

## Appendix 1

### Declassified Material from the Rattenbach Commission

The reinterpretation of the Malvinas/Falklands War that we provide in this article is based on newly declassified material from the Commission for the Analysis and Evaluation of the Responsibilities in the South Atlantic Conflict (CAERCAS) also known as the Rattenbach Commission, due to its chair, Lieutenant General Benjamín Rattenbach.

The CAERCAS was charged with the task of compiling all official documents related to the war and interviewing all participants at the highest levels of the state including the members of the Junta, between December 2, 1982 and September 16, 1983. Its purpose was to establish the motives leading to the war and the reasons of the defeat. Thus, it provides the best source for the analysis of our central research question: Why did Argentine authorities decide to fight the war?

The last military Junta that governed Argentina in 1983 declared the workings of the commission a military and political secret. Nevertheless, a sanitized version of the final report of the CAERCAS, also referred to as the Rattenbach Report, appeared in the Argentine magazine *Siete Días* on the editions of November 23 and November 30, 1983. That version of the final report contained only the conclusions (some fifteen chapters amounting to 290 pages) to which the chair of the CAERCAS, Lieutenant General Benjamin Rattenbach, had arrived. Apparently another member of the commission, Major General Tomás Sanchez de Bustamante, filtered them to the press. The rest of the documentation, consisting of interviews with members of the Junta, ministers, the General Staff, and other high-ranking officials, as well as official documents compiled by the commission, remained subject to secrecy.

On February 8, 2012, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner established by decree that the whole set of documents produced by the Rattenbach Commission was to

be declassified. This documentation, comprising 17 volumes and some 3,000 pages is available since 2014 in the official website of the Argentine Presidency.<sup>1</sup>

Although the final report is almost exactly as it appeared in the press in 1983, the large amounts of declassified material far exceed that particular document and provided the material for a new historiographical wave revisiting this war. For example, a set of intelligence reports from 1979 to 1981 that clearly state a “proportional British response” as the most likely scenario after an invasion of the islands has served historians to debunk the miscalculation thesis.

**Table 1. Intelligence reports forecasting proportional British response**

Title	Document number	Year
Apreciación sobre las islas Malvinas	w/n	1979
Apreciación sobre islas Malvinas, Antártida y Beagle	w/n	1980
Apreciación sobre “Política de Defensa de Gran Bretaña”	Inf. JEIN. IM4 N° 257 “ESC”/80	1980
Apreciación sobre la “Capacidad Británica de Movilización de una Fuerza de Despliegue Rápido”	Inf. JEIN, IM4 N° 417 “ESC”/81	1981
Apreciación sobre la “Infraestructura Militar de las islas Malvinas”	Inf. JEIN, IM4 N° 580 “ESC” 780	1981
Apreciación sobre la “Operación Alfa” en las Islas Georgias del Sur	Inf. JEIN, IM4 N° 318 “ESC”/81	1981

Source: Annexes to the Rattenbach Report. Volume I, pp. 20-22.

In particular, this massive declassification allowed the public to access *testimonies of high-ranking state officials* for the first time. In this Appendix we summarize some of this material, which has so far, to our knowledge, never been translated to English. In particular, we focus on the five volumes corresponding to the Declarations to the CAERCAS. These volumes provide access for the first time to the testimony of all high government officials directly involved in the planning of the war.

Before this material became available, Argentine testimonies consisted mostly of memoirs. Some relevant memoirs are those of the Minister of Foreign Relations, Nicanor Costa Mendez; the designated Argentine Governor of Malvinas, General Mario Benjamín Menéndez; the Argentine Ambassador in the United Kingdom, Carlos Ortiz de Rosas; the Commander of the landing operation in Malvinas, Rear Admiral Carlos Carlos Büsser; and other lower-rank army officers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The material we use in this appendix can be found online at: <https://www.casarosada.gob.ar/informacion/archivo/25773-informe-rattenbach>.

<sup>2</sup> Nicanor Costa Mendez, *Malvinas esta es la historia* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1993); Mario Benjamín Menéndez, *Malvinas: testimonio de su gobernador* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1983); Carlos Büsser, *Malvinas: La Guerra Inconclusa*, (Buenos Aires: Fernandez Reguera, 1987); Martín

The Declarations to the CAERCAS, however, present several advantages vis-à-vis those memoirs. First, they were recorded less than a year after the end of the war, allowing the interviewees to remember events clearly. Second, they were taken under oath and under secrecy, providing reasons to believe that they are truer than later statements made for public consumption. Third, the officials were asked a series of comparable questions by the investigators, which limited the interviewees' capacity to provide a distorted and overly favorable account of facts (as is often the case in memoirs) and also allowing investigators to triangulate an accurate picture of the causes of the war. Fourth, and most importantly, the CAERCAS interviewed all major participants, including the members of the Junta. This is the first document containing the deposition of any member of the Junta regarding their motives and strategic assessments before attempting to (re)take the Malvinas/Falklands Islands by force. Since the members of the Junta ultimately decided the seizure of the islands, their statements are decisive evidence to establish the motives behind their decision.

In the following pages of this Appendix we provide a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn from the statement of officials that played a relevant role in the planning stages of the war, between December 22, 1981, and the final decision to land in Malvinas on April 2, 1982. During that period a small group of high government officials knew about the plans. Our purpose is not to transcribe their declarations in whole, but rather to summarize the ways in which they illuminate our argument and the alternative explanations in the article.

According to the investigations of the Rattenbach Commission, a group of ten to twelve officials knew about the decision to seize the Malvinas/Falklands before March 1982 – one month before D-Day: the members of the Junta, three officials in the Task Force that planned the landing operation, the Minister of Foreign Relations, and other three to five officials, mostly in the navy. On March 15, the decision was shared with the General Staff and on March 26 the decision to land on April 2 was made. This Appendix is more strongly based on the depositions of this narrow group of officials.

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Antonio Balza, *Así peleamos Malvinas: testimonios de veteranos del ejército* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Soldados, 1999); Carlos Ortiz de Rosas, *Confidencias diplomáticas* (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, 2011); Juan Yofre, *1982: los documentos secretos de la Guerra de Malvinas/Falklands y el derrumbe del proceso* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2011). Juan Yofre, *Fuimos Todos: Cronología de un fracaso, 1976-1983* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2007).

**Table 2. Evolution of the group of decision-makers from December to April 1982**

<i>Date</i>	<i>People</i>	<i>Description of Events</i>
c. Dec-15 1981	2	A deal between Galtieri and Anaya is struck putting the issue as a first priority for Galtieri's government.
c. Dec-20 1981	6	Anaya tells some three to four Rear Admirals in the Navy that Galtieri had decided he would take the islands during his presidency, either by diplomacy or militarily.
c. Dec-22 1981	7	Galtieri becomes President and tells about his intentions to the Minister of Foreign Relations.
c. Jan-5 1982	10	The Junta meets and decides to start studying the feasibility of the mission. Lami Dozo first knows about the plans. Task force is fully conformed.
c. Feb-15 1982	11	Minister of Foreign Relations is informed that planning started. Also General Vaquero in the army is informed.
March-2 1982	11	Minister of Foreign Relations communicates 'Argentina reserves its right to consult the procedures that best fit its interests' to Great Britain.
March-16 1982	c. 16	The task force presents its first report for the seizure of the islands (DENAC 1). Joint Chiefs of Staff starts planning a second report that should include a plan for the defense but is never finished (DENAC 2).
March-26	c. 25	Decision to attack.
April-2	?	Landing

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

We interpret their declaration in search of evidence that either supports or undermines the four hypotheses at play in our article a) that the Argentine decision-makers did not foresee a British military reaction (miscalculation thesis); b) that the decision was made due to generate domestic support for the Junta (diversionary war thesis); c) that the decision-makers thought Argentina could fight against the United Kingdom and win; and d) that the key decision-makers perceived themselves in a loss frame and acted with the anxiety predicted by prospect-theory. We therefore sought evidence for our argument and evidence for competing arguments.

Throughout the Appendix we identify several statements that provide evidence to reject a) and c) conclusively. Although all interviewees coincide that domestic concerns did not play an important role in the decision, we acknowledge that they would have reasons not to admit this, so we do not think this is conclusive evidence against b). Yet, there is little or no evidence in favor of b) in the declarations, and some statements could be interpreted as decisive against this hypothesis.

Importantly, almost all of the depositions point to the type of behavioral expectations that d), prospect theory, would predict.

First, the depositions point to the perception of *imminent loss* as the main reason behind the hasty decision-making process that ensued in December. Members of the Junta and other key officials concur that the main reasons for their action was their

perception that Argentina was losing the possibility to assert its sovereignty over the islands as the British began to freeze the negotiations.

Second, the Junta decided to act favoring absolute secrecy despite the consequences this would have: poor intelligence and lack of expert advice. Because of these reasons, the decisions were made under high levels of uncertainty, *taking enormous risks*. Later, this resulted in bad planning, lack of coordination, further contributing to defeat.

Third, the Junta leaders *failed to update their priors* despite new information, *neglected information* contrary to their beliefs, and *interpreted new evidence in a self-confirmatory way*. This is clear, for example, regarding evidence of a potential British response and the position that the US would adopt during the conflict. Failure to update also affected negotiations through the consideration of *sunk costs*. An almost literal example was the sinking of the Argentine cruise, General Belgrano, which led to the rejection of a negotiated proposal that was deemed acceptable the very same afternoon before the event and could have brought peace by May 2.

Fourth, Argentine authorities adopted an *all-or-nothing approach to negotiations*. Hardening their position through *emotional and provocative public statements* like that of General Galtieri on April 10, when he said ‘If they want to come let them, we will present battle,’ thus hurting negotiations. Adopting this stance Argentina declined many settlement proposals – e.g. UNSC Resolution 502, General Haig’s proposal, President Belaúnde’s proposal and Pérez de Cuellar’s proposal – all of which were better than the expected result: a foreseeable military defeat. Slogans in Argentina like ‘sovereignty is not negotiable’ and ‘lets not loose diplomatically what we have won by the arms’ clearly show this tendency.

Finally, the Junta acted with considerable *recklessness* throughout the process leading to the occupation. The frictions that led to the invasion on April 2 (instead of May 15, the date for which it was planned) were largely due to a provocation of Argentine workers who raised their flag in the Georgias and the sayings of the Minister of Foreign Relations, Costa Mendez, who stated that ‘if necessary, Argentina will use all means convenient to its interests.’

## **Excerpts from Declarations to the Rattenbach Commission**

According to the CAERCAS, only a handful of high officials (between ten and twelve) were aware of the Junta's intention to take Malvinas by force before March, and some twenty to thirty knew of the resolution before a D-Day was decided on March 26, 1982. In the following sections we look at key testimonies of those who knew about the plans in advance: 1) The Junta, 2) the Task Force designated to plan the landing, 3) a small group of army and navy officers, 4) the General Staff, including some navy officials who knew since December, and 5) the Minister of Foreign Relations. We also include some other key members of the diplomatic corps and 6) other key officials that were excluded from the planning despite their responsibilities, to illustrate how small the decision-making group was until just prior to D-Day.

### ***1. The Junta***

According to the institutions of the Junta, decisions like sending troops to the Malvinas/Falklands had to be made by this collective body, composed by the Commanders in Chief of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Amongst the three, the Commander in Chief of the Army and President of the Republic, Lieutenant General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri, stood supreme, as it was he that acted as head of the Executive Power and to him that other key actors (like Ministers and Diplomats) reported directly. We therefore start with his deposition.

#### ***Teniente General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri. Volume IV, pp. 686 to 732.***

Although it is well known that the Navy had plans to invade the islands dating at least from 1977, Galtieri starts his deposition stating that he did not know about previous studies done by the Joint Chief of Staff regarding the re-conquest of Malvinas (p. 685).

He also denies any consideration that the domestic situation played a role in the decision to take the islands (p. 686), though he had obvious reasons to do so.

One key aspect of the investigation was to ascertain who knew about the plans to take Malvinas. On this regard, Galtieri states that it was not in the mind of the Junta to do so by December, and he did not tell Minister of Foreign Relations, Costa Mendez, about his intentions to invade the islands during December. As will be seen below, this is in direct contradiction with Costa Mendez's declaration.

