Department's long-term programmes). The SAS/BATT thus released would be used to create a new Firqat, making the process continuous. While suspicions remained between the SAF and Firqats, they had both come to realise that they needed each other to win the war. And by 1973, though PFLOAG remained formidable, it was clear that the Government was winning (75).

In terms of major, or 'conventional' operations, 1973 saw the continuation of the work, initiated the previous year and not to be completed till the next, on the Hornbeam Line. At the very end of the year, an Imperial Iranian Battle Group (IIBG) of 1,500 men arrived, with the purpose of securing the Midway Road. Though PFLOAG had never succeeded in cutting it, they had rendered it most insecure. This was now to change. The lavishly supplied and equipped IIBG set about the task by means of simultaneous attacks along the road from the north and south, using heavy suppressive fire to neutralise PFLOAG positions. The operation was a total success, and the IIBG guarded the Road for the following year, reacting to any PFLOAG attack, possible attack, suspected attack or rumour of attack with massive displays of firepower. This extravagance rarely caused PFLOAG any casualties, but it certainly kept them well away from the road; it also kept everyone

else well away too! Once the route had been secured, civilian contractors began work on a modern, two-lane highway from Salalah to Thumrait. The Iranian positions protecting the road also acted as another barrier line further disrupting PFLOAG re-supply to the eastern area (76). Iranian intervention, in the form of helicopters flying re-supply missions, also saved the position at Sarfait from having to be evacuated during 1973 - an event, which had it occurred, would have represented a major victory for the Front.

By mid-1974, when Brigadier Akehurst assumed command in Dhofar, the situation was basically as follows: the Dhofar Brigade had reached full strength as a multi-national, all services force of some 10,000 men. The Hornbeam Line, by now completed, disrupted PFLOAG re-supply to the central and eastern areas, while the Midway Road (now secure) had the same effect for the eastern area. The SAS/BATT and Firgat had positions in the eastern area and on the northern edge of the central area, while the SAF occupied the 'Dianas' on the southern edge. All these positions were used as patrol bases from which the Security Forces sought to dominate the Jebel. Nevertheless, PFLOAG was still active in the east and strong in the centre, while west of Hornbeam they were still totally in control, except for the

isolated and beleaguered position at Sarfait. The Government's Civil Aid Department, a crucial element in the strategy, badly needed more financing and a better organisation. Nevertheless, Akehurst concluded that the basis for victory had been well and truly laid and that it was time for a full scale offensive:

> "... we must take risks and be arrogant over our possessions ... our policy must be to trample over the area and to dominate it. This may best be done by Firqats ... the keys to victory are: (a) Cutting enemy supplies as far west as possible (b) Civil development, especially roads and encouraging normal commerce".

Victory, in Akehurst's view, was closer than the Government realised; to this end, he proclaimed the objective for all future operations: "To secure Dhofar for Civil Development" (77).

The extent to which PFLOAG had been placed on the defensive was made plain when Radio Aden, in August 1974, announced that the Front had changed its name yet again - to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). A new shift in strategy was also announced, giving more emphasis to political action, by means of a new front organisation, the United National Front. Nevertheless

> "... the revolution in Oman must be an armed revolution, making good use of the revolutionary violence of the masses to destroy the violence of the imperialists and the invaders and their local agents ... The struggle of the Omani masses must

> use all techniques of struggle at the same time, so that other forms of struggle can be undertaken within the framework of the armed struggle".

It was another example of PFLOAG's adherence to the principle of flexibility. In accordance with this, and to take the pressure off Dhofar, the Front attempted once more to subvert the north. The plot, involving a group trained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was uncovered in October and the infiltrators (including two PFLO Central Committee members) swiftly rounded up (78). Meanwhile, in Dhofar, the counter-offensive gathered momentum. Aggressive patrolling, to dominate the Jebel, and penetrate the densely vegetated Wadis (where PFLO had its arms and supply stores concealed among the many limestone caves), was stepped up by the SAS, Firqat and SAF from their positions on the Jebel and the Hornbeam Line. October saw the withdrawal of the IIBG, which handed over responsiblity for the Midway Road to the Omanis, as well as the establishment of no less than six new Firqat bases on the Jebel - at Zeak, Ashinhaib, Hagleet, Ayum, Burg Halaf and Jebel Khaftawt. From the last named the SAF constructed a new, permanent, line along the same route as the old Leopard Line. The new one was called the 'Hammer Line'. Though only five kilometres long, it successfully penetrated an area hitherto totally dominated by

PFLO (except for the few months of the Leopard Line's existence) and represented a severe blow to the Front. At the end of the month the SAF, jumping off from the Firqat base at Tawi 'tair, successfully opened the Taqa-Mirbat road. Moreover, with the bases on the Jebel as a protective framework, and the tracks leading to them as a basis, Engineers (initially military but soon - and indicative of the inc sing Security Forces dominance of the Jebel - civilian) rapidly began to construct a network of tarmac roads, in order to aid Civil Development and relieve the pressure on the SOAF. Throughout this pe..od the flow of intelligence rapidly increased, as did the numbers of SEPs. And, of course, Information Services had plenty of material for their never-ending campaign. Nevertheless, it was not all smooth-running: there was a riot at Thumrait; a mutiny at Mirbat; a murder in the Firqat at Jibjat (which nearly sparked off a full-scale intra-Firqat battle); another murder (this time within a Baluch Battalion) at Taqa; while the Firqat at Juffa caused such problems that it finally had to be disbanded (79).

The withdrawal of the IIBG did not mark the end of Iranian assistance; it was replaced by the Imperial Iranian Task Force (IITF) which was based at 'Manston'. Complete by the end of November, it was

to be used to carry out an offensive in the western area, where hitherto PFLO had been able to operate with little interference by the Government forces (excepting air attack). The purpose was to create a new barrier line. Initially the operation was intended as a two-pronged affair. While one of the IITF's battalions advanced from Manston to Iraqi preparatory to the final thrust, the other was to provide a diversion by moving to 'Gunlines' and thence pushing towards the key PFLO supply complex of the Shershitti Caves. The first battalion carried out its mission swiftly and without opposition, but a long delay followed while the Iranians planned the next phase. The second battalion was less lucky; its advance encountered fierce resistance and led to heavy casualties, after which the Iranians refused to move any further. Frustrated and angry, the CSAF, General Tim Creasy, ordered the abandonment of the diversion. Instead, the entire IITF would drive for the final objective: the coastal town of Rakhyut. The re-planning (by the Iranians) required a further two weeks, but the offensive was finally launched on 25 December. Despite heavy resistance, the IITF (accompanied by British Liason Officers and Firqats) successfully completed the offensive and re-took Rakhyut on 5 January 1975. The loss of Rakhyut, the erstwhile administrative centre of the western area before the

war, and PFLO's unofficial 'capital' and showcase to foreign delegations (including a Viet Cong delegation in 1972), was a very severe propaganda and psychological blow to the Front. Moreover, the new 'Damavand Line' (named after a mountain near Teheran) divided the western area (roughly equally) and gave the Security Forces a firm base where none had existed before (80).

