

Battle or Operation XXX

NAMER XXXX

Class XX

March 26, 2018

Xxxx Title

The purpose of this paper is to identify a combination of both national and military ends, ways, means, and risks that lead to Argentina's flawed actions in the South Atlantic occupation of the Falkland Islands. Argentina's final objective in this conflict was the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, setting the national and military ends. The leadership of Argentina had several ways in which they could accomplish their national goal using the national instruments of power: diplomacy, informational, military, and economics, commonly referred to as DIME (Wade, 2018). The new ruling party of Argentina had limited means to accomplish their goal of island sovereignty other than military might. The Argentina leadership failed to thoroughly analyze the risks or gaps in resources between ways and means before and during the use of military force to occupy of the islands. Argentina's leadership favored military power over diplomacy thinking the occupation of the Falkland Islands would accomplish their National goal of forcing Great Britain to grant Argentina sovereignty over the islands.

Ends (LEVEL 1 HEADING)

The ends or objectives in national strategy are what the nation, leadership, or ruler want to accomplish ultimately. In the point of the Falklands War, the Argentinean leadership's ultimate goal was the control or sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. They had to accomplish several other contributing objectives to gain sovereignty over the islands. Since the United Kingdom (UK) had been in possession of the Falklands Islands as a colony since 1833, Argentina had to negotiate with them for an agreement on the sovereignty of the islands. By accomplishing this, Argentina would build unity and national pride within the country. This action would help to

legitimize the new military lead Junta government with its people and the region as well. The leadership hoped that the national pride and unity could help to bring about an end to the economic crisis the country was facing at the time. Another goal of the Argentine Junta was to end colonization in the region by removing the UK presence on the islands, which "was a principle endorsed by the United Nations" (Welch, 1997, p. 6). The Argentine sovereignty of the islands would also deny the UK a strategic military stronghold in the South Atlantic region should it try and establish a larger military presence on the islands. With all these ends or strategic objectives in mind, the Argentine Junta needed a concept or way how to accomplish these goals.

Ways (LEVEL 1 HEADING)

The Argentina leadership had several options available through the four elements of national power: diplomacy, informational, military, and economic. The government of Argentina underwent a military coup in early 1981 ousting the former president, but they still possessed elements of national power just like any other country. The Junta government limited the effectiveness of each component, as it was a strictly military lead group.

(CONCEPTS) Power

The British government had worked on and off with the Argentinean government in negotiations over the sovereignty of the islands. One option that Britain had repeatedly offered during negotiations was a leaseback program for the islands, which gave sovereignty to Argentina while Britain leased the island for a period of no less than 99 years (Freedman, 2005). The agreement would allow

Argentina sovereignty but would not change the way of life for the Islanders during the term of the lease. Argentina brought up the length of the lease, citizenship of the Islanders, and the ability of Argentine people to buy property on the island as issues with the agreement (Freedman, 2005). The sovereignty of the islands was unfortunately not a priority for the British government, so it took a backseat to more pressing issues in the UK. The lack of diplomatic progress angered the Junta, which felt national honor was at stake.

According to Freedman (2005), in mid-January 1982, the Junta approved National Strategy Directive 1/82:

The Military Committee, faced with the evident and repeated lack of progress in the negotiations with Great Britain to obtain recognition of our sovereignty over the Malvinas, Georgias and South Sandwich Islands; convinced that the prolongation of this situation affects national honour, the full exercise of sovereignty and the exploration of resources; has resolved to analyse the possibility of the use of military power to obtain the political objective. This resolution must be kept in strict secrecy and should be circulated only to the heads of the respective military departments. (p. 133)

The slow progress of diplomacy was only one factor in choosing the way to accomplish the national objectives.

(CONCEPTS) Power (level 2 heading)

Countries usually apply this type of power outside of the nation to project an idea or strategy, but in this case, Argentina used it against its own people. According to Calvert (1982), “the new military generation of the 1980s were men who had spent

their entire adult lives under the shadow of Peron. From youth they had been taught that the Malvinas were rightfully theirs” (p. 48-49). This generation was now in power as the Junta ruling over Argentina and truly believed that the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands belonged to them. Educators still taught this information in schools at the time, and most the people of Argentina shared their belief. This idea produced a sort of national dream to reoccupy the islands lost to Britain back in 1833. As Argentina voiced their concerns about exercising their rights over the islands, the islanders themselves grew increasingly agitated about their future. Argentina failed to send a clear message to the islanders about their future, which caused them to continually voice their concerns to the UK over actions to protect them. The Islanders fully believed they were Subjects of the Crown and Britain should protect them from foreign actors such as Argentina, as evidenced during a meeting between island counselors and the British Minister of State for Latin America Mr. Ridley in November 1981 (Freedman, 2005). The locals on the island had very little to do with Argentina, relying on Britain for logistic and economic support.