Galtieri also mentions talking to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, Ortiz de Rozas, and realizing that there would not be a diplomatic solution to the problem in the twentieth century due to the low priority the issue had for Great Britain (p. 687). In his own deposition, Ortiz de Rozas declares having underscored that pushing the British in any camp (including the diplomatic) was a bad idea. These conversations took place in the context of trying to remove Ortiz de Rozas from the embassy in January and

naming an admiral for the position, which signals the decision the Junta had been made by then.

Galtieri admits that the General Staff was not informed until mid-March (p. 688). From this, one can deduce that the only seven individuals knew about the invasion two weeks before it happened.

Rattenbach: “You imposed the secret upon General García. Were you aware that, by doing so, you prevented the intervention of specialized agencies for that task: the Chiefs of Staff? Were you aware that by doing this you prevented the provisional activity of various administrative branches of the government, including the diplomatic corps?”

Galtieri: Yes, I am aware of all that. We had to choose between the secrecy to obtain surprise, or to distribute information to tens or hundreds of individuals which, evidently – given the experience that I have, this makes secrecy impossible – turned the operation unviable.”

Rattenbach: The task force that was formed under the direction of General García. Did it have the proper strategic intelligence for the task, provided by any Chiefs of Staff?

Galtieri: Rear Admiral Lombardo – commander of naval operations – and Brigadier Plessl [also] conformed the task force. Personally, I did not give García any appreciation of foreign intelligence, but I must suppose, given the quality and years of service of these men, that they must have sought, through the means at their disposal – specially in the navy – the necessary elements of judgment.

Rattenbach: But the secrecy impeded them to act in the sense of seeking ample intelligence. Is that correct?

Galtieri: Of course. This is even in the manuscripts. I think of General García’s.”  
(p. 689)

The insistence of Rattenbach on these points signals that the most outstanding feature of the planning was the lack of information and blind trust on what this group of three individuals could do. These individuals end up producing the National Directive 1, or DENAC 1, as it became known by the acronym in Spanish. This was the first document related to the taking of the islands but it clearly stated that it was only devised for the occupation of the archipelago and made no appreciation on how to fight Great Britain in case of response. In the DENAC 1 it clearly stated that plans should be made to evaluate such a scenario. Yet, Galtieri states that the decision to face the British if they reacted was made even without any formal plans.

“Rattenbach: Then the intention, despite that it is not sufficiently clear in the documents, was to occupy to force a negotiation. But what happens after? Which was the alternative when the British military reacted? Was there a decision to face this reaction?”

Galtieri: Yes. This decision was made. On the other hand, it was the only possible decision considering national dignity and honor.”  
(p. 690)

“Rattenbach: In the DENAC1 and DENAC2, it is stated that the appreciation of the global strategic circumstances was going to be done by the Ministry of Foreign Relations? Was this done?”

Galtieri: I do not remember.

Rattenbach: In neither of these documents appears the study itself. It is only mentioned that the Ministry of Foreign Relations would do it. You do not remember?

Galtieri: I do not. The succession of events happened in such short time frame and so much happened that I fail to remember many aspects about the documents”

(p. 691)

From the conversation above and other declarations it is clear that a proper study of the global political and strategic context by the Ministry of Foreign Relations did not take place until March 26, five days before landing (D-Day).

“Rattenbach: The decision to take the islands was made on March 26?

Galtieri: Yes.

Rattenbach: Doctor Costa Mendez argues that when he presented to you for the first time [December 22, 1981] you already informed him, indirectly, that there would be a necessity to, maybe, take the Malvinas. What can you say about that?

Galtieri: That was part of the planning. There was a conflict hypothesis. We had to prepare.

Rattenbach: He maintains that while he was not ordered to prepare, he did not. Is it correct?

Galtieri: He did not because of secrecy; he did not have the liberty to move diplomatically.

Rattenbach: When did Minister Costa Mendez have full knowledge of the decision to occupy the islands, without any specifics about the date? When do you let him know that there is an intention to occupy in the Military Committee?

Galtieri: I said it and I repeat to you, it is not like we were planning to occupy on April 2 and we had a fixed date in mind. This was never spoken.

Rattenbach: But did you let the Minister know about the intention?

Galtieri: Yes, we did let him know about planning. Not the date.

Rattenbach: On March 26 you gave him the intention and the date?

Galtieri: The topics were decided rapidly, due to the situation in the Georgias, I think he knew of the intention by about March 19. From then on there was an acceleration of everything. Even the planning – of positive and negative aspects – was incomplete.”

(p. 725)

Another planning problem derived from this extreme secrecy is that there are no official records of the meetings and certain members of the cabinet that could – and according to some interpretations, should – be part of the decision making group were excluded.

“Rattenbach: The Minister of Defense, according to the National Defense Act, is part of the Military Committee, formed, also, by the three Commander in Chief and the President. You did not inform the Minister of Defense, correct?



Galtieri: No, we did not.

Rattenbach: Any special reason why?

Galtieri: His condition as a civilian and his particular training.

Rattenbach: Wouldn't it have been useful for the action of the Junta, formed by three military *minds* to have the presence of a civilian *mindset*? For example, to evaluate how civilians felt about this? Would the Minister of the Defense have not influenced positively those evaluations?

Galtieri: I do not discard the possibility that he could have provided useful participation.”

(p. 692)

From the conversation above, the idea that a particular military mindset was affecting the decision-making process and that this bias had been amplified by the small group matches our theory very well. The prospect-theory mindset also predicts that actors will continue in their course of action despite evidence that contradicts their calculations, sometimes ignoring this evidence or diminishing its value. This is clear in how the Junta dealt with new information regarding US support for Great Britain in case of an invasion.

“Rattenbach: On April 1, the day previous to the landing, Ambassador Takacs is called in Washington by [Secretary of State] General Haig, who told him that in case of conflict the US would side with Great Britain? Did you receive this information from Ambassador Takacs?

Galtieri: I do not remember.

Rattenbach: You did not receive from the other members of the Junta (through their military attachés) this information?

Galtieri: We should ask them. I do not remember”

(p. 695)

The other two members of the Junta, as well as Ambassador Takacs, confirm that this information was available at the time, and the knowledge of this came at a time when suspending the operation was still possible. Also Ronald Reagan himself called Galtieri the night before the landing. Later in the interview Rattenbach insists on this point, and asked again about having disregarded Ambassador Takacs's report, Galtieri acknowledges to have heard about it and say he “gave it great importance.” Yet, he disregarded the possibility that the US would side with Britain.

Rattenbach: So, in the end you did not believe – despite the warning coming from Haig – the US would be decisively in favor of Great Britain in case of armed conflict?

Galtieri: I would say it was not believed in absolute terms.”

(p. 703)

Another related vignette shows more neatly the recklessness that denying all this information caused:

“Rattenbach: Before our troops started to fight in the Malvinas, you already knew that Great Britain had the United States on its side, NATO, and the European Community. Were you under the impression that, in this situation, we were going to be able to face a war in two fronts: Chile and Great Britain in the Falklands?”

Galtieri: No. We could face it, but without success.”  
(p. 706)

Going back to the days before the landing, secrecy not only impeded the delegation in the US to know about Washington’s reaction beforehand and with more certainty, but also impeded the delegation in the United Nations to plan their activities in New York once the islands were taken.

“Galtieri: The diplomatic and personal means to achieve a proper cover in the Security Council were limited due to the secrecy of the operation. This, to a great extent, meant that during the first voting on April 2 or 3 we would not have better conditions to deal with problems in the diplomatic front in the United Nations.

Rattenbach: So, the secret impeded much of the diplomatic deployment that should have accompanied the military action. Is this true?

Galtieri: It is true.

Rattenbach: It is the orthodoxy, of good doctrine, that any decision of this magnitude, of this nature, should depart from a basis which is a general strategic consideration, in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should participate very actively (...) in the DEMIL 1 it is announced that the strategic evaluation, when the Military Committee judges it necessary, would be prepared by and exposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Did this materialize throughout the conflict?”

Galtieri: Yes, partially; it was almost permanent the presence of the Minister to state his opinions, in the meetings of the Military Committee – which were many during that period [late March].

Rattenbach: What was the appreciation of the Minister before the Junta regarding the probable results that could be obtained in the Security Council? What was the opinion of the Minister in this particular regard?

Galtieri: He was not an optimist. Due to the conditions mentioned before, there was not enough time to work on the support of the fifteen countries in the council.”  
(p. 697)

From D-Day (April 2) to the initiation of hostilities on May 1, while the British fleet was sailing south, there were a series of mediations and a series of proposals that, had they been accepted by the parties involved, could have prevented the military confrontation. One key question that the CAERCAS attempted to answer is the following: Why did the Junta not accept any of the formulas proposed by the mediators when it was already evident that the United Kingdom was sending 80% of its fleet and the United States would side with them, therefore, reducing the chances of military victory to almost none. As this was acknowledged by Galtieri (above), Rattenbach asks a series of questions regarding the confrontational discourse of the Junta and the “all or nothing” approach to negotiations, which are also in line with what we would expect from a prospect theory mindset.

“Rattenbach: On April 10, when a multitude of about 50,000 assembles in Plaza de Mayo, you go out to the balcony and say, among other things: ‘If they want

to come, let them, we will offer resistance!’ These were your words. Your speech was previously prepared or improvised?

Galtieri: Improvised.

Rattenbach: Did you have any notion, in that moment, of the importance of those words with regard to our strategic intentions?

Galtieri: Yes.

Rattenbach: You had the absolute conscience that with this we were presenting a posture of long terms strategic defense?

Galtieri: Strategic defense for limited time.

Rattenbach: You said: ‘we will offer resistance,’ what do you mean by limited?

Galtieri: I refer to time.”  
(p. 697)

As other declarations (below) show, the fact that Argentina would lose the war was evident for most in the Armed Forces by that point. Differing opinions extended the prospects of defending the islands for a few weeks, or a few months, but with significant loss of lives. Yet, even more surprising is the way in which Galtieri dismisses US support for Great Britain as a factor, when US support – through NATO satellite imagery – was allegedly the main cause Argentina had to withdraw its whole navy during the first few days of combat.

“Rattenbach: That the United States would side with with Britain was manifest, practically in official form, by April 1. Does this influence in any way the Junta’s plans for military operations in Malvinas?

Galtieri: No, it does not.

Rattenbach: The fact that a power like the United States would unite with the possible enemy, the United Kingdom, did not influence in any way the strategic decision?

Galtieri: It does not change the strategic decision.”  
(p. 698)

One report by General Vaquero regarding the impossibility of military victory and eminent lose of the political objective was also disregarded, although mediation attempts were still offering the possibility of a truce and beginning of negotiations (p. 701). A proposal brokered by US Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and accepted by British Ambassador to the United Nations, Sir Anthony Parsons, was presented to the Argentine government before Vaquero’s report on May 17. Instead of accepting the proposal, that same day Galtieri recognizes having ordered General Menendez – Argentine Governor in the islands and Commander of the troops – to launch a military offensive (p. 710).

Galtieri’s interview closes with a rather strong exchange between him and Rattenbach regarding Galtieri’s responsibility for not having recognized the necessity to resort to more capable people during the crisis, including not having resigned the presidency when the events began to exceed his capacity. The session is suspended several times at this point, with Galtieri leaving the room and returning on different

dates until the signature of the acts is produced (731). The following passage gives some taste of the sort of blind faith that Galtieri had in his own capacity to manage a situation where the chances of success were minimal:

“Rattenbach: Did you have an exact idea, when you decided to order the takeover of the islands, of what it meant to defend an island 600 km from the continent, with an aerial and naval capacity inferior to that of the adversary? Did you have an idea of the risk you were taking when you decided to defend the island mainly with army troops, against Great Britain, and insist in the idea of defending them even knowing the United States and the European Community would support them? Did you have all this present in your strategic conception?”

Galtieri: Yes I did. I have experience. I have read military history in the Military Academy. And, of course, I knew of the difficulties of this operation. However, there was certain optimism among the other two Commanders in Chief, and a certain trust that, through negotiations, a solution to the conflict could be achieved without reaching a total confrontation. I am talking about the time at which we took the decision: the first weeks of April.

Rattenbach: You speak of experience. Did you ever worked in any exercise related to the defense of an island?

Galtieri: Not exactly.