Of course, the new Line was not created overnight, so to keep the pressure on the adoo and divert their attention from the construction work, a new operation was initiated. To be carried out by SAF with Firqat assistance, it would involve a drive on Shershitti, following the original IITF plan, with the objective of securing the ridge above Shershitti for two or three weeks. However, the attack would be launched from Defa via Zakhir Tree and Point 980 (so named from its height in metres). Code-named "Operation Dharab' ('Blow') it began on the morning of 4 January 1975. At first all went well. However, the Firqatmen spearheading the attack force were from several different Firqats, all mixed together. The result was poor cohesion and deliberate delays. The Firqat refused to advance on Zakhir Tree until they saw good supporting fire from artillery, armoured cars, and jets. They got it. Yet, despite constant supporting bombardments, they

took four hours to reach the Tree. There they encountered brisk resistance and refused to go further. An SAF company then advanced instead, capturing the Tree and pushing on to capture Point 980 in less than an hour. However, the day was now gone and the advance could only be resumed next morning, giving the thoroughly alerted enemy time to prepare: on the 5th, there had only been 8 adoo at Shershitti (plus another 12 at Zakhir Tree); by the 6th, when the attack resumed, there were between 40 and 50. The Firqats now acted as guides to the attacking force; unfortunately, they became disorientated in the dense bush, approached Shershitti from the wrong angle, and ran headlong into fierce resistance. Heavy casualties were suffered and the SAF forced to retreat. However, to salvage the operation, it was hastily decided to bulldoze a track from Zakhir Tree to Point 980 and thence to 'Stonehenge', a prominent spur approximately 1,000 metres further south. These positions dominated the Front's west-east supply route as well as the Shershitti Caves, and rapidly proved to be excellent (if temporary) patrol bases, an important supply dump soon being located and seized. In addition, adoo began to surrender, for the first time in months in the western area. Given the great strain placed by these positions on SAF logistics, compounded by unseasonable rain, and with the

original intention having been to hold positions only temporarily, it was decided in late January to abandon Stonehenge, a decision which was swiftly implemented.

Despite the failure of the original plan, Dharab nevertheless provided important results and lessons. PFLO prestige was damaged by the SAF's penetration of a hitherto very secure insurgent stronghold, and, in the aftermath of the attack, the Shershitti Caves (exposed as vulnerable) ceased to act as the Front's main supply depot. The operation clearly illustrated the slowness of the Front's command machinery, due to its lack of efficient communications, coupled with the standard communist committee system of decision-making. All future SAF operations were designed to exploit these weaknesses to the full, by means of frequent and rapid movement. And never again would Firgats be mixed up, nor used to spearhead conventional attacks; instead, they would be deployed in cohesive units as guides and reconnaissance patrols for SAF companies. Finally, the procedure of rapidly bulldozing tracks across the Jebel during the course of an operation, conceived as an emergency salvage measure for Dharab, became a standard feature of future operations (81).

The abandonment of Stonehenge did not mark the end of pressure on the enemy. Even the besieged Sarfait garrison managed to exfiltrate a patrol which captured much enemy arms and equipment. More significant (in the precendent it set, not in its results) was 'Operation Broomstick', an attempt to bring the PLA 'Ninth June Regiment' to action and destroy it ('Ninth June' being trapped between the Hornbeam and Damavand lines - the latter being finally completed in May). The operation took the form of heliborne coup de main: heliborne infantry seized a high ridge about 10 km west of Mughsayl, suppressive air support having blanketed the Landing Zone (LZ) only minutes before in a (highly successful) attempt to preserve surprise. Unfortunately, the 'Ninth June' could not be located and no action resulted. So another operation, 'Himaar' ('Goat') was scheduled to destroy the elusive PLA unit. Incorporating the lessons of Dharab and Broomstick, the operation was based on two key principles: fast and frequent movement to confuse the 'Ninth June' command, and the grouping of Firqats (accompanied, of course, by their SAS/BATTs) and SAF companies together so that they could always give each other mutual support. This time, intelligence had pinpointed the HQ of the 'Ninth June', in the vicinity of the junction of Wadis Bisreen and Ashoq, a very rugged area of ravines, overhangs and caves, but

little vegetation. Himaar commenced on 21 February and encountered fierce opposition. However, the steadfastness and firepower (including artillery) of the SAF; the initiative, flexibility and tactical skills of the Firqats; and the prowess of the SOAF jet pilots proved an irresistable combination and the 'Ninth June' suffered heavy casualties and lost huge quantities of arms, including all its heavy weapons. Though adoo groups remained active in the region for some time afterwards, the 'Ninth June', as a unit, was effectively destroyed. Moreover, the PFLO was never again able to resist the SAF with such determination (though the less experienced Iranians would not be so lucky) (82).

Late February also saw the arrival of yet more foreign military aid - the 91 Special Forces Battalion of the Royal Jordanian Army. Tough, well disciplined, experienced, but not at all keen on the SAF's 'hearts and minds' approach, they were deployed along the Midway Road to protect it and patrol the areas alongside it. March saw a successful SAF sweep of the Wadi Rishm in the central area, until then a secure PFLO area (though, unusually, the SAF lost a helicopter shot down; two British Officers and the British contract pilot were killed). Across to the west, the long, slow careful attempts by the garrison at Sarfait to find new

routes off the ridge began to bear fruit. In May a patrol successfully moved down to the south, secured a reserve position on Capstan, and then proceded down to the supply track, where they successfully sprang an ambush - the first time this had ever been achieved. Early June saw two more successful ambushes below Capstan; thereafter, the emphasis was switched to the north of Sarfait, to confuse the enemy command and force re-deployments on him.

June also saw the commencement of the monsoon. The Government's achievements were now considerable: 35 wells had been drilled; 155 miles of motorable track linked the Jebel positions; 21 Firgats now existed, containing 1,600 men and dispersed over 26 different locations, each having civilian Civil Aid Department teams and facilities, those towards the west also enjoying the presence of SAS/BATTs and CATs. Only west of the Damavand Line did the enemy maintain a stronghold. In the eastern and central areas it was estimated that the PLA had been reduced to 100 men; in the west it was thought still to number some 500, backed by a further 300-400 PDRY troops (of low quality and used largely for rear area security) (83).

Major operations did not re-commence promptly with the end of the monsoon, it being decided better to

wait for the end of Ramadan. There were, however, constant minor operations to keep the pressure on the Front. The next major operation, code-named 'Hadaf' ('Target'), was intended to establish yet another Line, this time from 'Furious' to Dhalqut, by means of overland assault from the north and heliborne assault into unsecured LZs. As this latter would be extremely dangerous should PFLO be fore-warned, deception plans were absolutely essential. The deception operations themselves, carefully worked out, amounted to major operations in their own right. The basic idea was to persuade the Front that the SAF was actually attacking towards Shershitti, accompanied by a simultaneous break-out attempt from Sarfait. The unclassified code-name for these operations, 'Kuhoof' ('Caves') added to the effect. Both Hadaf and Kuhoof required the establishment of a secure base at 'Gunlines', this being achieved by the preliminary 'Operation Badree' ('Early') - which, in turn, had had its own deception operation, 'Waagid Badree' ('Very Early'). Both these preliminary operations took place in mid-August, Badree encountering resistance in the form of stand-off bombardments of Gunlines. It also provoked the PFLO into premature revelation of their latest weapon: the man-portable SAM-7, with which a Strikemaster was shot down (the pilot being safely rescued). The SOAF were thus able to modify their

aircraft and tactics to neutralise this threat before the main operations commenced (they were to lose only one other aircraft - a helicopter - to SAMs, though a Strikemaster was damaged).

