

The Thatcher government assaults Monroe Doctrine

by Cynthia Rush

EIR founder and Democratic Party leader Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. has posed a straightforward solution to British threats to militarily punish Argentina for retaking the Malvinas Islands (also known as the Falklands) on April 1. Argentina reclaimed the islands on its southeast coast and ended an occupation which began in 1833, when the British illegally ousted Argentine residents and claimed the islands for themselves.

Mr. LaRouche has called on the U.S. government to inform all concerned parties that "military intervention into the Western hemisphere by a European power is an explicit violation of the Monroe Doctrine, bordering upon *casus belli*." The United States has the obligation to "prevent European military action in the hemisphere . . . and to nullify by all required means any temporary advantage which might be secured by extra-hemispheric military forces. . . ."

As indicated by British strategists, London's threats of aggression against Argentina are motivated by a desire to extend the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Third World, and blackmail the United States into supporting this. While a fleet consisting of two-thirds of the British Navy steamed toward the Southwest Atlantic to militarily confront Argentina, a team of British officials descended on Washington the second week in April to strong-arm the Reagan administration into supporting the Thatcher government. The British are reportedly threatening to "break up NATO" and strategically humiliate the United States, if it does not back Britain's right to retake the Malvinas by force.

Mr. LaRouche states in his new document, "Why We

Must Insist Absolutely that the Monroe Doctrine Be Strictly Enforced Now," that "Under U.S. law, the British have no legal claim to the Malvinas Islands. At the time of the promulgation of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, these islands were both *de jure* and *de facto* territory of the sovereign state of Argentina. They were taken forcibly by the British, in direct violation of the Monroe Doctrine, in 1833. . . . If we permit British military action in this matter, there is no credibility remaining anywhere in the world for either the foreign policy or the strategic posture of the United States. . . ."

"The prospect of destruction of much of the petroleum flow from the Gulf region . . . means a scramble for alternative petroleum resources. . . . It means that the London-based Seven Sisters petroleum-marketing cartel can now dream of pushing world petroleum prices up to as high as \$100 a barrel. Whether the government of Argentina was or was not aware of all the details of the presently threatening developments in the Middle East, that government has broad and compelling reasons of vital national security interest for seeking to develop the Patagonian shelf. . . . Similarly, London's petroleum-marketing and associated financial interests had powerful motives of greed for wishing to seize control of as much as possible of the Patagonian shelf. This has been, broadly speaking, the strategic environment of recent conflicts in negotiations on this matter between Argentina and the United Kingdom."

Restructuring NATO

In light of reports that the British Foreign Office

had intelligence on the Argentine invasion plans as much as two weeks before the actual attack, it is likely that the British Crown and its intelligence services deliberately withheld information from Prime Minister Thatcher and other officials in order to provoke a government crisis and force a change in defense and military policy—if not dump Thatcher herself.

The crisis was also probably engineered to divert world attention away from the Middle East, where Israel is threatening to invade Lebanon. British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, who handed in his resignation over the Malvinas crisis, on his recent visit to Israel told Prime Minister Begin to accept the creation of a Palestinian state and give up territories for that purpose. Now the outcry in Israel over “British hypocrisy” can be used to justify a strike against Lebanon.

A senior military institute analyst indicated in a private interview in London that the purpose of pursuing a showdown with Argentina is to establish an operational precedent for completely reorganizing NATO, and moving it into the South Atlantic. NATO must ready itself for conventional confrontations throughout the Third World, this analyst emphasized. “If the British Navy backs down at the prospect of heavy casualties [in a confrontation with Argentina], it will call into question the posture of NATO. . . . It may well be that these events will cause a rethinking of the strategic redeployment of NATO navies out of the NATO area.”

British policymakers are also using the fact that Britain was allegedly militarily surprised by the Argentine attack to demand that the government adopt a rearmament policy—with special emphasis on conventional weapons. Over the weekend of April 3-4, the new Tory coordinator for defense policy, Averell Harriman's stepson Winston Churchill III, publicly called for a conventional arms buildup.

Thatcher government shaky

Margaret Thatcher is trying to appease her critics. When Carrington's resigned April 4, Thatcher replaced him with Francis Pym, the former Defense Secretary dumped a year ago for opposing her dismantling of Britain's military capabilities.

Thatcher knows that if she doesn't follow through on threats to teach the Argentines a lesson, her government will fall; if she does, she has no guarantee of political survival.

Many military experts in the United States and Britain are warning that the British Navy deployment to the Malvinas could end in new humiliation for Thatcher, given the overwhelming logistical problems facing the fleet and the lack of an adequate air cover in the event that they attack the islands.

Argentine Interior Minister Gen. Alfredo St. Jean

stated a few days ago that “we are prepared for the worst . . . Argentine troops can withstand a British attack.” President Leopoldo Galtieri has ordered a war mobilization, and Foreign Minister Costa Méndez reported at the April 4 meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) that his government is considering invoking the 1947 Rio Treaty of mutual defense by which other Latin American nations would come to Argentina's assistance were it attacked by Britain or any other power.

The Argentines have even intimated that if necessary, they would seek aid from the Soviet Union, their most important trading partner, if they can't count on the United States to respond with “common sense.”

Eyes on the United States

Latin American diplomatic sources in Mexico City have told *EIR* that Britain's planned aggression against Argentina is motivated in part by its desire to destroy U.S. influence in Latin America. Great Britain has nothing to lose by a defeat in Latin America; but the United States most certainly does. President Reagan is under enormous pressure by the British directly and by their agents in the U.S. news media who are demanding that the President side with “America's oldest ally” Great Britain. Intelligence sources also say that Alexander Haig's State Department will block any effort to apply the Monroe Doctrine.

Latin America is watching the United States carefully to see what course of action it adopts. One diplomatic source told *EIR* that the United States must apply the Monroe Doctrine across the board—not just when it suits their interests—and two leading Mexican newspapers have published commentary discussing whether the United States will fulfill its responsibility to invoke the Monroe Doctrine.

The majority of Latin American nations—Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico—have issued formal statements supporting Argentina's claim to the Malvinas, but adding in most cases the hope that the conflict will be settled peacefully. In the case of Mexico, indicating a sharp internal fight over the issue, the government has called for adherence to the U.N. resolution demanding Argentine withdrawal from the Malvinas. This reflects Mexican fears over a possible invasion of Belize by Guatemala, a military conflict that would almost certainly draw in Mexico and further destabilize the Central American situation.

No Latin American country wants a war. But if the British fire one shot at Argentine troops in the Malvinas, or carry out their threat to bomb cities on mainland Argentina, the entirety of Latin America will rally to Argentina's defense—with incalculable consequences. Only the United States can prevent that from happening.