Rattenbach: Then this was a problem “sui generis” you had to resolve for the first time.

Galtieri: Yes.”  
(p. 725)

***Almirante Jorge Isaac Anaya. Volume IV, pp. 733 to 802.***

Admiral Anaya was a key member of the Junta. All evidence suggests that the plans to take the Malvinas were his and he struck a deal with General Galtieri to carry them out on December 1981. Arguably the most consolidated version in recent historiography is that the invasion of the Malvinas/Falklands was the bargaining chip that secured Galtieri the support of the navy in his quest for the presidency.<sup>3</sup> These versions were ostensibly in Rattenbach’s knowledge and thus he begins his questionnaire asking about these previous plans.

“Rattenbach: Before assuming command of the Armada, did you have any knowledge about the existence of plans to take the Malvinas?”

Anaya: Yes, this was known in the realm of the navy since many years ago. I think at the time Admiral Varela was Commander in Chief [1966 to 1968] there were, at least some ideas in that respect. Then in the year 1978 Admiral Massera was the one who proposed the other commanders (Army and Air Force) the occupation of the islands. Personally, in the year 1977, I planned how this occupation should be done. I

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<sup>3</sup> Benjamín García Holgado and Nicolás Taccone “Diseño institucional e Inestabilidad Presidencial en Autoritarismos” *Desarrollo Económico* 58, no. 224 (2018): 19.

was aware that, also, the Naval Operations Commands had secret plans for how to take the islands.” (733)

In line with the argument we advance in this article, there is a clear reference to the notion that a window of opportunity was closing in the diplomatic realm because Argentina was losing the momentum of the 1960s, the British Parliament was analyzing suspending negotiations, and a few years after, according to Anaya, technology would allow extracting oil from the Malvinas/Falklands region, thus increasing British military presence notably (p. 734).

Importantly, Anaya informed the Council of Admirals about a decision by Galtieri to invade the islands on December 20, two days before General Galtieri becomes President (p. 735).

Regarding the possibility of victory against Great Britain – i.e. the Arquilla and Moyano (2001) hypothesis that the military considered this possible – Anaya offers decisive evidence against it:

“Rattenbach: Before being designated to the task force, did Admiral Lombardo express his doubts regarding the operation?

Anaya: I think the doubts regarding the operation... I mean, *without any doubt, the certainty that a military operation against the third world power cannot be carried out is completely irrefutable*. The problem is that the use of military power to help political decisions is the only way in which military power can be used.

Rattenbach: I reiterate the question. Did Admiral Lombardo express those doubts?

Anaya: It may be. I do not remember.

Rattenbach: Weren't the doubts of Admiral Lombardo more than about the operation itself, about the success of the operation if other specialists did not intervene?

Anaya: Of course! The Ministry of Foreign Relations had to intervene, that is why on January 12 we ordered the constitution of the task force, which had to consult with Foreign Relations, because they had to prepare the political-military plan.

Rattenbach: The task force then had the order to contact Foreign Relations to elaborate these plans?

Anaya: Exactly. But I think they never did or it was done late because everything happened too fast.

Rattenbach: But they had to.

Anaya: Yes.  
(p. 736)

As we saw above and will be evident again below, the Task Force was actually forbidden from contacting anyone. Their orders were to act with utmost secrecy. Yet, the most important point in the conversation is that the Junta decided to act without the proper information about the political environment – i.e. the chances of striking a favorable deal – and with the almost-certainty of defeat in the military realm:

“Rattenbach: In which moment did the Junta understand that the military decision was not favorable for Argentina?

Anaya: I think from the very beginning.

Rattenbach: Orthodoxy of thought and good military doctrine suggest that, at the starting point of a decision of this nature and magnitude, at this level, an appreciation of the general strategy (political strategy) should be done. This is the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Relations. These studies, conclusions, recommendations, etc. were they presented to the Junta?

Anaya: They were never completed.

Rattenbach: So the Junta did not count on any advise fore making the decision.”  
(p. 738)

Against the miscalculation hypothesis, Anaya and many other interviewees make it clear that the military reaction of Great Britain was foreseeable and even expected by the members of the Junta. Rattenbach and Anaya have a long conversation about the reiterated decision of Great Britain to send nuclear submarines every time tensions took place (like in the Georgias crisis, right before the Malvinas/Falklands crisis). The following passage provides strong evidence against the miscalculation hypothesis:

“Rattenbach: Then military reaction was a possibility, almost automatic? Not an unexpected thing?

Anaya: No (...) we did have the idea that every time we presented a strong position in the diplomatic realm, the English had sent those submarines.”  
(p. 739)

In fact, in the DENAC 2 (elaborated by late March, before the invasion) there is a mention to a strategic reserve that is called the “Malvinas reserve” and the “reserve for action already posterior to landing.” This official document already denotes that the British response was foreseen. Apparently, the idea in the Junta was not that the British would not react, but rather that a favorable term could be achieved while engaging British troops. Anaya is clear about how this played out in his mind:

“Rattenbach: Was this about the search for a political success through a military effort, which would be as prolonged as possible?

Anaya: As prolonged as possible, or until something happened that made the others [the British] withdraw their forces, due to the high level of punishment inflicted”  
(p. 744)

“We considered the British reaction would be of about a Brigade, at most. We considered 1,500 men.”  
(p. 745)

“Rattenbach: The extension of this sleight of hand to a protracted defensive war, improvised, without any planning, was it justified? There was no other option?

Anaya: In my view, there was not.”  
(p. 746)

In this and other responses Anaya shows a clear incapacity to update his plans as new information arrived and his inclination to disregard information that was directly

against his priors. He says, for example, that he was aware of the US's capacity to locate ships through satellite imagery due to conversations he had with three American Admirals before the war, in 1980 (Admiral Harry Train), 1981 (Admiral Sylvester Folley), and 1982 (Admiral Thomas Hayward), and still he did not foresee that the NATO satellites would be used against the Argentine navy (p. 747). Later on in the interview he is asked about his decision to withdraw the fleet from combat – after the sinking of the Cruise General Belgrano on May 2. He answered that this was his decision after he came to the conclusion that the United Kingdom had satellite imagery provided by the US. Then, he admits he had some elements to foresee the existence of this technology but nevertheless was not sure about how precise it would be. All in all, he neglected prior information in a way that confirmed his expectations, grossly overseeing three conversations with American admirals (p. 775)

Being asked whether he was not being too optimistic given the information he had at hand the following exchange takes place, where he admits that he knew in advance that the prospects of a war against Great Britain were dim.

“Rattenbach: Your conclusions with respect to a probability of success against Britain were based in all these suppositions?”

Anaya: More than that. I mean, from the beginning I must say that *we could never win a war with Great Britain due a simple problem, that we can never achieve the dominance of the sea*. That the punishment we could inflict to England was great, is true; that the delay [in the reaction] would be great, yes; that the reaction from Thatcher I did not expect, I can also say I was not expecting that.

Rattenbach: What you have just said about your own thought regarding these matters, were these conclusions from before the landing on the Malvinas?

Anaya: Yes, from far before.”  
(p. 765)

Also Anaya's self-confirmatory bias is clear in his alleged expectation that the US would be neutral. His assumptions are incredibly far-fetched, and based on scattered and obviously irrelevant evidence:

“Rattenbach: According to your narrative, when you are informed that there was some support our army was giving to the US in Central America, by sending advisors, you deduce that, by virtue of that support – i.e. military and political advise in Central America – the US would decide not to give any support to England if we decided to take military action in the Malvinas?”

Anaya: Not just that. I also noticed the Sub-Secretary of State of the US, when the Minister of Foreign Relations asks him openly about the relations between Argentina and Great Britain, he answered the problem was between the two of them and it was a ‘hands-off’ problem for them. To me this was very important in the sense that the US – which had the Malvinas problem very present – had a decision in the top levels not to intervene...”  
(p. 765)

Later in the interview, he states that he was present in a meeting on August 1981, where US Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman asked President Viola about the figures that Argentina was willing to support in the upcoming presidential elections in Bolivia. Allegedly, this conversation convinced him of the “power that Argentina had vis-à-vis the United States” (p. 789). This self-confirmatory bias becomes even more evident

when he is asked about his reaction to General Haig's statement on April 1, confirming that the US would side with Britain. He says:

“Anaya: Ultimately, because of what I just said regarding Central America. Because of the interest of the United States to have its borders free of what might happen – and now is happening, no matter what Haig said, what matters is the interest (...)

Rattenbach: You say that the US depended upon Argentine support in Central America to fight subversion. This thing about ‘depending on Argentina’ don't you think is a statement that goes far beyond any reality?

Anaya: (...) Argentina was the only Spanish-speaking country supporting the US in Central America in this way...”  
(p. 773)

When it becomes evident that all these conclusions were close to delusional, Anaya is also asked about the lack of any diplomatic plans or assessments of the political strategic context prior to the invasion.

“Rattenbach: The document produced by the task force, the DENAC, which you approve, contains a series of previous measures by the Ministry of Foreign Relations – above all – Economy, etc. and, despite all this, because of the secrecy imposed by the military Junta or General Galtieri, all these previous works cannot be carried out. Can you explain this?

Anaya: Yes. General Galtieri did not determine the secret of the operation; the Junta imposed it. Because we were absolutely clear in that, if anything would filter, we would have never been able to put a foot on Malvinas. Then the military option was not valid.

Rattenbach: Did the secret compensate for the non-realization of fundamental measures, above all diplomatic, to accompany the action?

Anaya: Yes (...)

Rattenbach: Was it convenient to prepare something in the Security Council, with respect to the military operation that was going to be carried out?

Anaya: Our ambassadors were told – I think those in the United Nations, the Soviet Union, China, etc. – two or three days before, so they would be ready for an urgency requirement, to gather support for Argentina.

Rattenbach: Two or three days before April 2?

Anaya: Exactly.

Rattenbach: Couldn't this be done beforehand?

Anaya: Not before, no.”  
(p. 770)

One key contradiction in the actions of the Junta was this lack of planning in the diplomatic realm did not coincide with the alleged hopes that the Malvinas/Falklands issue would be resolved diplomatically before a full-scale military confrontation took place. One key event that shows the willingness to resolve the issue militarily – although against all odds – took place in New York, by mid-February 1982. There the Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs left talks with Great Britain and issued a



statement that read: ‘If it is necessary, Argentina will use all means convenient to its interests,’ to regain sovereignty over the islands. Anaya is asked if these declarations were not already provoking Great Britain and giving up the secrecy of the operation:

“Rattenbach: Didn’t you think that the final phrase of the communication was an alert to Great Britain about the Argentine intentions.

Anaya: No, no. This was an alert for Great Britain to react, because it permanently played with an image of Argentina of doing nothing – as it is described in the Franks report [a report about the diplomatic stalemate]– the policy they had was one of entertaining the Argentines. And we wanted to have a negotiation and a clarification of the Malvinas problem, Georgias, and Sandwich, with an aggressive diplomatic situation. The aggressiveness of the diplomatic posture was given by the declaration of the Argentine government after the New York meeting and it is very badly received by the English – who realize we were serious.

Rattenbach: *The message sent by the military attaché reflects very clearly the interpretation that, immediately, was given by the United Kingdom to that phrase: that there was a danger of invasion.* So, if there was already a decision by the Junta to invade, what was the reason for alerting the English about this?

Anaya: This is part of the diplomatic game. We go to military action due to the Goergias episode but – I believe I said this – *we intended to use military power, in all moments, to support diplomatic action,* and never adequate diplomatic action to military possibilities.”

(p. 772)

In the context of this response, consider also the recklessness of going to war with Great Britain while the possibility of a war with Chile was very present.

“Rattenbach: At the moment when the landing on the Malvinas is about to take place the situation with Chile is still there. It is in fact so present that we need to station considerable ground troops in front of Chile. Do you think it would have been possible to win a war in Malvinas and against Chile, fighting in two fronts?

Anaya: No.”

(p. 774)

At this point in the interview three things are clear: many hours before the landing Anaya knew the British would react, that a war with Britain would be almost impossible to win, and that the US would support Great Britain, further reducing the chances of winning the war. The following question ensues, followed by an overly emotional answer:

“Rattenbach: At that moment, wasn’t there in the Military Commission anyone who had opposed the continuation of military action?