In the interim, with the final completion of the new Midway Road, and the SAF's domination of the Jebel in the central and eastern areas, the 91st Special Forces Battalion was able to withdraw, and, in September, return to Jordan. The Iranians, however, remained active along the Damavand Line (85). That same month, however, an SAS/Firqat attempt to establish a new base south of Defa failed in the face of strong PFLO reaction, heavy casualties were suffered (including several SAS being wounded); but the Front did not claim a victory: its casualties had been considerably higher (86). Though abortive, this action did increase the credibility of Kuhoof.

As the implementation date for Hadaf itself approached (21 October 1975), the SOAF received a massive increase in capability with the establishment of a squadron of ex-Jordanian Hunter jets; unlike the Strikemaster, the Hunter was a dedicated fighter-bomber. But before Hadaf commenced, the final phase of Kuhoof had to be implemented. This involved two major attacks; the first, timed for seven days before Hadaf, involved a break-out from

Sarfait and the seizure of Capstan, which would then be held for two or three days and then abandoned; the second timed for four days before Hadaf, involved the Iranians in a push west from Rakhyut to seize a ridge overlooking the entrance to the Wadi Sayq (and thus some of the routes to Shershitti). For convenience, this latter operation will be discussed first: nearly an all-Iranian operation, code-named 'Saied', it was preceeded and accompanied by massive bombardments (including naval gunfire), yet encountered stiff resistance and only just managed to attain its objectives. Nevertheless, Saied held the attention of PFLO for an incredible three weeks, despite events elsewhere.

By dramatic contrast, the earlier move from Sarfait had encountered no resistance whatsoever. The adoo, believing that any move from Sarfait could only be a diversion, and with their attention firmly focussed on Shershitti and its approaches, had committed an enormous blunder. The opportunity for the SAF was too good to miss; Hadaf was largely scrapped. Instead, the SAF would drive down to the sea from Sarfait and Capstan; the main danger being the PDRY's 85 mm guns at Hauf, which had bombarded Sarfait for three years. Within a matter of hours they began to bombard the new position on Capstan as well. On the second night, despite the PDRY

artillery intervention, the SAF extended their positions down to the sea - still encountering no opposition from PFLO. The next morning (16 October) the SON supply ship As Sultana arrived offshore and, converted to carry helicopters, began flying essential supplies and materials into Sarfait and the positions on the new 'Simba Line': over one thousand helicopter sorties were flown from the ship in all. Throughout that day PDRY artillery bombarded the new Line, threatening its consolidation. Sultan Qaboos himself ordered counter-strikes, and, on the next morning, SOAF's new Hunters retaliated. The air raids lasted for a month, with great effect, and considerably contributed to the consolidation of the new positions for the loss of only one aircraft (the pilot being rescued).

This was a devastating blow to PFLO: its re-supply routes from the PDRY were now totally severed. But it was given no time to adjust to the new situation: the pressure was kept up to the full. The initial phase of Hadaf was ordered to be implemented as planned: on 26 October Zakhir Tree was seized to guard the flank of the advance; and then the designated SAF battalion, accompanied by armoured cars and including a bulldozer which converted the goat trail into a motorable track, drove forward

from Defa to Furious. Despite eminently defensible terrain, no resistance was encountered. Once at Furious, a company was despatched to seize 'Point Alpha', a sheer spur overlooking the Wadi Sayq 2,000 ft below. Here there was some resistance, but superior firepower soon overcame it. A day was spent consolidating the new positions, and then the direction of the offensive was switched to the east, to clear the series of spurs and wadis between Furious and Point 980/Stonehenge, and to re-occupy the last two positions.

The PFLO and PDRY forces in the western area were in a desperate situation. The east and west were blocked by the Damavand and Simba Lines respectively; the south by the SON; the north-east sealed by Hadaf, and the air, as always, dominated by the SOAF, against which the Front's SAMs had proved ineffective. The only escape route was north-west, along the Wadi Sayq between Sarfait and Furious. Abandoning their heavy weapons, the PFLO and PDRY forces concentrated on the Darra Ridge, and then withdrew by night through the gap. They were purposely allowed to go. A few insurgents remained in the western area, but the SAF did not know how many. So Point 980 and Stonehenge were subject to a full-scale traditional infantry assault behind a rolling barrage. Shershitti was then rapidly

captured, massive stocks of arms being seized. Finally, the Darra ridge was scaled (by an indirect route to confuse any remaining insurgents) and cleared, and Dhalqut, the last town in PFLO hands, was liberated (after a delay of twenty-four hours to enable the media to cover the event). On 4 December 1975 Brigadier Akehurst reported to the Sultan: "... Dhofar is now secure for civil development". On 11 December, and despite the continued existence of 100 PFLO insurgents in the central and eastern areas, the Sultan formally declared the war over. As the surviving insurgents in the field were now capable of only pin-pricks and nuisance actions, the Sultanic announcement cannot be regarded as premature. Moreover, this was a period of dramatic defections from PFLO: 94 in November, 36 in December and no less that 145 in January 1976, including a member of the Front's General Command (the PFLO's highest decision making body) and the Commanders of the western and eastern regions (87). Saudi Arabian diplomatic initiatives led to a cessation of PDRY shelling of Simba on 5 March 1976, though occasional PFLO bombardments (from inside the PDRY) continued until 30 April.

With the collapse of the PFLO from a major military threat to a source of minor banditry, the SAS/BATT found themselves as acting primarily as liaison

teams between the Government and tribespeople, endlessly informing the latter of the nature and kinds of Governmental assistance, and where and from whom to obtain it. The Firqat remained active to secure the Jebel and neutralise the scattered PFLO remnants, and in September responsibility for the Firqats was transferrd from the SAF to the civil Government under Wali Baraik, converting them from military auxiliaries to a form of Gendarmerie. Simultaneously the BATT was disbanded and the SAS withdrew. Civil development continued at an intense pace: also by September, 29 schools had been built, 54 wells sunk, nine new Government centres created, and a regular Flying Doctor service inaugurated. By 1982 Dhofar was criss-crossed by a network of tarmac roads, possessed universal education, and had a comprehensive medical service. The Sultan, while retaining the traditional political structures, had enlarged the sphere of consultation. The PFLO had been reduced to insignificance (a senior PFLO defector, who fled the PDRY in late 1977, estimated that, at that time, there were 30 insurgents in Dhofar and another 200 in the PDRY; by contrast, the Firqat numbered 3,000). Inarguably, the war in Dhofar had ended in victory for the Sultan (88).