(CONCEPTS) Power (LEVEL 2 HEADING)

The Falkland Islands were not self-sufficient economically until after 1982 Falklands conflict and drew most of its support from sheepherding and whaling industries and support from Britain. Argentina provided no economic assistance to the islands and had little direct impact on the island's economy. However, based on a 1971 Communications Agreement they did provide the communications links to and from the island, connecting them to the rest of the world (Welch, 1997). If so inclined they could cut communications links with the island and limit requests for aid

or information updates on the island. Argentina was suffering from a countrywide economic crisis with the military Junta lead government. From 1979 to 1983, Argentina suffered from a national debt increase growing from \$6 billion to \$44 billion, with inflation rising to over 600% in just four years (Dornbusch, R. & Pablo, J. C., 1987). Argentina was suffering an economic crisis and needed a way to overcome its failed financial policies.

(CONCEPTS) Military Power (LEVEL 2 HEADING)

The military is one of the four instruments of power, and since they controlled Argentina, it only makes sense that it ultimately tried this instrument to force the UK into negotiations. A group of senior military officers formed the Junta, a military dictatorship, led the Argentina government since its takeover in 1976. As mentioned earlier, the UK did not try with any sense of urgency to negotiate with Argentina over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. This action in a way forced the military to plan and execute its form of policy to make the UK take them seriously. The Argentine military had a robust Navy, Army, and Air force. No other country in the South Atlantic region could match them in military might at the time, which gave them superiority in the three domains of battle. Their plan of battle used all three branches of the armed forces to achieve the objective of occupying the island and forcing the UK to the negotiating table over the sovereignty of the islands.

Means (LEVEL 1 HEADING)

Argentina had very little in the way of resources or means to exercise diplomatic, economic, or informational instruments of power. The primary element it considered was its military due in part to the military Junta ruling Argentina at the

time. The military had assembled a 500-man assault force to capture the British held garrison on the island with a 2000-man occupation Army in reserve. The Navy landed these forces along with supplies for the initial occupation operations. The Air force provided aerial reconnaissance of the island and air cover for landing sites before and during operations. The Argentine forces were well prepared for the initial assault on the island and the occupation afterward over the 1800 or so islanders. What the Argentine force did not prepare for was a military response from the UK.

Risks(LEVEL 1 HEADING)

The military Junta failed to identify gaps between their ability and resources to accomplish their overall objective. The risks that the Argentine leadership took and accepted were small in their eyes. The risks that they did not identify led to the overall failure of the operations and the ultimate defeat of the Argentine forces after eight weeks of fighting. When planning an operation of this nature, the leadership did not make any assumptions about the UK response other than they would negotiate since Argentina possessed the island. They believed this tactic would force negotiations in their favor and gain Argentine sovereignty for the islands, not a military response.

World Response

The Junta had assumed that they would gain world favor by taking the island without bloodshed from the UK forces. They did accomplish this action, but the world condemned it and saw it as an act of aggression against a peaceful nation. A shortsighted vision cost them the backing of the UN, as they thought either China, due to Hong Kong, or Russia, due to the events in Eastern Europe, would side with them on

the decolonization of the Falkland Islands (Welch, 1997). They also believed that the United States would step in and restrain Britain, as Argentina was a safeguard against communism in Latin America (Welch, 1997).

British Response

The Argentine leadership failed to anticipate a military response from Britain for several reasons. The Argentine leadership saw the sign of what they thought was UK disinterest in the Falklands with the scheduled removal of the HMS Endurance, due to defense spending cuts in the UK (Williams, 1983). They looked at how the UK handled the Suez and Rhodesia incidents, thinking they would rather deal than fight (Welch, 1997). They also believed that Britain could not mount a decisive military response "at the end of an 8,000-mile supply line in notoriously bad weather conditions" (Williams, 1983, p. 147).