Anaya: I never heard a member of the commission say he was against continuation of military action. I do not remember. I, personally, was not against. *To me it was necessary to defend the Argentine rights for history, with blood; not to win, but to generate the juridical precedent that, what we believe to be ours, we had defended with our blood.*”

(p. 778)

Finally, Anaya concedes to Rattenbach that when the British fleet arrives there was no rationality in continuing to fight without accepting the terms proposed by Great Britain.

“Rattenbach: When you knew that the negotiation was not rendering results and England was not negotiating, what was the sense in continuing the fight? Was it a problem of pride, honor?”

Anaya: It was a matter of national dignity. Of course, a matter of honor (...) *it was absolutely elemental that against England we were not going to win.* But if one is to defend that which belongs to you, then one has to be thrown away by force.”  
(p. 796)

***Brigadier General Basilio Arturo Ignacio Lami Dozo. Volume IV, pp. 803 to 859.***

Galtieri and Anaya crafted the plans of invasion and brought them to a meeting of the Junta on January 5, when the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Arturo Ignacio Lami Dozo, became the third person to know about them.

“Rattenbach: Who amongst the commanders in chief had the initiative to treat Malvinas on January 5?”

Lami Dozo: You mean who came up with the subject? It was General Galtieri, on January 5.

Rattenbach: What was your opinion in this regard? Did you have a dissident opinion?

Lami Dozo: Not dissident. But I did contend that we should be clear that this was a matter to be studied and analyzed for a hypothetical case – like any country should do – where the political objective was not achieved through the negotiations.”  
(804)

He is immediately asked about the possibility that the two other commanders saw this as a reaction to the domestic context, which he denies.

“Rattenbach: In your assessment of Malvinas, was the domestic political situation of any importance?”

Lami Dozo: No.

Rattenbach: There was never a mention, an analysis of how taking the Malvinas could revitalize the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*?

Lami Dozo: No. At least I never considered so; also, I did never detect this in the other two members.”  
(805)

Regarding secrecy and the small group of people that were informed about the intentions to take the islands by force he is asked:

“Rattenbach: During the process that started on January 5 and followed on January 12, did the Minister of Foreign Relations intervene?”

Lami Dozo: No. Until the 12 he did not. On the 12 we treat the subject again and each of us designates a man that should undertake the study (...) And in that occasion we also decide that the only people to know in this first stage were to be the General Staff and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (...) Because the major thing we wanted to prevent was that this would become like a snowball and from a hypothesis this would turn into something assumed by the armed forces as a fact. *It was analyzed – at least I analyzed this in depth – whether it was more convenient to keep the secret in a small group or require discretion in a big group. I mean, secret in big groups is impossible, you can at most ask for discretion. And we preferred – I think it was right – secrecy in a small group.*”

(805)

“Rattenbach: Which was the reason for the Junta to resort to an ad hoc organism of three men, instead of the General Staff, some of them, or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had the organizational means to carry this out?”

Lami Dozo: For the same reason I said before. This was supposed to be a preliminary study and we did not want to raise expectations in organisms – like the Joint Chiefs of Staff – where any type of discretion is impossible...”

(806)

Noting again that the DEMIL and DENAC1 were directives that only planned the takeover of the Malvinas, Lami Dozo is also asked about the absence of any military plans for defending the islands after the invasion. Against the miscalculation hypothesis, he underscores that the reaction of Great Britain is considered.

“Rattenbach: How is it possible that the limited operation [to just take the islands] is planned completely and there was no intention in planning what was coming after, logically?”

Lami Dozo: When the Joint Chiefs of Staff start to intervene – and then, yes, we start to effectively work on a DENAC – the panorama is broadened and, if I remember correctly, it is on March 10 or 12 that the Joint Chiefs of Staff decide to broaden the study to incorporate a hypothesis of an alliance between Chile and Great Britain, in case of engagement (...)

Lami Dozo: That alternative [a reaction of Great Britain] is considered. All alternatives are considered. *No one could have ever believed that the United Kingdom would not have as a possible course of action that of retaking the islands (...) in no moment did I think that England could remain tranquil.*

Rattenbach: At which moment did the Minister of Foreign Relations begin to take active participation in these discussions?

Lami Dozo: On the second half of February.”

(808)

In this section Lami Dozo already confirms that a group of ten persons knew about the plans by mid-March, two weeks before the landing. He is asked harshly about the implications this imposed secrecy had for the operations:

“Rattenbach: Is it valid to state that, due to the priority of surprise, it was not possible to communicate everything that was necessary to the civilian Ministries?”

Lami Dozo: It was concluded that the surprise would be more convenient to achieve the objective in the DENAC, instead of making this known to many people.

Rattenbach: If the secret was so important to obtain strategic surprise, why do the plans include all those measures, which are not participated to the corresponding people and cannot be made effective?

Lami Dozo: So the Chiefs of Staff can have elements to start analyzing the issue.

Rattenbach: But, necessarily, you would have to analyze them with the responsible people in those areas. Don't you think it would be a redundancy, or a countersense, to have this in the plans if it was not to be adopted?

Lami Dozo: I think that after the 23 or 24 March [a week before the landing] the issue was known by a number of people."

(819)

Then, he is asked about the specific timing of the invasion on April 2. The landing was initially planned for May 15. By that date the weather conditions and decommission of British ships would have enhanced the prospects of victory for the Argentines. The commission asked whether the domestic situation was important to determine the date, getting a negative answer. Then it asks about British ships and the reasons the Junta had to not wait for their decommission. Lami Dozo, like the other members, insists that the problem in the Georgias islands was the trigger.

"Rattenbach: So, in the end, in the decision to anticipate the date what prevailed was the Georgias incident?

Lami Dozo: The catalyzing fact was the Georgias, and the problems associated.

Rattenbach: These considerations prevailed over every other, including considerations regarding the long-term reduction of British military power.

Lami Dozo: Yes, because Great Britain was already sending signals, more and more clear signals, that they would reinforce their presence in the South Atlantic notably."

(816)

The following paragraph is telling of the kind of contradictory wishful thinking on the part of the Junta we would expect given our prospect theory take on this episode. Notice that Lami Dozo had just stated that: "*No one could have ever believed that the United Kingdom would not have as a possible course of action that of retaking the islands (...) in no moment did I think that England could remain tranquil...*" (p. 808). Yet, a few moments after he states that, although the British reaction was foreseeable, he did not expect a confrontation to take place, and he always hoped to negotiate.

"Rattenbach: Which was the alternative that the Junta had in mind in case of a British military response? Confronting with military force?

Lami Dozo: No, always negotiate. *How could we think of a military confrontation?*

Rattenbach: Then, you are carried by the facts?

Lami Dozo: The facts carry us. *The circumstances many times make you act in a way that had been not planned or thought of. But in no single moment – at least with regard to my personal experience – in no single moment we thought about confronting the British military power.*  
(817)

This inconsistency between expecting a British response and not planning for a military confrontation is clear in all documents and declarations of the members of the Junta. There is yet another inconsistency in the alleged intentions of the Junta to achieve a negotiated solution and the rejection of all formulas that could have avoided the conflict.

“Rattenbach: Why instead of negotiating you go toward an attitude of duress that, inevitably, would mean a confrontation in a situation of relative power that was already evaluated to be detrimental to our cause?”

Lami Dozo: Is not like that because immediately after the occupation of Malvinas the US started offering its ‘good offices’ – however you want to call that – to reach an agreement.

Rattenbach: But the President, the Commander in Chief of the Army, says that same night – in which the physical fact of the occupation is still not consummated – in a conversation with the President of the United States, that ‘England should recognize our sovereignty tonight...’ Is this not true?

Lami Dozo: Well... that is already about other people’s expressions.

Rattenbach: Is that negotiating?

Lami Dozo: That is not negotiating.”  
(818)

As well as the other members of the Junta, Lami Dozo is asked for the reasons not to cancel the operations once they know about the US preference for Great Britain.

“Rattenbach: On April 1 in the afternoon, Secretary of State Haig calls Argentine Ambassador Takacs and lets him know that, in case of conflict between Argentina and Great Britain, the US would stand without a doubt with Great Britain. This, the Ambassador communicates to the military attachés. Did the air force attaché inform you about this?”

Lami Dozo: The operation was already under way. It was already executed.

Rattenbach: He did not communicate this?

Lami Dozo: Yes, he did, but it was not a decisive element anymore.

Rattenbach: We are on April 1, was there no time to intervene that night?

Lami Dozo: The point of no return was 18 PM of the day before, because some operations had been launched.

Rattenbach: And they could not return.

Lami Dozo: We could not cancel the operation.

Rattenbach: You are being arbitrary on this point.”  
(820)

Asked once and again why he did not suspend the mission knowing of the support the US would give Britain, he changes focus and says they already knew what Washington's position would be. The following paragraph further illustrates the recklessness of the Junta if in fact they could foresee both British military reaction and the support the US would give the United Kingdom.

“Lami Dozo: But that [that the US would side with the United Kingdom in case of war] we knew very well. If we, Argentina, faced a conflict between some other country and Spain or Italy, we would never support the other country. We are cousins! I do not know if anyone thought that, in a situation of military confrontation, the US was not going to be inclined to support Britain directly or indirectly.

Rattenbach: Any member of the Junta thought that the US would be totally neutral under such circumstances?

Lami Dozo: No, we expected neutrality in the negotiations; to be able to negotiate...”  
(821)

Then the interview switches back to the issue of inflexibility in the negotiations and the continuous signaling to the British that Argentina was willing to fight.

“Rattenbach: On April 10 in Plaza de Mayo a great amount of people gathered (calculated at around 150,000 persons) and General Galtieri from a balcony pronounced more or less the following words: ‘if they come, we will fight back.’ Why were you not there in that occasion?

Lami Dozo: ... Galtieri told me that there was a great amount of people gathered and he invited me to join. I said no, that I did not believe it was correct and I even thought it was convenient not to have such an act. He told me his advisors were telling him it would be convenient to appear if only to wave and compliment the people that had gathered there. I said to General Galtieri ‘if there is no other way, go but remember what we talked about in the meetings of the Military Committee’, in the sense of avoiding that triumphalism, which was already present”  
(826)

Then he is asked about the reasons for rejecting the Security Resolution 502 and General Haig's proposal. At this point, the British fleet was arriving and the Junta basically knew that the war would be lost sooner or later.

“Rattenbach: When Great Britain decrees the blockade, on April 8, and the war is imminent because British forces abandon Ascension Island on April 16, why did you reject Resolution 502 and General Haig's proposal in Buenos Aires, two times?

Lami Dozo: I do not know if the word ‘rejection’ was employed or not, but the form we interpreted Resolution 502 was that this had an integral character. I mean, those were not steps to be followed, but a whole that had to be undertaken in its entirety. These were the themes in the 502: the withdrawal of troops, cessation of hostilities, and negotiations (...) so we say, ‘no, this is all at the same time’ (...) The problem with Haig's proposal of April 29 was the article 8 or 9 – I don't remember clearly – which practically, with other terms, refers to what is known as self-determination; it talks about an opinion survey with the inhabitants of the islands...”  
(828)

Finally, he is asked about the reasons for rejecting other two proposals presented right after the beginning of hostilities. In those parts of the text it becomes clear that there were sentimental reasons and even feelings of revenge had affected the calculations of the decision makers after the sinking of the Cruise General Belgrano.

“Lami Dozo: The moment when we were analyzing the proposal of Belaúnde was May 2. The Minister of Foreign Relations says with few modifications, it is acceptable (...) the conclusions we arrived to with the three commanders was that Belaúnde’s proposal was to be retained to be accepted (...) Later I get a call by phone – I don’t remember the time exactly, must have been 2 or 3 in the morning – to inform me that the communication with Architect Belaúnde – President of Perú – had happened and it had been said to him that, due to the sinking of the General Belgrano that same day, the treatment of his proposal had been differed. Then I said: ‘this is not what we convened; but is all right.’

Rattenbach: You said your opinion was to retain the offer and Admiral Anaya accepted the consequences too?

Lami Dozo: In the meeting Admiral Anaya – I cannot forget this – in tears, said ‘if this is the sacrifice that has to be made by the navy, I am willing to do it.’ I cannot forget this.

Rattenbach: Then who wants to differ?

Lami Dozo: I do not know (...)