The principles which achieved victory in Dhofar were elucidated in a very different war: the Malayan

Emergency (1948-60). Though bearing little resemblance to Dhofar - in Malaya the Communists fought against a basically popular and respected administration, recruited from a minority population (albeit a large and important one), totally lacked a secure rear base area in a friendly neighbouring state, were completely cut off from any foreign aid, assistance and arms, and opposed the (relatively great) might of the still-extant British Empire - the Emergency nevertheless acted as a source of invaluable precepts, which were further refined by experience in other conflicts (for example, the Indonesian Confrontation of 1963-66). The three key principles were: the establishment of joint civil and military control for the war; the adoption of an overall strategy capable of providing direction for the campaign, yet possessing the flexibility to swiftly exploit any unexpected advantage; and the need to win hearts and minds.

The first of these principles was fulfilled by the creation of the Dhofar Development Committee, which not only ensured joint civil/military control - with the latter, following British practice, in support of the former, and not vice versa - but also upheld the crucial principle of Omani sovereignty, making it clear that the British were assisting in an Omani war. This was further ensured by the fact that the

CSAF, though a serving British Officer, reported to the Omani Defence Minister and thence to the Sultan, and not to London. The Sultan's ability to combine the highest military and civilian positions in his own person also assisted the essential civil/military co-operation.

The requirements of the second principle were met by the 'Five Fronts' strategy, which provided an all-embracing framework within which the war was fought, yet was free of dangerous rigidities. This is especially clear with regard to the major, 'conventional', operations which were not specifically mentioned in any of the 'Five Fronts', yet were totally integrated with, and intended to assist and support, them. It is also clear from the deployments of the various allied elements during the war. Thus, the Iranians, lacking experience, suspicious of the local people, with poor junior leader initiative, yet possessing lavish supplies and massive firepower, were employed at what they were best at: carefully planned, set-piece, conventional assaults to seize terrain. The Jordanians, on the other hand, being experienced, well disciplined and led, were ideal for patrolling the Jebel; but their dislike of hearts-and-minds rendered them unsuitable for operations in areas where the Sultan was trying to win the people back

to their allegiance to him; so they were deployed in the relatively secure area of the Midway Road, freeing Omani personnel for employment elsewhere. The importance and value of the mutual support given by the SAF's steadfastness, discipline and ability to hold ground and the Firqats flexibility, initiative and tactical skills has (hopefully) already been made clear.

The third principle, hearts-and-minds, is one that is often misunderstood. It actually encompasses four equally important elements:

(i) to provide security for the people
(ii) to gain intelligence from the people
(iii) to bring civil development to the people
(iv) to destroy the enemy

It is thus not merely a matter of medical aid reforms. Reforms alone were, and are, useless, as clearly illustrated by the events at Taqa and Mirbat, where civil action by the SAS and the Sultan's proclamations brought no response - until the Firqat uncovered and destroyed the local communist cells. As Peter Dickens remarked (of an earlier war in which the SAS made a major contribution to victory):

> "... win hearts as you may by being thoroughly nice guys, minds will be overridingly influenced by force majeure, *when the choice is between life and death,*

and the locals must be shown beyond all doubt that it was we who had it" (89).

The confusion about hearts-and-minds undoubtedly arose when the British first put it into practice in Malaya by way of the 'New Village' programme of re-settlement. The considerable socio-economic benefits of this re-housing of the people obscured, to many, the other functions of the New Villages: security, intelligence, and destruction of the enemy. Security provided from outside attack by the defended p[illegible] from internal subversion by the placing of a police detachment in each New Village (the Police Station was always the first building erected in a New Village). The Police provided round-the-clock protection, observed the populations routine lifestyles, and noted unusual or uncharacteristic behaviour, which inevitably led them to the local underground Communists. Intelligence came from the interrogation of these agents. Destruction of the enemy resulted from the intelligence provided by the captured Communist operatives; from the destruction of the Communist Cell in the village, depriving the insurgents in the jungle of food, medicine and information; and from the attrition inflicted on the Communists by their having constantly to send new operatives to try and operate in the Villages. Far from being passive re-settlement centres, the New Villages were extremely

active elements of the British Strategy to destroy the Communists.

Exactly the same role was played, in Dhofar, by the SAS and Firqat, backed by the Civil Aid Department: the improvement of socio-economic conditions by means of medical aid and well-drilling; the provision of security in conjunction with the SAF both by protecting the site or town from internal or external attack and by routine patrolling; the gathering of intelligence by interviewing the locals; and the destruction of the enemy, often in conjunction with the SAF artillery and SOAF, by special offensive patrols, sweeps, ambushes, and by inducing them to surrender voluntarily. Indeed, the SAS itself is the embodiment of the hearts-and-minds strategy, with its unique combination of excellent civil aid capabilities and superb combat skills. For hearts-and-minds does not exist separately from the actual destruction of the enemy. No; hearts-and-minds is the means of destroying the enemy - for all time. Those who have understood this, as the Omani and British did in Dhofar, have triumphed. Those that have not, have failed.

NOTES

1. Akehurst, J., We Won a War, Mike Russell, Salisbury, 1982, pp. 6-8; Jeapes, T., SAS: Operation Oman, William Kimber, London, 1980, p. 17; Kelly, J.B., Arabia, the Gulf and the West, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1980, p. 133; and Price, D.L., Oman: Insurgency and Development, Conflict Studies, No. 53, January 1975, p. 3.

2. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 5-6; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 17-21; Price, ibid.

3. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 11-13; Halliday, F., Arabia Without Sultans, Penguin, London, 1974, pp. 312-314; Kelly, op.cit., pp. 112, 119, 133-134.

4. Halliday, ibid., p. 319.

5. Jeapes, op.cit., p. 47.

6. Kelly, op.cit., pp. 16, 134; Becker, J., The PLO, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1984, p. 70; Habash later founded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Wadi Haddad becoming his deputy, with especial responsibility for hi-jackings.

7. Akehurst, op.cit., p. 13; Halliday, op.cit., p. 317; Jeapes, op.cit., p. 24; Kelly, ibid., p. 134. Kelly dates Musallim ibn Nufl's uprising to 1963; an important spur to this revolt was the possibility of oil being discovered in the Bait Kathir tribal area. Initial Saudi support for the insurrection resulted from long-standing Saudi expansionist desires vis-a-vis Oman, which had earlier been expressed through support for the 1958/59 Jebel Akhdar revolt in Northern Oman, which had been broken by the SAS on behalf of Sultan Said.

8. Kelly, ibid., pp. 134-135; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 24-25; Halliday, ibid., pp. 317-318. Kelly reports that, at the formal (that is, 1965) start of the rebellion, the DLF could muster no more than 50 insurgents.

9. Kelly, ibid.g; Jeapes, ibid.; Halliday, ibid., pp. 318-319.

10. Kelly, ibid.; Halliday ibid.

11. Halliday, ibid., pp. 366-367; Kelly, ibid., pp. 135-136; Price, op.cit., p. 4. All quotations, except the last, are from Halliday, pp. 366-367;

the last is from Kelly, p. 136.

12. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 27-28; Jeapes, op.cit., pp. 22-23.

13. Jeapes, ibid., p. 2.

14. Akehurst, op.cit., p. 15; Halliday, op.cit., pp. 322-325; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 25, 28-29; Kelly, op.cit., pp. 137-138.

15. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 28-29; Jeapes, ibid., p. 36.