Argentine Response

While the Junta had planned the occupation of the Falklands as early as January 1982, they did not intend to execute the operation later in the year as a last resort when and if negotiations failed (Freedman, 2005). The Junta decided to commence operations in early April 1982 ahead of schedule for several reasons. The first reason was an incident on South George Island involving a party of scrap metal workers and Argentine Marines. The Junta had agreed to postpone the operation to have the Marines plant an Argentine flag on the island and declare in under Argentine rule, until after negotiations were complete in New York in early 1982. The Navy acted without the knowledge of the Junta and went ahead with the mission. The UK responded with the HMS Endurance evicting the parties, which enraged the Junta as

they thought the operation was on hold (Welch, 1997). With the HMS Endurance off the coast of South George Island, 700 miles from the Falklands the Junta thought they had a small window of opportunity to launch an offensive without detection. One last piece of information obtained by Argentina was a story leaked by a UK defense minister on 25 March that Britain dispatched two submarines to the South Atlantic, which lead the Junta to believe that Britain intended to refortify the island (Freedman & Gamba-Stonehouse, 1991). The Junta wanted to launch the operation without interference from the Royal Navy as the operation depended on sealift of Soldiers and equipment as the main effort (Welch, 1997).

A risk not identified before operations was the lack of Joint Doctrine for the Argentine forces. There was also, a large rivalry between the services for power among the Junta. The Air force was not part of the initial planning process until two weeks from the execution of Operation Rosario (Corum, 2002). The Junta setup a complicated command structure for the operation. The South Atlantic Theater of Operations was established to control the naval units and army garrison units (Corum, 2002). The Junta created a subordinate command under that to control all army, navy, and air force units deployed to the Falkland Islands (Corum, 2002). The Argentine Strategic Air Command established a force called the Southern Air Force, which reported directly to the Junta, not the theater commander (Corum, 2002). Due to the uncoordinated nature of the campaign, the Junta was not able to resource the needs of any branch in a prioritized manner or maximize efficiencies any branch could provide to the overall fight.

An example of this disjointed effort was the Navy decision not to moor the Belgrano in Port Stanley harbor, which could provide air defense capabilities as well as a safe harbor from UK submarine patrols (Bicheno, 2006). The Army also did not expand the airfield on the island, as it was not a concern for them initially. If the Army had extended the airfield, the air force could have stationed larger fighter jets such as Skyhawks, Mirages, and Daggers on the island to respond to the UK threat (Bicheno, 2006). They could have gained air superiority by operating from the island instead of flying from land bases on the mainland. These long-distance flights exhausted pilots as well as fuel needed to stay on station to engage the enemy in direct action. The Navy recalled its ships back to Argentine ports after the sinking of the General Belgrano by a British submarine, which essentially gave the UK a naval blockade of the island. The Army stood alone without naval or air supply lines to replenish them during the conflict. The military's inability to plan joint operations and work as a unified force gave the British forces the tactical advantage on the battlefield winning the conflict over the Falkland Islands.

Conclusion

Argentina's leadership thought, in the face of national turmoil and economic crisis, an occupation of the Falkland Islands would strengthen their diplomatic position in gaining sovereignty over the islands. Argentina had the ways and means to complete the occupation operation but did not think strategically beyond that point. The Junta composed entirely of senior military officers favored using the military element of strategic power against the UK in an effort to force diplomacy over the sovereignty of the islands.

References

- Bicheno, H. (2006). *Razor's edge: The unofficial history of the Falklands War*. Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Calvert, P. (1982). *The Falklands crisis, the rights and the wrongs*. London, U.K.: Frances Pinter Limited.
- Corum, J. S. (2002). Argentine airpower in the Falklands War. *Air & Space Power Journal*. 16(3) 59-76. Retrieved from: <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Argentine+airpower+in+the+Falklands+War%3A+an+operational+view....-a094269861>
- Dornbusch, R. & Pablo, J. C. (1987). Argentina: Debt and macroeconomic instability. *National Bureau of Economic Research*. Retrieved from: <https://www.webcitation.org/63vtJrm5Q?url=http://cdi.mecon.gov.ar/biblio/docelec/nber/w2378.pdf>
- Freedman, L. (2005). *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume 1 : The origins of the Falklands War*. London, U.K.: Routledge.
- Freedman, L. & Gamba-Stonehouse, V. (1991). *Signals of war: The Falklands conflict of 1982*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Kinney, F. X. (1990). *The Malvinas conflict: Argentine practice of the operational art*. Retrieved from: <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a234161.pdf>

Wade, N. M. (2018). Instruments of national power. *The Lightning Press Intellectual Fuel for the Military*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thelightningpress.com/the-instruments-of-national-power/>

Welch, D. A. (1997). Remember the Falklands? Missed lessons of a misunderstood war. *International Journal*, 52(3), 483. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/220855413?accountid=46682>

Williams, P. (1983). Miscalculation, crisis management and the Falklands conflict. *The World Today*, 39(4), 144-149. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40395501>