Rattenbach: From what you just said it can be deduced that someone wanted to reject the offer.

Lami Dozo: To defer, not reject (...)

Rattenbach: So, the one who differs is General Galtieri?

Lami Dozo: It follows from the conversation.”  
(836)

This conversation almost literally illustrates the “sunk costs” strategic logic that is at play in prospect theory. In the first episode of the war (when the British fleet had just arrived to the islands and far before the British landing) Argentina began the war loosing a ship. This put the Junta on a loss frame with respect to the conflict itself, and made the President reject a proposal that was calculated acceptable only hours earlier. Argentina sunk the British destroyer H.M.S. Sheffield on May 4, and from then on the prospect of a negotiated settlement acceptable for both parties is virtually discarded.

## **2. The Task Force**

Besides the three members of the Junta and the Minister of Foreign Relations, only other three men knew of the plans to invade Malvinas/Falklands before the invasion took place. These were the officers in charge of planning the invasion itself. In this section we review how they thought of the plans as they were being developed, in particular regarding the motive for the invasion and the probability of a British response.

*Rear Admiral Juan José Lombardo. Volume I, pp. 57 to 107.*

Supporting the idea that the plans were first thought out in the navy and Admiral Anaya was one of the key figures willing to push them, Lombardo narrates that his Commander in Chief asked him to “study the possibility of taking the Malvinas” on December 15, 1981. Anaya had a previous conversation with him in August 1977 regarding this possibility (p. 58). He confirms those plans were then evaluated and presented to the Junta by Admiral Massera in 1978 but were disregarded by the other Commanders in Chief at that time. In his testimony Lombardo assures he asked Anaya if he had to plan for a foreseeable British reaction.

Lombardo: Anaya told me ‘what you need to do is to take the Malvinas, the rest is a different problem, which we will think after this is underway’ in those words.”

(60)

Lombardo then insisted that a British reaction was likely and asked again if he should plan for that as well.

Lombardo: (...) he insisted in that, he said ‘what happens afterwards is my problem. You have to undertake the operation to take the Malvinas’ and left.”

(66)

Later in the interview, Lombardo confirms he did not receive any information from the Ministry of Foreign Relations or any intelligence agency regarding British capabilities (p. 87). It is clear from Lombardo’s declarations that there was no miscalculation regarding the British response. He and Anaya clearly saw a response was highly probable. Moreover, Lombardo was already under the impression that the United Kingdom would have satellite location of all ships due to technology at disposal of NATO (p. 97). A copy of a report dated May 15, 1982 – which he presented to the CAERCAS – supports his testimony, (p. 107).

Despite all this evidence, the Junta proceeded lacking any planning beyond the mere tactical objective of occupying the islands. Apparently, there was no consideration of the political-strategic objectives because the Junta did not meet to consider those until March. Then Lombardo recalls Brigadier General Lami Dozo named Plessl, and General Galtieri named García to integrate, with him, a task force. This was around January 5. Yet, a few admirals in the navy might have been aware that this was an important plan and eager to see it happen.

“Lombardo: In the navy – and I imagine in the other forces as well – there was a deep frustration due to the non-concretion of the actions against Chile. I mean, the war had been aborted ten minutes before its beginning (...) I have received via many subordinates to the fleet, many notes of restlessness in this sense.”

(p. 62)

Lombardo highlights that the work of the task force was essentially completed in a week, for a meeting on January 12 and in the middle of summer holidays. He also adds that unlike people in the navy who had seen previous plans, “García and Plessl knew nothing” (p. 67). Unlike him, who had been undertaking some planning since December, the other two members of the tasks force had literally one week to devise the plans.

Lombardo was later designated commander of the South Atlantic Theater of Operations (TOAS, by its acronym in Spanish). The TOAS was created a few days after



the landing, on April 4, and was supposed to handle the operations to defend the island. When he was asked if the defense was planned in any way before April 4, he answered “No, absolutely not. As I said before: no, definitely not” (p. 70).

Noting that Argentina would have been in a better position to defend the island in May, Lombardo also expresses skepticism regarding the Georgias incident. He recalls the navy had another plan “Operation Georgias,” which was to take place after the Antarctic campaign in March. This plan was allegedly suspended, but it is nevertheless curious that an incident in the Georgias triggered the crisis that led to the anticipation of the Malvinas Operation from May 15 to April 2. This anticipation then led to all series of mistakes due to the lack of proper planning, some of them regarding the jurisdiction of each force. Brigadier Plessl claimed jurisdiction over the landing sites islands, which Lombardo thought should be naval jurisdiction and used for aeronautic operations. That, as well as many other key operational issues, was not fully resolved: “We said, lets put the possibilities on the table and let that be solved afterwards” (p. 71).

Lombardo also mentions a complete lack of coordination between the forces. Although the TOAS claimed command over General Menéndez – commander of the land forces in the islands – he never recognized Lombardo’s orders and communicated directly with Galtieri. The situation forced the creation of a Coordination Committee by mid-May, which only partially solved the problem of not having a central command. This was later identified by General Rattenbach as one of the main causes of the defeat.

Importantly, Lombardo always noted that Argentina was to lose the war and asked emphatically for the Junta to strike a deal.

Lombardo: “I told them repeatedly ‘When are we accepting negotiating terms? Militarily, we have no solution to the English attack.’ As long as they did not attack it is easy, but when they decided to initiate the operations, we had no military solution. We could cause them damage, troubles, but I knew if they put the necessary effort they would crush us”  
(p. 79)

He narrates that around April 15, intelligence reports coming from each of the three forces assured that Chile would attack. This was the main reason why key battalions (like Battalion V of the Marine Corps and the Mountain Regiments of the Army, who were more apt to fight under those weather conditions) were not sent to the islands (p. 79). If these reports are true, they further illustrate the recklessness of the Junta.

Finally, Lombardo discards any possibility that the Junta members did this to generate a rally-round-the-flag effect and remain in power. His testimony in this regard is more credible than the Junta’s, who have obvious reasons to deny it. He does not – in fact, it would help alleviate his own responsibilities to push that interpretation. However, he advances a convincing argument against the diversionary war thesis:

“Lombardo: If the main goal was to achieve the union of the Argentine people behind a banner and consolidate that which was dismembering in late March when the demonstrations started – do not forget that two days before April 2 [D-Day] there was a demonstration in Plaza de Mayo. If that was the goal, then we should have ended military action on April 3 or 4. With that we would still be winners, although partial winners, and avoided a defeat.”  
(p. 86)

***Major General Osvaldo J. García. Volume I, pp. 1 to 37.***

The designated army official for the task force starts his declaration emphasizing he had no knowledge of the islands “at all” when he was designated to draft the plan as it appears in the DENAC1 (p. 3). Nevertheless, he was asked to present conclusions “as soon as possible,” (p. 3) and no evaluation of the general political context was required of him, nor taken into account (p. 6). Under such pressure, the task force elaborated the plans between the third and fourth week of January 1982, in “only one week” (p. 7). Interestingly, at the moment of the deposition before the CAERCAS, General García failed to recall the name of one of the two Malvinas islands (p. 12).

General García proceeds to tell that all planning was suspended during February and only on March 6 was he summoned to present the DENAC1, which was approved hastily by the Junta during the first two weeks of March. The only comment that the Junta added to the plan was that there were to be no casualties and the plans should be kept under “complete secrecy.” A final plan was presented on March 20 and at that time he did not know of any coordination with Ministry of Foreign Relations (p. 8).

Against the miscalculation hypothesis, García noted very clearly at the time that the United Kingdom would probably respond and that military planning was impossible without considering this. In a personal communication to the Junta and then in the text of the DENAC1, he includes a clear statement of this concern: “*the lack of knowledge of the nature and magnitude of the British reaction impedes us from determining a priori the nature, magnitude and mission of the means to dispose*” (p. 12).

García confirms that, in general, the invasion was planned hoping it would induce the British to negotiate. Yet, there was no clear planning of how the war would be fought in case of a reaction, nor any understanding of how to fight Chile (p. 14). Yet, García was even more surprised by the recklessness and stubbornness of the Junta’s position in the negotiations, given Argentina was clearly going to lose the war. He had been summoned in late May to evaluate a proposal to continue the military confrontation. At that moment – a month before the final defeat – he already assessed it would be impossible to defend the islands with the navy paralyzed, 40% of the Air Force destroyed and only six Hercules to supply the land troops in Malvinas. His counsel was not accepted (p. 20). He added that the Junta was aware of these difficulties. He says when Galtieri went to the Falklands on April 22 to evaluate the conditions he was “not necessarily in a state of desperation or depression, but the contact with reality made him realize there were really big extensions to defend.” (p. 22)

***Brigadier Sigfrido Martín Plessl. Volume I, pp. 38 to 47.***

Brigadier Plessl was the last member of the task force. He confirms the documentation they produced was for taking the islands only, and even suggested that the Junta developed a plan for a British intervention (p. 38). He confirms they were working under what he calls the “Operation Entebbe” which assumed the creation of a *fait accompli* and negotiations over that (p. 38). Therefore, the only intelligence they used regarded British forces in the island (p. 39). They had no intelligence available – nor the authorization to seek intelligence – regarding a British or Chilean response (p. 42). According to his orders they were in charge of the planning strictly until five days after taking the islands (D-Day+5), when security should be transferred to the Governor of the islands (p. 44).

He also emphasized there was not miscalculation on his part and he was convinced there was no miscalculation on the part of other authorities regarding the clear possibility of a British response:

“Rattenbach: Did you ever doubt the feasibility of the operation, given the probability of British intervention?

Plessl: I never thought this operation would have been carried out without having foresaw a military-strategic reaction by England.”  
(44)

### **3. Group of Officers Aware before March**

While the Task Force started planning the landing operation in January, a small group of navy officers was charged by Anaya to assess the feasibility of a landing operation. This was done through a directive by the Commander in Chief of the Navy asking three commanders in the Navy General Staff (Carlos Büsser, Marine Corps; Gualter Allara, Fleet; and García Boll, Naval Aviation) to assess the feasibility of taking the Malvinas. Effectively, these officers claim to have known about the intentions of Galtieri and Anaya since December or January. In general their statements strengthen the evidence against the diversionary war hypothesis, since domestic politics was rather calm by December, when General Galtieri was enjoying a mild honeymoon period. Last but not least, the testimony of General Vaquero is included, ostensibly the eleventh person to know about the plan, only by mid-February. He completes the list of officers that knew about the plan before March 1982.

#### ***Rear Admiral Carlos Alfredo García Boll. Volume II, pp. 292 to 303.***

The Commander in Chief of the Naval Aviation was one of three men in the navy that was told directly by Anaya about the decision to invade as early as December – possibly on December 20, even before Galtieri became President. In January the occupation was assessed feasible, but only the occupation “we did not analyze the capabilities of the enemy.” (p. 292) Nor did they effectively plan the occupation. However, he was aware of all the planning undertaken by the task force.

“García Boll: When the Schematic Campaign Plan was presented to the Junta in February it was emphasized that the plan was only for taking the island and not to maintain control of the islands, which was another operation”  
(293)

He also declares Lombardo did not know he was going to be assigned to the TOAS until the very last minute and thus ordered the withdrawal of the Marine Corps right after occupation. Their re-deployment delayed the whole defensive operation at least four days (p. 294) and only by April 12 did the commander of the TOAS produce a Schematic Campaign Plan for its mission (p. 295). He too highlights the lack of planning, proper intelligence and logistics, and unity of command as the main causes for the defeat (p. 296).

#### ***Rear Admiral Gualter Oscar Allara. Volume III, pp. 445 to 460.***

The Commander in Chief of the Fleet confirms that only the Task Force and the General Staff of the Navy knew of the planning. He said he was informed on December 28, after being appointed by Anaya and confirms that the Junta met in mid-February, considered their studies, and “approved by the plans for the recovery of the Malvinas” (p. 445).

Allara says the Navy General Staff, as well as the Task Force, foresaw the possibility of a military confrontation with Britain and were surprised that they were not asked to develop plans for the defense:

“Allara: I would like to make it clear that work we were doing was uniquely for the seizure of the Malvinas Islands. In no moment were we ordered nor indicated that we should plan for anything beyond the initial occupation, despite that we asked – I, personally, asked – about the plans for subsequent events, for the defense of the objective achieved...”