16. Captain Ian Gardiner, Royal Marines, quoted in Akehurst, ibid., p. 25.

17. Quoted in Jeapes, op.cit., p. 25.

18. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 24-25. Both Gardiner's and Akehurst's comments concern relatively late periods of the war, by which time the SAF had been considerably strengthened.

19. Jeapes, op.cit., p. 38.

20. Akehurst, op.cit., p. 30.

21. Halliday, op.cit., p. 347.

22. Ibid., p. 374.

23. Ibid., p. 375.

24. Ibid., p. 379. This discussion of 'mass education' has made use especially of ibid., pp. 373-379 and Kelly. op.cit., pp. 139-141.

25. Quoted in Halliday, ibid., pp. 376-377.

26. Ibid., pp. 376-378.

27. Quoted by Kelly, op.cit., p. 138.

28. Halliday, op.cit., p. 377.

29. Ibid., p. 382; Kelly, op.cit., p. 138.

30. Quoted in Halliday, ibid., p. 381; this discussion on anti-tribalism is based on Halliday, pp. 381-383.

31. For the official line, see ibid., pp. 383-384.

32. Jeapes, op.cit., p. 36.

33. Price, op.cit., p. 5.

34. Kelly, op.cit., p. 141.

35. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 14-15.

36. Jeapes, op.cit., p. 130.

37. Ibid.

38. Halliday, op.cit., p. 387; Kelly, op.cit., p. 141; Price, op.cit., p. 5.

39. Halliday, ibid., pp. 331-333.

40. Jeapes, op.cit., p. 27.

41. Akehurst, op.cit., p. 15.

42. Kelly, op.cit., pp. 141-142.

43. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 15-19, with a full description of Qaboos' personality; Jeapes, op.cit., pp. 26-27; Kelly, ibid., p. 142. Qaboos was 29 at the time of the coup.

44. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 15-19; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 27-28; Kelly, Ibid., pp. 142-143.

45. Interview with PFLOAG General Command member Talal Saad, quoted in Halliday, op.cit., p. 335.

46. Akehurst, op.cit., p. 19; Jeapes, op.cit., p. 28.

47. Jeapes, ibid.; Halliday, op.cit., p. 335; Kelly, op.cit., p. 143.

48. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 33-34; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 28-30. The British Officers and NCOs in the SAF were either seconded from the British Forces, or ex-servicemen recruited on contract by the Sultan; the only differences between them was that the latter were better paid than the former; were paid by the Sultan and not the British Government; did not pay British income tax; and were subject to Sharia (Moslem) Law, not British Military Law. The ratio between the two groups was about 50:50.

49. Dickens, P., SAS: The Jungle Frontier, Fontana/Collins, London, 1984, pp. 47-56; Geraghty, Who Dares Wins, Arms and Armour Press, London, 1980, passim, especially pp. 213-214; Jeapes, ibid., passim.

50. Geraghty, ibid., pp. 120-121; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 29-31.

51. Jeapes, ibid., pp. 32-34.

52. Ibid., pp. 33-34.

53. Ibid., pp. 34-37. Corporal Lane was so good at Information Services that, in order to avoid that hierarchical prejudice that is all too common in human affairs, he was ordered to refer to himself, at all times, as 'Mr' Lane! He later became a civilian advisor to the Omani Government.

54. Ibid., p. 37. Geraghty, op.cit., p. 122.

55. Jeapes, ibid., p. 39.

56. Ibid., pp. 39-43. Jeapes provides (pp. 40-41) a most amusing report from SAS medic (and patrol Arabists) Douglas Steadman, illustrating the difficulties under which he laboured at Taqa:

> "'This old bloke came to me one night in a high old dudgeon. Said his wife was sick. So I went to seen her. She was lying in this little room all dark except for one candle burning in the corner. She was quite an old woman, I could see that from her face and hands, but I couldn't see her shape or anything, just a bundle of cloths, lying there. He said she had stomach-ache. Her temperature and pulse were OK so it was not appendix [sic] I thought she was probably constipated; there's a lot of that here - they don't drink enough. Anyway I gave her some vitamins and iron tablets - all the women need them because the men take all the *good food* - and gave her a dose of senna pod for constipation. I thought I would go back and see her in the morning, by daylight, like'.
>
> "It was obvious from the looks of delight from the others [in the patrol] that he was coming to the crunch line.
> "'What happened?'
> "'Well, nothing really. The old boy turned up with a goat next morning as a present for the birth of a fine son.'"

57. Quoted in ibid., p. 40. Mirbat also lacked a Wali at this time.

58. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

59. Ibid., pp. 55-57, 65.

60. Ibid., pp. 65-68.

61. Ibid., pp. 69-74; quotes pp. 73 and 74 respectively.

62. Ibid., pp. 74-79, quote p. 78.

63. For the whole operation, see ibid., pp. 80-96; quote p. 94.; geysh is Arabic for Army (that is, SAF).

64. Ibid., pp. 109-111.

65. Ibid., pp. 112-129.

66. Ibid., pp. 129-131; Halliday, op.cit., pp. 386-388, quotes on p. 386; Kelly, op.cit., p. 144.

67. Jeapes ibid., pp. 133-142.

68. Ibid., pp. 160-211; Halliday, op.cit., pp. 340-344; Akehurst, op.cit., p. 21; Kelly, op.cit, p. 144.

69. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 21-22; Geraghty, op.cit., pp. 124-132; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 143-158; Kelly, op.cit.

70. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 20-21; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 160-161.

71. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 22-23; Jeapes, ibid., p. 161.

72. Kelly, op.cit., pp. 144-146; Price, op.cit., p. 6.

73. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 31-44; Jeapes, op.cit., pp. 159-161; Halliday, op.cit., p. 325.

74. Yodfat, A., The Soviet Union and the Arabian Peninsula, Croom Helm, London, 1983, pp. 13-15, 32-34, 42-44.

75. Geraghty, op.cit., p. 133; Jeapes, op.cit., pp. 162-163.

76. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 22-23, 58-59.

77. Ibid., pp. 60-65; quotations p. 64 and p. 65 respectively.

78. Price, op.cit., pp. 6-7; quote is from Radio Aden, 'Voice of Oman', on p. 6.

79. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 66-79.

80. Ibid., pp. 82-86

81. Ibid., pp. 90-96; Jeapes, op.cit., pp. 192-203.

82. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 99-110; Jeapes, ibid., p. 203.

83. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 111-137; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 203-205; Kelly, op.cit., p. 148.

84. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 138-144.

85. Ibid., p. 147.

86. Jeapes, op.cit., pp. 213-220.

87. Akehurst, op.cit., pp. 162-175; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 221-225; Kelly, op.cit., pp. 148-149.

88. Akehurst, ibid., pp. 172-186; Jeapes, ibid., pp. 225-237; Kelly, ibid.

89. Dickens, op.cit., p. 100.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

All three Case Studies chosen for examination were wars, because war is the extreme, and therefore rarest form of application of Armed Forces as instruments of foreign policy. In total, six main combatants were involved - Egypt and Israel; Argentina and Britain; PFLOAG and Oman (though in this case both sides received considerable assistance from allies). The focus was primarily on the victors, in an attempt to ascertain the elements underlying the successful employment of Armed Forces in war.

In each case, the victorious combatants resorted to the use of military power in war (or military force, as Aron would say (1)) because they had no rational alternative. Israel had no economic leverage over Egypt of any kind; economic power was of no use to Jerusalem except in the primary role assigned to it by Realist theorists of International Relations - that is, as a basis for military power (2). Furthermore, Israel had long before exhausted all available diplomatic instruments - appeals to the UN, or the Great Powers, had all failed to produce any result. Britain, though taking immediate economic and diplomatic action to isolate Argentina, and though willing to accept a diplomatic formula

for the withdrawal of the Argentine Forces from the Islands until as late as 20 May, could not afford not to despatch the Task Force - it gave added impetus to the diplomatic and economic measures, showed Britain's determination, kept all possible options open, and prevented the States System from accepting the Argentine invasion as a fait accompli. London had learned the lesson of the 1956 Suez Crisis - procrastination by France and especially by Britain had resulted in the States System, initially outraged by the nationalization of the Suez Canal, coming to accept it as an irreversible fact of life, and thus to oppose the Anglo-French military action when it finally came. In the case of the Falklands, by the time it had become clear that only military force could regain the Islands, that force was ready and available in the crisis area. Initially, the Task Force supported the diplomatic initiatives, following 1 May, this relationship was reversed. Similarly, though sanctions did have an impact on Argentina (especially the arms embargo), the primary role of British economic power was to support the Task Force, through the conversion of merchant ships and the acceleration of production and delivery of weapons systems.

In the case of Oman, the ultimate object of the war was not to destroy the enemey's Forces, not to

regain lost territories - these were mainly the means to the ultimate end: to regain the allegiance of the people of Dhofar. Economic measures alone were of no use - Sultan Qaboos' reforms might have been joyously received, but they could, and did, bring no return until the people could be rescued from PFLOAG terrorism, and that could only be achieved by military means. Diplomatic efforts were of importance only in securing further allies for the Sultan; in other words, in increasing Oman's military power. Diplomacy only induced the PDRY to reduce its support for PFLOAG after the adoo had been soundly defeated. Similarly, Omani economic power was primarily employed as a basis for military power, both directly (financing the enlarged SAF) and indirectly (through the Civil Development programme).

The defeated combatants also had no alternative but to rely primarily on military force. Egypt wished to undermine and eventually destroy Israel; to this end its economic embargoes were hurtful to the latter. However, the real threat, and damage, sprang from Egypt's military actions: the comprehensive support and direction of the fedayeen, and the blockade of the Straits of Tiran (an example of military, not economic, power). Egyptian diplomacy served the purposes of trying to keep

Israel isolated and supporting Egyptian military power by obtaining arms.

Argentina could not hope to obtain the Falklands in the limited time politically available by any means other than the use of military force. Buenos Aires had only very limited leverage over Britain, and diplomatic efforts had all foundered upon the rock of sovereignty. As for PFLOAG, it had no option but to rely on military force to achieve its aims, for the Omani government would never have passively acquiesced in its own destruction, nor would the Dhofari people have accepted the revolutionisation of their Society had it not been accompanied by a policy of terrorism. It should be noted that, in all three Case Studies, it was the ultimately vanquished combatant which actually initiated the use of military force (though in the case of the Sinai conflict, it was Israel that escalated the crisis to the level of full-scale war, in order to pre-empt the Egyptians from doing so).

While the very existence of neither Britain nor Argentina was at stake in the Falklands War, the situation with regard to the other two conflicts was totally different. Both Israel and Oman were fighting for their very existence. For Israel, the penalty of failure would have been the disappearance

of the country from the face of the map; in the case of Oman, its total transformation into a wholly alien, and foreign-dominated, socio-political structure.

It is this factor - the ability of military force to destroy entire States - that both makes meaningful the concept of an ultimate form of power and grants that status to military power. It should not be thought that this is a situation that has arisen since the development of nuclear weapons; it has existed since the birth of civilization. Thus, Athens destroyed Melos in the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century B.C., while, in 4th century B.C. China, Sun Tzu warned his readers of the danger war poses to the existence of a State (4); there are many other examples throughout history.

In fact, military power can not merely destroy States; it can also bring about the destruction of entire States Systems. So it was that the superb Roman military machine first destroyed the Italian States System and then went on to overwhelm the Mediterranean States System, substituting the Roman Empire in their place. Nor is this only an ancient phenomenon; half of the European States System vanished into the Soviet Empire following 1945, as a result of the conquests of the Soviet Army. NATO

was created, and exists today, to protect the surviving portion of the European System from a similar fate.

No other form of power can match the potential rewards - and perils - of military power, though they can be of great assistance. For example, the independent existence of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were all extinguished by German and Soviet military power in the period 1938-1940, but only after the diplomatic manoeuvres of both Berlin and Moscow had left them isolated and vulnerable. Finland, significantly, only survived a similar fate because of its unexpectedly successful military resistence.

As a consequence of these realities, the refusal - indeed, the incapacity - of the 'scientific' school of 'policy contingent framework analysis' (also known as the 'relative infungibility explanation') to accept the concept of an ultimate form of power represents a serious flaw in the theory. Nor is it the only one. Baldwin (5) accuses the Traditional, or Realist, approach to International Relations as encouraging sloppy analysis, focusing his attack on

> phenomenon of the "paradox of unrealised power" is, the apparent inability of stronger States force weaker ones to do their will - the US and

Vietnam being the most common example), with the claim that Realist theorists blame such occurences on the lack of will and/or skill of the apparently stronger power. Policy contingent framework analysis, Baldwin holds, takes skill and will into account when estimating power relationships.

However, while this is excellent in theory, its application in practice is a different matter. Skill and will can only be calculated - and then only approximately - if there is some recent experience from which the analyst can extrapolate. When such data has been available, Realists have always used it. There is explicity space for these factors in most Realist theories, as in Morgenthau´s categories of national morale and quality of government, Aron´s concept of potential of mobilization and collective action, and Knorr´s mechanism of the conversion models. Of the Realist theories considered in this Study, only Carr´s lacks such explicit consideration of skill and will (6).

Unfortunately, in the real world, such data is often lacking. And there is nothing that policy contingent framework analysis can do, or provide, to overcome this problem. No matter which approach is adopted, if there is no data on a nation´s skill and/or will, then guesses will have to be made -

and, inevitably, many of them will be wrong. States and governments do not obey rigid scientific laws. They are often unpredictable, even capricious. All this renders the job of the analyst very difficult.

For example, with regard to the Falklands War, Argentina had not been involved in a foreign war for a century. No real data thus existed as to the likely levels of skill and will on the part of the Argentine government and Armed Forces. As it turned out, Buenos Aires had the will, but not the skill, to wage war. Among the Armed Services, the will of the Air Force was very strong, that of the Army reasonable, but that of the Navy (following the sinking of the Belgrano) proved to be weak; in no case were their skills up to the task.