(p. 445)

After this, Allara narrates how the execution of the operation was effectively improvised. Although their evaluation suggested feasibility after May 15 and with two weeks of preparation, the invasion was decided on March 24 to 26, with less than a week of preparation, and to be effective on April 2, a time of the year that was previously considered inadequate. He also tells that he returned with the fleet to the continent after the seizure, on April 6, and was then ordered to plan the defense with untrained personnel. He could only start deploying back the fleet on April 15. Allara notes that no one had any real prospects of defeating the British fleet, even before an official communication on May 2 let him know that they had satellite imagery, at which point the fleet was pulled back (p. 452).

Asked about the psychological action plan – i.e. the transmission of information to the media right after the invasion on April 2, including reports and pictures from the island – Allara gives yet another reason to doubt the diversionary war hypothesis. He said that triumphalism was characteristic of the press reports and independent media, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Junta were rather moderate in their declaration, sometimes leading to complaints in the navy.

“Rattenbach: How do you judge psychological action that was done through the General Staff, both aimed to the country and the armed forces?”

Allara: Here I would say we should talk about two aspects of the psychological action. One was that carried out by the communications of the Joint Chief of Staff. Those communiqués were judge, in the realm under my command, as sober, sometimes too sober and according to reality. I mean, the Chiefs of Staff sometimes arrived later with the information, because they wanted to verify it before letting it out. The other component was the general diffusion, without any official character – which I do not know how it was handled. In my opinion most journalistic outlets displayed a triumphalist spirit that, sadly, never reflected the reality of the operations. I think the possibility of success that were depicted in that kind of media were exaggerated...”

(453)

Finally, Allara offers some reflections on the state of the negotiations with Britain in 1982. He is asked about this due to his previous position as Secretary of Foreign Relations from 1976 to 1978 and his answer confirms the general feeling in the Junta that the negotiations were stalled and would only be resumed earnestly if some shock took place (p. 459).

***Rear Admiral Carlos Alberto Büsser. Volume V, pp. 950 to 977.***

Due to the previous deposition of navy officers involved in the planning, the Commander in Chief of the Marine Corps is not asked as much about conditions before the war and the questions of the CAERCAS refer mostly to the activities of the Marines during the conflict. However, he does confirm that the operation he planned and executed was only envisioned to take the islands (p. 950). He also expresses his surprise regarding the unprofessional way in which the psychological action was carried out – which speaks against the diversionary war hypothesis. Asked if he knew about the plans to communicate to the press he answered:

Busser: No, honestly I could not say anything about that. But it was evident that information was contradictory, and the information coming out was not within a proper system.

Rattenbach: And the General Staff could not control this?

Busser: I think they could not control all this because it was not a system, designed to control this. These information systems cannot be put together, for a thing of this magnitude, in such a short time.”

(961)

***General Jose Antonio Vaquero. Volume I, pp. 190 to 203.***

Vaquero was a hard-liner, close to the Navy and to Galtieri, and thus probably the only army officer to know (beyond General García) about the intention to invade before March. He declared to know by mid-February. General Menendez himself, who had to command the operations in the islands, was notified only during March.

Vaquero declares he manifested to Galtieri that he was alarmed “*due to the reaction that this might provoke from Britain and, especially, Chile*” (p. 190). Later in the interview he says again that he thought Chile would react, and his perception was perhaps the main reason why the mountain brigades – much better equipped to fight in the cold than the conscripts that were sent – were not deployed (p. 197).

He also confirms that he could foresee a military defeat by mid-April. Allegedly, he told Menéndez “I believe that you are particularly absorbed by your functions as a Governor, and here, the way this goes, England will react in a very important way. I believe you should dedicate more time to your functions as commander of troops (p. 201).”

#### **4. General Staff**

A scattered group of officers in the General Staff was informed of the decision to invade during March, and before the official decision was made on March 26 – five days before D-Day.

***Brigadier Hellmuth Conrado Weber. Volume I, pp. 108 to 123.***

The Air Strategic Commander – the key Air Force member of the General Staff – was notified informally on March 22 and formally on March 25 that he would be responsible for carrying out the operations and presented in the DEMIL – the document that summarized the plans for the invasion. He was shown no plans for a possible British response (p. 108). Only on April 4, after the United Kingdom deployed its fleet was he given intelligence regarding “the capacities of the enemy and the capacities and restrictions of our own fleet and air force” (p. 110).

It is well known that the Argentine Air Force under his command performed some reckless bombardment and reconnaissance missions. These acts are illustrative of the type of risk-taking behavior that is assumed under a prospect theory framework.

“Weber: ... they asked me to decide if they [the reconnaissance missions] were to be suspended or continued. We continued them. The war is a risk and we had to assume that risk.”

(112)

“Weber: We also performed procedures with the C-130 planes that were somehow reckless.”

(113)

Adding to this recklessness, training for flying the Super-Etendart planes that were used for bombing British ships started during the conflict. These were naval aviation planes, so they had to be transferred from the Navy to the Air Force amid the war.

Weber also mentions the many problems of coordination between a de facto command in the island, the fleet, and the strategic air command, that were the obvious consequence of the lack of previous planning (p. 115).

Weber also confirms that the defeat was foreseeable already during April, before the war broke out.

“Weber: I did a bunch of visit to the Malvinas, of course, before the hostilities broke out. From the last one I did – I do not remember precisely when – I returned alarmed by the disorder and because I realized no one was handling things there. I even told my commander in chief that I was alarmed and that in such conditions, if the English were able to disembark, they would destroy us.”

(121)

Weber was the Air Force Commander in the TOAS. Given the lack of coordination between forces, he is transferred in May, together with García and Lombardo to Comodoro Rivadavia where a Center for Joint Operations (CEOPECON after *Centro de Operaciones Conjuntas*) is improvised. There they “tried to ameliorate the situation of lack of command that had taken hold” (p. 135). A prospective defeat was already clear to him.

### ***Brigadier José María Insúa – Volume I, pp. 124 to 140.***

As the Second Chief of the General Staff, Brigadier Insúa was informed of the plans to invade the islands on March 3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had a hearing on the plans and if was communicated directly to him that the Junta had already decided to take the islands (p. 124). He declares that he was soon struck by the lack of consideration of a British response.

“Insúa: The first thing we realized was these documents [DENAC1] were only elaborated to prove the feasibility of the operation.”

He even says that the Junta was probably expecting a British response anyways because the number of soldiers on the invasion plans was unnecessarily high. The British garrison in the island had only a few dozen soldiers.

“Insúa: ...some things were strange and we arrived to the conclusion that this was a political resolution (...) when we found out it was planned to send 2,500 men under the orders of Admiral Menéndez we smiled and said it made little sense.”

The General Staff was in charge of elaborating the DENAC 2, a second directive that was also only intended to take the islands. Yet, Insúa and other members of the General Staff made it explicit that they were basing their recommendations on the assumption that strategic, political, and diplomatic considerations, were being made too by the competent bureaucracies – e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Relations. They were not suggesting, in other terms, that there was a political opportunity. They were just schematizing the plans for the invasion – and now also defense – of the islands.

“Insúa: We included on every document (...) a paragraph saying that Foreign Relations had direct dealings with the Military Committee, and it had advised it about the necessity and opportunity to take the Malvinas.”  
(125)

Insúa also narrates the emotional conditions in which some of these decisions were made.

“Insúa: I want to highlight that when we were informed we were going to take the Malvinas everyone became very happy. Everyone became very happy. Maybe we did not realize it would be like that, a premature thing, a bit unplanned, having to adapt to the circumstances that later developed and we could not manage. Then we started to work and see how we were going to do these things and we started to draft some documents” (126)

Not after a week of starting planning, he was confronted with the decision to invade in a week.

“Insúa: The Commander in Chief tells us that the Minister of Foreign Relations had informed the Military Junta the conditions were set to take the Malvinas, and we should move forward the operation [initially planed for May 15]. He was at this moment in condition to deal with the thing in the United Nations. Then, here is when we accelerate all the process of *poor* planning that we elaborated”  
(126)

Soon after the deployment is anticipated to April 2, Insúa starts worrying about the conditions and suspecting Argentina would lose the war in case of effective military confrontation once the British fleet arrived.

“Insúa: I personally put General Menéndez in the Malvinas. And when I told him ‘it worries me to know that you are bringing soldiers that haven’t completed their shooting training in its totality.’ General Menéndez answered that I should not be afflicted, that *he had already planned to instruct his 500 soldiers so that they would be prepared for September*. That made me think that Menéndez was instructed to a government action with occupation troops or domestic security but in

his mentality at the moment was not oriented to confront a war with the British Empire.”

(127)

Insúa is also very critical of the Junta’s position in the negotiations, when the defeat was very clear for him.

“Insúa: When the President said ‘From here we are not leaving, the flag will not be folded,’ we felt a bit shocked because we realized ‘we don’t have much of an alternative here, after this we cannot say we are returning, the Governor is returning, and you English can retake the islands’”

(129)

***Rear Admiral Leopoldo Alfredo Suarez del Cerro, Volume I, pp. 141 to 166.***

Suarez del Cerro was notified on March 16 and started working on the DENAC2 (p. 141). He admits “there wasn’t enough time to elaborate a proper military directive (DEMIL) but we had to give some form to those concepts” (p. 141). Since the DEMIL and the DENAC1 were elaborated just to take the islands but without any plans of defending them, he says the DENAC2 tried to incorporate the idea of defending the islands and creating the TOAS, but they ended up not having time to consider all that (p. 142). He again states that war against Britain was a possibility they had in mind.

“Suarez del Cerro: Our goal was to reopen negotiation and, maybe in that way, finish the Malvinas issue, yes. But if by any chance that did not work, continue by the other [use of force].”

(142)

He then suggests that invading the Malvinas on April 2 was a military decision. It had nothing to do with domestic political considerations nor diplomatic considerations (p. 144). According to him the Operation Davidoff – sending a commercial ship to the Georgias –triggered the events.

After May 23, he participated directly with four people in the General Staff. It is very clear that in five out of six scenarios they foresaw a British response.

“Suarez del Cerro: We made a report on the capacities of the United Kingdom and wrote it down. This included the first six capacities that we supposed London could produce from the moment the war was a fact (...) time, and distance, and then *six different capacities, from non-reaction to reaction with an important task force and the most dangerous of all: reaction with an important task force connected to Chile. These perceptions I brought to the Military Committee. When I presented the DEMIL I said: ‘here are the capacities of the enemy, like possible capacities and degree of danger, and factors of weakness and strength.’”*

(147)

Rattenbach notices that despite having foresaw the response, the General Staff also failed to assign clear directives to the TOAS, to which he answers:

“Suarez del Cerro: We did not decide on all that because this was not something that could have been done in two or three days, it was something we did not know very well (...) When we did the schematic plan, everything should have been assigned. But this is an area of work that would have taken us at least two or three months to do a detailed job as it corresponded. So there were problems. I ask



you those problems are assessed in consideration of the time and opportunities at our disposal.”

(148)

Again, it is confirmed that a war with Great Britain was a clear scenario. The DEMIL reads: “If the armed reaction by the United Kingdom happens, assume a defensive strategic-military attitude with the strategic-military reserve” (p. 148).

He also highlight that after the sinking of the Belgrano it became evident that the British were using American satellites, Argentina would have to withdraw its fleet and it would be impossible to resist for long.

Suarez del Cerro also provides some decisive evidence against the diversionary war thesis. When asked about the hypothesis he says:

“Suarez del Cerro: In my opinion it had nothing to do with domestic politics. In my view – I, who lived it from the inside – it was not related to domestic politics. It was a matter of sovereignty” (153)

His testimony is especially important because Suarez del Cerro was the one in charge of the psychological action plan. He makes a credible argument that he even acted to moderate the domestic impact of the news, not to affect the government stance in the negotiations (p. 158).

### ***Rear Admiral Alberto Daniel Vigo. Volume II, pp. 266 to 281.***

In line with our long-term theoretical narrative, Rear Admiral Vigo narrates how the expansion over the South Atlantic was seen in the navy as a whole. During the year 1979 he established a position in the *Isla de los Estados*, and in 1981 he was in charge of analyzing the possibility of a deploying a scientific base in the Georgias as the Argentines already had in the Sandwich. The proposal was elevated to the Junta in April. In September he was named and participated in the discussions regarding “*Operación Alfa*” (which was to transport Mr. Davidoff to the Georgias, and ended up provoking the incident that triggered the war). To him, all of this illustrates a broader expansionary policy in the South Atlantic.