Again, in the case of the 1956 Sinai War, both Israel and especially Egypt had seen considerable internal upheavals and changes since 1949, so that the experiences of the 1948-1949 War seemed to be of doubtful validity by 1956. Nasser had, it emerged, both political will and skill, but Egyptian military will and skill proved inadequate - it was quite good when the Egyptians were fighting defensively from prepared positions, but otherwise was poor. Israel, however, displayed the requisite skill and will to win the war. But none of this was obvious before

the war. In Israel, only Dayan and the IDF were confident of their qualitative superiority (in terms of skill and will) over the Egyptians. Even Prime Minister Ben-Gurion was doubtful, in retrospect exaggerating the capabilities of the Egyptian Armed Forces, and wavering briefly when it seemed that Britain and France were not going to abide by their agreement with Israel.

None of these things could have been known by any outside analysts observing the events unfold. When, and where, data exists from which levels of skill and will can be calculated, Realists use it; when it does not exist, policy contingent framework analysis cannot supply it.

Furthermore, with regard to the 'scientific' school's favourite example of the paradox of unrealised power: the U.S. was not merely fighting a (relatively) small Asian country; it was fighting an alliance of such a country, a Superpower (the USSR) and a major power (the PRC). The latter two poured arms and other aid, without interference (until 1972) into North Vietnam, including their most sophisticated weapons and the necessary military advisors to instruct in their use. The Vietnam War was a conflict between the Superpowers, with the USSR using a proxy, and because of this, as well as

the self-imposed restrictions under which the Americans fought, was no-where remotely as uneven a conflict as has often been claimed. Thus, the paradox is more apparent than real, while the American practice of fighting in Vietnam under severe and self-imposed restrictions does raise real questions about American political skill and will dur'ng that war.

Baldwin further argues that policy contingent framework analysis is superior to Realist analysis because the former focuses on power's contextual nature (7). However, Realist theorists also emphasize the contextual nature of power. Weber described it as requiring a "social relationship" (8) (this being so defined as to include relations between States) in which to function, while Aron described the exercise of power as "a human relationship" (9), to give only two examples.

Where the Realists do differ strongly is in their recognition of the need, for the purposes of day-to-day power calculations, for an approximate, general power hierarchy of States, based on their military power because this is both the easiest to measure and most important form of power there is. The call, by the Sprouts, for <u>all</u> power analysis to be contextual is simply not practical. Though the

Sprouts argue that it is possible, by eliminating the many remote contingencies concerning the application of power, to come to

> "a hard core of contingencies that seem more or less likely to set the major patterns of international politics in the years to come" (10).

This is simply not a practical proposition. The modern world is far too complex to allow anyone to be able to confidently assert which policy contingencies are likely to be remote or "hard core".

This is apparent even from the handful of examples examined in this study. Who could have predicted that Britain would have entered an alliance, albeit a loose one, with Israel in 1956? Nasser, for one, initially could not believe it (11). Then there is the case of the Falklands War, fought between countries that, despite their differences over the Islands, traditionally regarded each other as allies. Britain sold, without hesitation, some of its most sophisticated arms to Argentina. History is full of many other examples - most experts were taken by surprise by the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact. Few analysts were not surprised when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in late 1979. Many other instances of apparently improbable crises, conflicts and other contingencies coming to pass could

quite easily be collected.

Policy contingent framework analysis, advocated by Baldwin, not only offers no advantages over the traditional Realist approach but, as has been shown, suffers from severe drawbacks: it fails to recognise the necessary pre-eminence of military power; it cannot provide the general power rankings which, while far from preci , are essential for making sense of inter-State relations, which occur within a hierarchical framework (as shown by terms such as Superpower, Great Power etc.); and its insistence upon placing all power analysis within specific policy contingency frameworks, though impressive in principle, is utterly unworkable in reality.

The alternative 'scientific' approach, exemplified in this study by the work of Ray Cline (12), is that of quantification - an attempt to transform the discipline of International Relations into a mathematically based science, illustrated by Cline's formula for calculating a State's power:

$$Pp = (C+E+M) \times (S+W)$$

where:

Pp = Perceived power

C = Critical mass = population + territory

E = Economic capability

M = Military capability

S = Strategic purpose

W = Will to pursue national strategy

Initially impressive, such formulae are ultimately totally sterile. They solve nothing. They face exactly the same problem as giving a real meaning to concepts such as "will", "strategic purpose" and so on, that both Realist and policy contingency framework analysis have. Additionally, the mathematical approach is too rigid to deal with the complexities of the real world - it implies, and seeks, clear answers. But they do not exist - there is too much unpredictability in inter-State relations, as has already been demonstrated. Such factors as will and purpose can be subject even to daily variations. Any possible answers from the equations would rapidly become outdated. Quantification has its place in International Relations, but it is a subordinate and limited place. Its true role is in providing the analyst with such limited data that can be usefully conveyed in numbers - strength of Armed Forces, size of Gross National Product, and so on. In this form it has always been employed by Realist theorists.

The sad truth is that so much intellectual effort has been devoted to the creation of the various 'scientific' approaches that little is left over for grappling with the realities of inter-State

relations. All too often, the 'scientific' school was concerned not with the study of International Relations, but with the study of approaches to the discipline itself. While there is room in the subject for this - indeed, it is necessary - it must not be allowed to usurp it totally. Theorists of the 'scientific' school came to see the creation of 'improved' theories as ends in themselves; the application of such theories to the real world often seems to have been of little interest to them. As a consequence, they frequently (as in the case of Baldwin, Cline and the Sprouts) failed to recognise the im- -icality of their approaches.

Not tha- -list theories are perfect - far from it: Carr's is too simple; Morgenthau's over-involved and cumbersome; while Knorr's suffers from his adoption of the 'scientific' style. Aron's approach, perhaps aided by the French distinction between puissance (power between States) and pouvoir (power within a State), is clearly the best of those considered in this study, being both comprehensive yet concise. Nevertheless, all these Realist theories work - not equally well, but all better than the apparently superior modern approaches. And the Realist tradition has worked, and worked well, for at least 2,500 years. Few other intellectual approaches in any field can claim as much.

Just as the Realist approach still works, so too does military power and military force. War, in the post-1945 era, remains a "matter of vital importance to the State", a "continuation of political activity by other means" (13). Armed Forces remain key instruments of foreign policy, often being the only instrument capable of achieving foreign policy goals (though not always directly, nor by war or violence short of war). This leads to another of the advantages of Armed Forces - their enormous flexibility. They can, short of war, demonstrate concrete support for an ally, or make a demonstration against an enemy or rival; they can be used as instruments of foreign aid (not merely military foreign aid - Army engineers can build roads and bridges, Air Force transports can distribute emergency food aid, and so on); used on public safety tasks (such as Search-and-Rescue) and so on. Indeed, it is this flexibility, unequalled by any other form of power, that further established military power as the ultimate form of power, along with its value in ascertaining national standing and power (the most obvious example is the USSR, rated as a Superpower solely on the basis of its military might), and, of course, with its extreme capability to destroy both States and States-Systems.

Even in their extreme form of employment, violent conflict and war, Armed Forces still display enormous flexibility. The massed bomber fleets of the Second World War; the small groups of Commandos rescuing hostages from terrorists in the present day; SAS Civil Aid Teams bringing medical aid to underdeveloped corners of the world - all are aspects of the employment of Armed Forces.