He opines that the decision to invade was already taken on December 20, 1981, when Admiral Anaya informed the Navy Chiefs of Staff that General Galtieri had already resolved that he would take the islands, either diplomatically or by force, in the months to come (p. 270). He also saw, in January, how Anaya had tried to place someone from the navy, Admiral Luchetta, as the Ambassador in London to better inform about British intentions and capabilities. In the end Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas contested his proposed transfer to Rome and the Minister of Foreign Relations called the whole plan off (p. 268). Yet, the whole thing did not surprise him.

“Vigo: In Argentina there were several plans to occupy Malvinas. In the *Comando de Operaciones Naval* there were many plans. The older plan I saw was from 1972 or 1973. Admiral Anaya was the Chief of Operations at the time and he had crafted it himself. These were plans that were written by the author, without the participation of anyone indispensable. Then there were many plans and already in 1977 and 1978 there were more serious ones – done with all the formalities of a plan – related to the situation with Chile.”

(270)

He continues to tell how this eagerness to retake the Malvinas developed in the late 1970.

“Vigo: At the time Admiral Massera informed us that he had passed a note to the other two commanders in chief suggesting the take of the Malvinas. This was already in 1977. When the take of Malvinas happened I asked for that note to the Navy General Staff and it was not there (...) Then Admiral Anaya asked me to update the plans, this should have been around September or October [1981] and I did (...) and it was archived (...) then in December 15 I gave these plans to Admiral Lombardo by order of Admiral Anaya.”

(271)

Vigo also makes a convincing argument against the diversionary war hypothesis. In his view, the rally-round-the-flag effect played against the interest of the Junta. Asked if the ideas of the negotiating position of the Junta were more limited at first and then hardened, he said:

“Vigo: I think it had much to do the meeting in Plaza de Mayo, when Haig came [on April 10]. To me, that motivated a change in ideas. How could we say now to the people that we were surrendering the islands? To me, that was when the change took place.”

(275)

Yet, he confirms that the expectations from the very beginning were that Argentina would rapidly lose any military confrontation.

“Vigo: We never doubted Malvinas would fall; it was always clear that Malvinas would fall. Sending more or less people only changed the deadline (...) “we knew this from the beginning.”

(276)

This leads Rattenbach to probe why invading and trying to defend if defeat was assured? The following conversation ensues.

“Vigo: I think the opportunity would have been ideal had we intervened in May (...) In this case, the opportunity was produced by the English. It was a chain of events, which led us to take the Malvinas, without any previous consideration: note, counter-note, and ultimatum. The planning was done, but only regarding the first stage. The proof is that, in one week, we had to plan the operations (...) the military result was rushed and thus imperfect, as were the diplomatic negotiations since the incident of the Georgias.

Rattenbach: So, you mean the islands were occupied knowing they were going to be lost?

Vigo: The Malvinas were occupied as a consequence of a series of incidents, graver and graver, which culminated in the *decision to take the islands without thinking if the opportunity was good or bad*. I do not know what would have happened if we invaded in August, for example. That elaboration cannot be made.”

(277)

***Brigadier Ernesto Horacio Crespo. Volume I, pp. 172 to 189.***

Crespo was the Commander of the Air Forces in the South (*Fuerza Aerea Sur*) in charge of operations in the continent. He knew about the decision only three days before D-Day.

“Crespo: I asked why I did know nothing about it and I was told this was due to the secrecy of the operation.”  
(172)

“Crespo: There was no coordination in the operations and almost no planning, but also that there was a general ignorance regarding what coordinated action meant, Unity of command is the only way to achieve victory and was ignored.”  
(186)

In his view there was no way the military could have projected a military victory against Great Britain.

“Rattenbach: At the time was your understanding that British victory was inevitable given the conditions at the outset of combat?”

Crespo: Possibly. At best, having precluded their landing operation and due to the winter, we could have extended the war for one more year, but it would have been lost anyways.”  
(189)

***Brigadier Mayor Aquilino Guerra. Volume II, pp. 282 to 291.***

The Secretary General of the Air Force was informed of the invasion four days in advance (p. 283). His testimony provides a good example of how the all-or-nothing way in which the Junta approached the negotiations was naturalized and reproduced by some officers in the three forces.

“Guerra: I assume the commission would like to know – and I will be loyal with myself, because this will be part of history – what would I have done if confronted with the reiterated failures in the negotiations with the United Kingdom, because it had been four or five years this did not move forward. I supposed if we did not act in a drastic way the islands would not be ours, now nor never; lets not fool ourselves. No one gives something back by good will between nations”  
(283)

“Rattenbach: Do you think it would have been difficult to accept a concession of sovereignty?”

Guerra: Such thing is inadmissible. I am not willing to accept a concession of sovereignty, I mean, us ceding any sovereignty to Great Britain, not even limited; I do not know what the country might think about this (...)

Rattenbach: Not even conditional?

Guerra: I do not know what the country might think but sovereignty is not conditional!  
(286)

Guerra also provides yet another motive to doubt the diversionary war interpretation, highlighting that psychological action was not an important dimension in

planning the war. If the objective was to produce a rally-round-the-flag effect, then there would be some figures in charge of that, yet he notices that this aspect of the war was very improvised, almost seemingly without thought.

“Guerra: Here in Argentina there were no great technicians to manage, not even to adhere to the psychological action. The psychological action was done with the good will of the newspaper directors, the journal director, the TV directors, etc.”  
(289)

He assures it was never discussed by any officer in the air force that there would be a domestic political reason for the invasion and, furthermore, he thought it was curious question; that the response should be obvious for someone like Rattenbach (p. 290).

## **5. The Diplomatic Corps**

After the members of the Junta decide to plan the attack, the Minister of Foreign Relations becomes the highest rank official and the only civilian to know about the plans for retaking the islands. In this section we take sections from interviews made by the CAERCAS to him and other diplomats. Interviews to other diplomats are referred mostly to illustrate their amazement and surprise at the moment of the invasion, but also to illustrate some flagrant ways in which the Junta failed to gather and process information.

### ***Minister of Foreign Relations, Nicanor Costa Mendez. Volume IV, pp. 631 to 685.***

In his first response, Costa Mendez narrates how he first knew of General Galtieri’s interest in the Malvinas issue during his first interview with him after being designated for the ministerial position.

“Costa Mendez: He said ‘you must know that within the priorities of this government is to activate to the maximum degree the negotiations leading to the acknowledgement of our sovereignty over the Malvinas.’ To which I said I agreed, and he added ‘I do not discard the possibility of having to use something more than diplomacy.’ That is how my first interview with Galtieri ended.”  
(631)

“Rattenbach: From your words it is possible to deduce that in December of 1981, when Galtieri becomes president and you have this interview with him, you already knew about his fundamental ideas regarding Malvinas, is that so?”

Costa Mendez: It is so.

Rattenbach: Did you appreciate, immediately after, the same sensation, the same way of thinking, in the Junta?

Costa Mendez: No, I did not have any reunion with the Junta until well into March...”  
(632)

Although Costa Méndez did not have any meetings with all the Junta until mid-March, it was decided that he would be informed of the military plans in January, and he is effectively informed and starts to work with that in mind by February. At that point, negotiations with Britain in New York fail and the Junta virtually decides the invasion at that point, although this was initially scheduled for May 15. Costa Méndez already threatens with a military reaction to the breakup of negotiations in a statement of March 2. There he unnecessarily provokes the British government and arguably accelerates the events leading to early deployment and defeat during the Georgias crisis, which in turn triggers the decision to invade on April 2.

“Rattenbach: After the round of negotiations in New York (...) you issue an official statement reading, textually: ‘If the solution did not take place soon, Argentina reserves the right to choose the procedure that best consults its interests.’ What did you mean by this? (...)

Costa Mendez: We thought of a statement that, in general, was that one. Then I brought it to General Galtieri who read it, made two or three changes, and approved (...)

Rattenbach: That statement was out on March 2. You already knew in December of the Junta’s intention. Between December and March 2 there are a series of military plans that are developed in order to take the islands. Did you know of anything, at least unofficially, related to the existence of these works?

Costa Mendez: I will state the conditions under which this information arrived to me; I think this is very important, at least to me. Around the second half of February, right before a meeting of the Junta, Galtieri looked at my instructions and said: ‘I believe you should know with the utmost secrecy that we are working on analyzing the possibility of occupying the Malvinas islands.’

Rattenbach: Who informed you of this?

Costa Mendez: That was informed to me by General Galtieri...”  
(635)

“Costa Mendez: I was not surprised by General Galtieri’s announcement. Why? Because already when I was Minister to General Onganía [1966-1969] the Commander in Chief of the Navy, Admiral Varela communicated me one day that there were alternative plans for a military action over the islands or that these were being studied. Long after this, I also know that in 1977 there had also been a possible plan that was rejected by the other two forces.”  
(636)

“Rattenbach: You, as advisor to the president, from whom you already knew the intention, did you not have the obligation to let him know about the reaction that something like that would produce in the world and the United Nations?

Costa Mendez: I say again that we did not study that concrete scenario until the moment of occupation, or, if you want, until the Davidoff incident [the Georgias incident], because we were not charged with that analysis or study, nor had us been given the terms.”  
(637)

“Rattenbach: And when exactly did the president inform you, concretely, of the decision to occupy the islands?

Costa Mendez: That decision, the decision to effectively occupy, I know already a few hours after it had been made. On March 26 during the afternoon.

Rattenbach: After it had been made?

Costa Mendez: I think so.”  
(637)

When asked about his evaluation of British intentions and in particular about the possibility that there would be a military reaction on the part of Great Britain, Costa Mendez very explicitly states, against the miscalculation hypothesis, that a military reaction was almost obvious.

“Rattenbach: All this issue of the Georgias already makes it evident to you that there would be a military reaction by Great Britain to what you already knew was going to happen. Did you know that the Junta had a wrong appreciation when the Malvinas operation was undertaken, with respect to the capacity of British reaction in the moral, and also in the material order of things – of its military power?

Costa Mendez: *With relation to the military reaction of Britain, I had no doubts that it would happen. I had no doubts because it was already happening.*

Rattenbach: And why did you not tell the Junta, who was about to commit that mistake?

Costa Mendez: *I think that was the subject of long discussions, because after March 23, the deployment of the nuclear submarine had already been announced, and after it was denounced – without being denied – Great Britain had disposed the deployment of other military forces. That was public and notorious.”*  
(641)

Then he is asked about his appreciation regarding the neutrality of the US, another alleged misperception of the Junta. He says he foresaw this too:

“Rattenbach: How is it that the Junta commits two grave diplomatic mistakes of that order [not foreseeing British military reaction and the US support to Great Britain] and you, as advisor, do not bring them up?

Costa Mendez: I insist on this. I was convinced of the possibility and efficacy of a US mediation, but I never thought there would be a military intervention in our favor. That, never.”  
(p. 642)

Like Anaya, Costa Mendez narrates the episode in which Sub-Secretary Enders says Malvinas/Falklands was a ‘hands-off’ issue for the US (p. 643). He also assures that US Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman offered to mediate the Davidoff incident on March 30 and was rejected (p. 645). Asked then about the warning given by Haig to Tacaks regarding the US effectively siding with Britain, he says to have interpreted that would happen in the case of military confrontation only, but still trusted the US would mediate (p. 655). Yet, when asked about his assessment before the decision to invade was made – by around March 24 – he drew clear parallels with cases of war:

“Costa Mendez: I mean, my first appreciation was that the US, both given what I had conversed with Secretary Baker, the House of Representatives, and with Mr. Enders, and also considering what the US had done in more or less similar situations: Suez and Oman, with respect to the Egyptian Third Army in the Fourth War, the 73 war of the Yom Kippur between Israel and Egypt, etc. In all those cases

the US had intervened using its capacity, its force, responding to its obligation as a hegemonic power to generate an agreement.”  
(657)

Then he is asked about his reasons not to oppose the decision of the Junta, even when knowing about the US partiality and the possible reaction of Great Britain. His response provides more evidence against the miscalculation thesis.