Moreover, military power often underlies the other forms of power - diplomacy is more effective if backed by strong Armed Forces (militarily weak countries rarely enjoy any significant diplomatic influence). Economic power can be promoted by military might (weaker States can often develop close economic ties with their Great Power patrons, having originally entered the relationship for military reasons).

However, despite its importance, and flexibility, military power is not a universal panacea. There are many matters for which it is totally inappropriate - the debate over the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy, for example. Indeed, military power is usually of no relevance in relations between friends and allies (except in the special case of meeting military obligations).

When the employment of military force does seem appropriate, it is of utmost importance that the State concerned has ensured that its Armed Forces have received the necessary arms and training for them to be able to participate in war. It would be nothing short of madness for a State whose Armed Forces are little more than a gendarmerie to engage in armed conflict with another State - unless its services were of a comparable level of training and equipment. Italy plunged into World War Two in 1940 with a well trained but very poorly equipped Air Force, and (apart from some elite units) a poorly equipped and trained Army, and suffered many humiliations as a result. This is why Realists stress such factors as military preparedness, and the "quantity and quality of implements and combatants" (14).

Assuming that the Armed Forces are properly trained and equipped (the former being the more important factor), it is imperative that they be properly employed. This requires that the government listen to its specialist advisers - the Chiefs of the Armed Forces (or, in the case of a special problem, perhaps some of their subordinate specialists). That is why they exist. Civil control of the military is not the same, and does not imply, civil interference in the conduct of operations. Such

interference can only be justified under exceptional circumstances. Otherwise, in Sun Tzu´s phrase, it amounts to "hobbling the Army" (15). One of the prime factors underlying Germany´s defeat in the 1939-1945 War was Hitler´s continual interference in military operations and his disregard of professional advice. While it is true that Churchill often tried to interfere in British military operations, he, unlike Hitler, was open to professional advice and persuasion - which meant that, in Churchill´s case, usually only his good ideas came to see the light of day.

Of course, military Chiefs are by no means perfect; they can be incompetent, or tired, or ill, or otherwise fail to come up to the standard required. Such failings would rapidly become apparent during a conflict, and the government would be entitled - indeed, obligated - to replace the Officers concerned. In the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln fired a string of Generals for being inadequate - but, in each case, only after they had sustained a defeat at the hands of their Confederate counterparts. Federal Generals who were not defeated kept their jobs (note that the dismissed Generals had usually commanded armies bigger and better equipped than those of their Confederate opponents). One of the problems Argentina had in

the Falklands War was that its government could not dismiss any inadequate Service Chief because they were the government. This illustrates one of the reasons why Armed Forces must always be answerable to some higher civil authority. Moreover, as military force serves political ends, in the end it is only a political leadership that can truly judge whether the Armed Forces actually gained the desired ends.

Because of its role in deciding upon the use of military power to achieve policy goals, and in assigning the Armed Forces their ultimate objectives, it is imperative that the government have at least some knowledge of the conduct of war. The better this knowledge, the better the government can understand, evaluate and appreciate professional military advice. This is why Sun Tzu argued that the study of war should be mandatory, and why Machiavelli insisted that a Prince's (i.e. government's) prime interest should be the requirements of war (16).

Armed Forces are still crucial instruments of foreign policy today; they are the basis of a country's standing in the world, of its security, indeed, its very survival. More - as powerful Armed Forces in the hands of an expansionist State are the

primary, if not the only creditable, threat to the existence of the entire States System, so too are strong Armed Forces in the possession of status quo powers its only guarantee of survival. Rome may have destroyed the Hellenistic States System, but the earlier Persian attempt to overthrow the Greek City-State System foundered on the rock of the latter's military might. And, today, NATO has not only preserved the Western States System for over forty years, it has also prevented the outbreak of any general (as distinct from local) war. Armed Forces form the instrument which underpins the balance of power, that equilibrium between the powers that "secure[s] the repose and independence of the Powers" (17) and which constrains the powerful from doing "what they have the power to do" (18).

NOTES

1. See Part I, Chapter 1, pp. 16-23.

2. See the discussion of Aron, Carr, Knorr, and Morgenthau in Chapter 1 passim.

3. Sun Tzu, The Art of War, translated by Samuel B. Griffith, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, Ch. XII, v. 18, pp. 142-143.

4. *Thucydides*, *The Peloponnesian War*, Penguin, London, 1981, Book V, sections 85-111, pp. 401-407.

5. Baldwin, D.A., "Power Analysis and World Politics", in World Politics, Vol. 31, No. 2, January 1979; and see Part I, Ch. 1, pp. 30-34.

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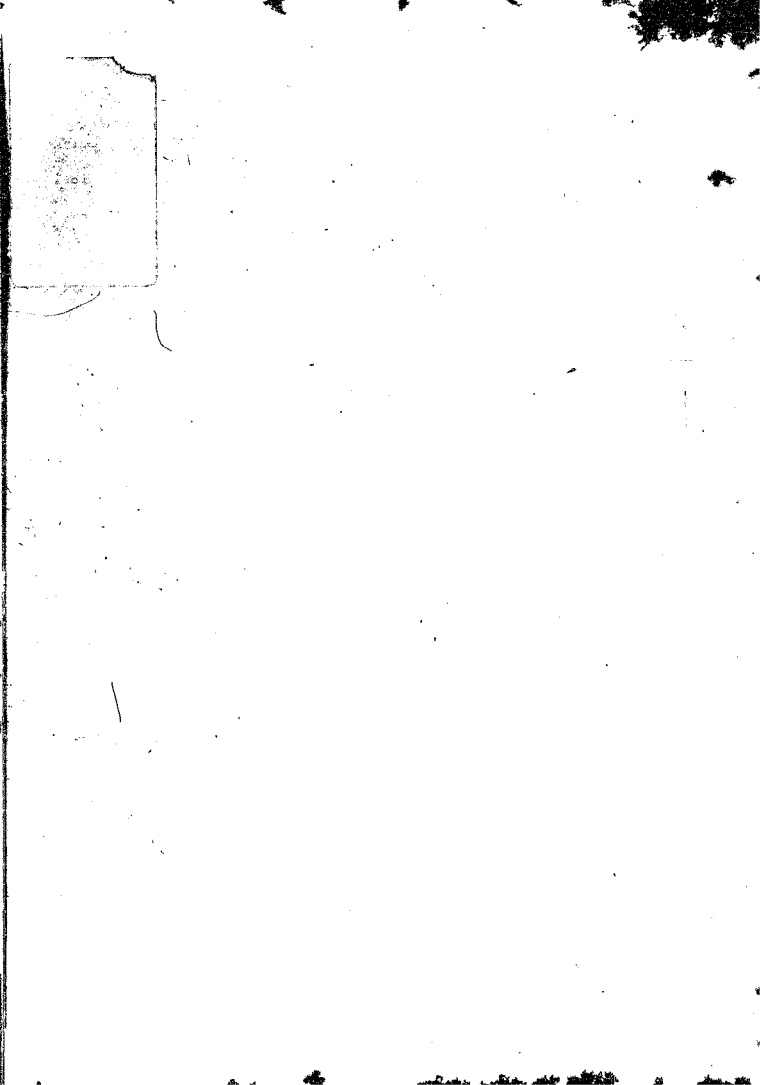
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