“Rattenbach: Could you be more specific on which were the reasons you had – which you did not express at the time – to oppose the decision of the Junta.

Costa Mendez: I considered that the decision of the Junta was based, essentially, on two points. First, the desire to stop the advance of the British fleet – which was already announced – which meant...

Rattenbach: On March 26?

Costa Mendez: Yes, on March 26?

Rattenbach: The advance of the fleet was already announced?

Costa Mendez: It was announced, and not denied.

Rattenbach: You mean the two submarines and the three frigates?

Costa Mendez: The nuclear submarines and the frigates.

Rattenbach: There were signs that they would send the submarines and the frigates but that was not the entire fleet, don't you think?

Costa Mendez: *The fleet is mobilized later but there is already a movement of warships that might signify the beginning of a peaceful militarization.*” (658)

Regarding the Belaúnde proposal he states that he was favorable, and all points had been almost agreed upon by May 2, when Galtieri unilaterally decides to reject it (670). Finally, about the mismatch between the military discourse about the possibility of victory and his own perception he assures it was clear to him that Argentina would lose, providing decisive evidence against the military-parity hypothesis:

“Costa Mendez: Regarding that [Argentina's chances of victory] I had two impressions, one formal, the other subjective. The formal one is the one I received from the agencies that gave me that information; in that moment [May 1] at least, those agencies did not think defeat was inevitable, and there was some talk about the islands being impossible to breach or almost impossible to breach, which was curious... If you ask my subjective perception, then I was not convinced at all...”  
(670)

***Ambassador in the US, Esteban Takacs. Volume II, pp. 204 to 215.***

The deposition of Ambassador Takacs is interesting to illustrate the small group decision-making biases in which the Junta incurred. Takacs did not know about the invasion plans before April 2. He only started suspecting on April 1, when the US Ambassador in the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, called him to ask if it was true what the American intelligence was gathering: that an invasion of the islands was imminent. He promptly communicated this to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign

Relations but received no response. Secretary of State Haig then called him in the afternoon with the same questions. This was at 7 PM. President Ronald Reagan called Galtieri a few hours later, at 9 PM.

“Takacs: Haig also made it clear that in case of a conflict between the UK and Argentina, the United States would side with Britain. He used the words, in English, textually: we are going to side with Britain.”

(205)

He informed this immediately to all his military attachés and to the Ministry.

Takacs declares that the day after, on April 2, Ambassador Kirkpatrick accepted an already pending invitation by the Argentine delegation for dinner (p. 207). Although she came late due to a meeting with Reagan, this was interpreted as a sign of good will. But already on April 3, Kirkpatrick confirmed they were going to side with the United Kingdom in the Security Council. Then General Haig told him literally: “they will sink your fleet” (p. 208).

***Ambassador in the UK, Carlos Ortiz de Rozas. Volume III, pp. 555 to 571.***

Ortiz de Rozas was Ambassador in the United Kingdom until the breakup of relations on April 2. Unlike other actors, he did not observe the level of alarm rising considerably in London after the declarations of Costa Méndez on March 2, nor was he too pessimistic about the course of negotiations negotiations (p. 562). All in all, he seems convinced that the Argentine government was not being pushed to war by international developments, and this was a very inconvenient decision that the Junta made with no apparent motive. However, he recognizes that, in retrospect, the attempt to transfer him to Rome in December 1981 and naming Admiral Luchetta in London could have been interpreted as a sign of those intentions (p. 571). Yet, he was not informed at any time about the Junta’s decision.

“Rattenbach: Did you have, at any point, any indications regarding the intentions of the Argentine government to occupy the islands.

Ortiz de Rozas: In no moment.

Rattenbach: Absolutely never?

Ortiz de Rozas: In no moment.”  
(p. 564)

Although he stopped acting in any official manner in April 2, Ortiz de Rozas is asked by Rattenbach about how reasonable the Argentine position was in the negotiations. His tone is very critical and dismissive of the excuses made by the Junta and Costa Méndez to carry on with the operations. Referring to the position taken vis-à-vis the United Nations requirements that, if respected, could have ended the conflict on April 4, he said:

“Ortiz de Rozas: ... Had I been the Minister of Foreign Relations of Argentina in that moment, less than 48 hours after the Resolution 502 is approved, I say to the United Nations that I accept it in its entirety”



(578)

In his view, the resolution was actually favorable, since it contained the cease of hostilities and obliged Great Britain to negotiate. Rattenbach makes a comment at this point, which speaks to our purposed existence of sunk costs and all-or-nothing strategy.

“Rattenbach: We would have ended up in a situation, worse than April 2, but better than March 29.

Ortiz de Rozas: Of course.”  
(578)

***Attaché to the Embassy in the US Miguel Mallea Gil. Volume II, pp. 237 to 247.***

This Navy Attaché studied at West Point and was one of the best-connected officials capable of knowing what the reaction of the US could have been. He was never asked for his opinion and did not know of the decision until April 1 (p. 240). Then he consistently reported that the intention of the US was to side with Britain as the alliance with the United Kingdom was too close in Europe for them to do otherwise. He advised a negotiation should be struck soon in the political realm, and that in the military realm Argentina’s strategic position was very weak (p. 243) It was very feasible, in his opinion, that the US would share satellite information with Britain (p. 246).

***Ambassador to the UN, Eduardo Alejandro Roca. Volume II, pp. 248 to 265.***

Roca only started to suspect the situation was grave after March 15, when Costa Mendez told him the British were sending an ultimatum to Argentina by asking for the withdrawal of personnel from the Georgias. According to him he knew of the plans after a meeting with General Galtieri on March 20.

“Roca: I said goodbye to the President and he told me that he had the obligation of telling me that he had already taken the decision to occupy the islands in the future, because there was no other way out.”  
(249)

Yet, when on April 1<sup>st</sup> the British representative in the UN, Anthony Parsons, called a special meeting of the Security Council to analyze the situation in the islands, the Argentine Ambassador did not know of the fact (p. 251).

“Roca: With surprise I confirmed that not even our Military Attaché, General Mallea Gil, knew about the gravity of the matter.”  
(251)

“Roca: This describes the climate of ignorance in which we were living.”  
(252)

Roca negotiated on April 3 the possibility of deploying a UN mission, a solution they called the “blue helmet overture” which had to be cancelled due to the arrival of news regarding the deployment of Menéndez as Governor of Malvinas (p. 255). The latter was an unnecessary provocation impeding what could have been a rapid diplomatic solution.

Asked about the diplomatic stance before the war he demonstrated a completely different evaluation of the political environment when compared to the optimistic descriptions of Costa Mendez:

“Roca: Our country was not empathized, I should say that (...) we looked like (...) a country with problems. I mean, in the last few years we had been creating trouble (...) so, in general, our country was not presenting itself as a victim of colonial aggression.”

(261)

## **6. Other Key Officials**

In this last section we summarize the depositions of a few remaining key officials that, for the most part, did not know of the invasion until it happened. They serve to illustrate the absolute lack of planning that characterized the decision to seize the islands.

### ***Secretary of Intelligence – Carlos Martinez. Volume II, pp. 216 to 226.***

The chief of the *Secretaría de Inteligencia del Estado* (SIDE), the Argentine equivalent of the CIA, with agents in all major countries of the world, only knew about the invasion on the night of the landing. He is clearly ashamed because of this in his deposition. The SIDE never knew the DENAC1, DENAC2, and DEMIIL, so they never really knew what the plans were (p. 219).

The chief of the intelligence was aware of some rumors within the forces. He had heard navy officers suggesting that “the conditions were set for an opportunity to take the Malvinas” (p. 223) during 1978 and 1979. By 1981 the SIDE already saw a war with Britain as an imminent conflict hypothesis, and a secret evaluation of the matter was made after consultation with officers in the three forces and Ministry of Foreign Relations and Ministry of Interior (p. 224).

On April 6, the SIDE produced a full report saying that the British would only negotiate after having set foothold in the islands (p. 218). Dismissing this intelligence, the members of the Junta continued to think an agreement could be reached during April.

### ***Minister of Interior – Alfredo Saint Jean. Volume II, pp. 227 to 236.***

Saint Jean provides some smoking-gun evidence against the diversionary war hypothesis, since he was in charge of monitoring the situation of domestic unrest that ensued in late March, and yet was barely informed about the Malvinas operation. If the seizure of Malvinas had been planned with a domestic objective in mind, he would have been a key participant.

Furthermore, he commissioned a study of the socio-economic situation, which was completely disregarded by the Junta. Apparently, the Junta members, and Galtieri in particular, started to completely disregard domestic situations as soon as the invasion went to the top of the agenda, suggesting the main motive was not to cause a rally ‘round the flag effects. At the moment he was presenting this report to Galtieri, the following conversation took place.

“Saint Jean: As I was letting him know of the results Galtieri manifested ‘Come on, Saint Jean, do you have to come with this problem precisely today?’ At the beginning I did not understand what he meant, so he finally said ‘See, we have taken this resolution; of course this is absolutely secret. Now you know the mood in which we are... don’t bring me those problems’

(227)

When asked if the decision to invade the islands had anything to do with the domestic situation he said the following:

“Saint Jean: I always understood it did not (...) I think it [the Georgias incident] was the only thing that led to that decision. Always thought it has been like that, since the first moment, and I have ratified it despite the many pressures I have been through”

(p. 228)

Regarding the “psychological warfare” campaign he even denounced the campaign that was taking place as too triumphalist (p. 230). He assures his Ministry did not take part in organizing the demonstrations of April 3 and April 10, and even opposed a demonstration on June 14. Everything in his declaration suggests the military favored a general de-activation of the masses rather than a rally-round-the-flag effect, and all that mobilization generated many problems.

### ***Minister of Economy – Roberto Teodoro Alemann. Volume III, pp. 539-555.***

The deposition of the Minister of Economy is central in the evaluation of the diversionary war hypothesis, since it shows very clearly how considerations about the domestic economic situation did not play a role in the planning of the war. First and foremost, this is clear in the fact that Alemann was in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, until April 1, and only knew of the plans for the invasion in the morning of April 2, when they had effectively already taken place (p. 539).

He also reports having stated repeatedly to Galtieri that the war would have negative effects on the domestic economy, thus worsening the situation of the Junta and the country as a whole.

“Rattenbach: On the morning of April 2, when you know about the seizure of Malvinas, or afterwards, did you make any proposal to the government or the Junta, regarding the economic problems you just referred to? Did you advise the government, in any form, about the economic effects of the war?”

Alemann: I was in contact – I would not say daily contact, but frequent – with Lieutenant General Galtieri, informing him, as I was saying, about the financial front and the economic front, which was being affected by the conflict itself: the subject that demanded his attention the most. I informed him permanently about the difficulties that appeared, mostly regarding the attitude of foreign stockholders, and how we were facing these challenges.

I made several concrete proposals regarding the management of the economy. The measures that we adopted were always consulted with him. Of course, I always told him that, if the conflict continued, we could not expect an economic reactivation. These terms are an antinomy. You cannot fight a conflict of this nature and expect the economy, which had just come out of a recession, to continue growing rapidly.

Rattenbach: Did you try to influence the Junta to negotiate, especially given the economic situation?

Alemann: Yes...”  
(p. 547)

In another section, Alemann is even more emphatic about how he advised Galtieri that the war would have a negative impact in the domestic front.

“Rattenbach: Did you advise the president directly regarding the consequences that the initiation of hostilities or the prolongation of hostilities would have, in relation to the economic situation it might trigger?

Alemann: I told him that if the conflict was to last, the economy, to use a metaphor, would sink more and more, as it happened. In June we had to close the external situation more and more, we had to forfeit payments, postpone, etc.”

(547)

***Guillermo Cabral Banco Nación. Volume I, pp. 48 to 56.***

This authority tells how the secrecy impeded the withdrawal of the funds the *Banco Nación* had in the Central Bank in London. Of these funds only some 500 million dollars could be transferred and 940 million dollars remained blocked, due to lack of any directive (p. 50). He made the decision to move those funds unilaterally after hearing rumors of the invasion. No officials from the Ministry of Economy are interviewed by the CAERCAS but it becomes clear from this interview that the Ministry of Economy (as Intelligence, and Interior) was not informed until the landing.