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P A N O R A M A

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RICHARD LINDLEY: Good evening. Today in the Falklands more Argentine planes have been shot down but more British ships have been hit. In Panorama tonight we'll be looking at what is happening now and what will happen in the future. The battle to repossess the islands is now in its fourth day. In the studio with me is John Nott the Defence Secretary. I'll be talking to him about the way the fighting is going. We'll be looking, too, at the way the world is reacting to the fighting. Tom Mangold will be reporting from the United Nations and questioning Argentina's Foreign Minister, Nicanor Costa Mendez. And, finally, we'll be examining what lies beyond military victory. What is the long-term future for the Falklands; has the government thought it through? We'll be talking to Mr Nott about that as well. But we begin with the latest news from the South Atlantic where Britain has gone to war to assert its rights eight thousand miles from home. Here's Philip Tibenham.

PHILIP TIBENHAM: Tonight's latest news is that the battle for air superiority has been fought out throughout the day over the Falkland Sound. According to the Ministry of Defence, seven Argentine planes have been shot down today while attacking the fleet. Some British ships were damaged but the extent of that damage still isn't known. Now as to the bridgehead itself, as we understand it, it now stretches something like that, with the San Carlos settlement here and Port San Carlos there; may be larger than the ten square miles we've heard about so far. But what we do know that in there are four and a half, may be five thousand troops dug into the bitterly cold ground. They with their Rapier anti-aircraft missiles, Scorpion light tanks and some Snow Cats and what's more they've put up a maintenance base. Now according to the Ministry not a single life among the ground troops was lost in the landing; a couple of legs broken may be; broken rib but no more than that. But tonight, supplies are still being heaved ashore from this water here. That is food, ammunition and so on. And to protect those ships there have to be frigates in the Falkland Sound and their presence has, to an extent, been costly. As we know we've already lost the Ardent, the Entelope has been abandoned while another frigate has been badly damaged by air attack. Now these attacks are certain to go on and privately Defence Ministry officials acknowledge that some Argentine pilots have shown professional skill but at a very high price. A total of thirty six aircraft since the assault started have been shot down against five of ours. So, what next?
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TIBENHAM: Well, we'll almost certainly strike south towards Darwin and Goose Green where there're about a thousand Argentines dug in that is if we haven't done it already. But to take the Falklands a commander must take Port Stanley. One of his problems is that from the bridgehead to there is this range of mountains running pretty well stright from east to west. In places they're about half a mile high and in the bleak Falkland winter they're impassable for heavily laden troops. Even close to the mountains there are what the islanders call "stone runs". They're tracks of boulders left over from the ice age. Even Scorpion tanks would make heavy weather of trying to get across them. It means then to get to Port Stanley British troops have to skirt north or south of the mountains. Either way, that forces them over land like this shown on this unique film shot by a Falkland islander about this time of year. The temperature in May is about zero, but the cutting west winds produce a chill factor of ten below zero. Apart from the cold, the drivers of wheeled vehicles face two big obstacles: the first is what lies beneath the grass -- miles of peat bog. The winter rains turn the surface below the grass into deep and unpleasant brown sludge. While Scorpion tanks with their dispersed weight could, probably, cross it; landrovers are likely to sink in at least up to their axles. The land on the way to Stanley is also cut by deep creeks. There are a few fords but the creeks present a series of obstacles in the path of the advance. Even when the troops get nearer Port Stanley the problems won't be over. This is the main bridge to the town from the south and it's believed that it's already been mined by the Argentines. Now that bridge is about here, ten miles from Stanley and whether we go over it or round it there are bound to be problems because there are thought to be seven thousand Argentines dug in here with artillery in a sort of semi-circle there looking on to land there, and there in which there's no hiding place. Military experts don't under-estimate how tough the going will be when we get there.

LINDLEY:

Thank you, Philip.

An opinion poll carried out for Panorama by MORI yesterday shows that the overwhelming majority of people supports the government's decision to take military action. Asked if it was right to go ahead with the landing, eighty percent said 'yes'. But although nearly two-thirds of the population sixty three percent thought we should go on fighting until the Argentines left the islands; nearly a third thought there should be an immediate ceasefire.

Mr Nott, you told the House of Commons this afternoon that the days of the Argentine garrison on the Falklands are numbered. Does that mean that you've ordered British commanders subject only to their own advice and their own opinions as to when to move to go all out to complete the reconquest of the Falklands?

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RT.HON.JOHN NOTT, MP (Secy. for Defence): Yes, the task force commander has been told to repossess the Falkland Islands at the earliest possible opportunity.

LINDLEY: Argentina is supporting the call for a ceasefire. Would you be prepared under any circumstances to order a halt in our military advance and accept a ceasefire while further talks are held?

NOTT: Well, we've had six weeks of talks. I think that's right and we've made a succession of proposals all of which have been rejected by Argentina. We've gone backwards so far as their agreement is concerned to a withdrawal from the islands under the mandatory United Nations resolution and I see no reason why they should have changed their position. They have continuously said that they wanted a ceasefire and they wanted to negotiate, but every time that's been put to the test they have shown total intransigence.

LINDLEY: So we're not going to stop in the middle now?

NOTT: Absolutely not.

LINDLEY: Even though a third of the British public seems to think that a ceasefire now now that we've made our point, now that we've landed, a third of the public seems to think that a ceasefire would be a good idea?

NOTT: Well, two-thirds don't think it will be a good idea and I agree with the two-thirds.

LINDLEY: What you're after really is surrender?

NOTT: We're going forward to repossess the Falkland Islands. We must see how the Argentine garrison reacts. It's too soon to say; we've only just established a bridgehead; we're now making that secure and the task force commander will press forward as soon as he's ready to do so.

LINDLEY: If the Security Council seemed about to accept a resolution for a ceasefire would we veto it?

NOTT: Well, the Security Council has already passed a resolution -- resolution 502 -- requiring the Argentines to withdraw. They have totally ignored it. Indeed, following resolution 502 they continued to build up their forces on the islands. So that is the resolution that we are concerned about -- withdrawal of the Argentines immediately -- and only with withdrawal is a ceasefire sensible or a possible option.

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LINDLEY: So you don't think there's any possibility at all that the Security Council could call for a ceasefire now?

NOTT: Well, we already are operating under resolution 502 which has been ignored by the Argentinians.

LINDLEY: If it came to it, would you veto it?

NOTT: Veto what?

LINDLEY: If the Security Council did decide in a further resolution to call for a ceasefire would you veto it?

NOTT: Well, there can only be a ceasefire as we've made absolutely clear from the outset of this matter if there's total withdrawal of the Argentinians from the islands and so far they have shown no willingness to do that.

LINDLEY: You talked today in the House about the way in which despite the defensive screens we're now putting out some Argentine planes are still getting through to damage our ships. What do you feel about that?

NOTT: Well, we've shot down about fifty of their fixed wing aircraft which is an enormous loss of skilled pilots for the Argentine. We've successfully now blockaded the islands for many weeks. Undoubtedly the garrison there is getting short of food and now last weekend we successfully accomplished the most difficult military operation which has been establishing a bridgehead. That was always going to be the most dangerous part of re-establishing our position on the islands and it went on the whole very well. We suffered losses — tragic losses — but the military aim has been achieved and achieved with remarkably little loss of life, in fact none from the troops who are now ashore.

LINDLEY: Is it possible to say that the worst period of taking casualties on the British side is now over?

NOTT: Well, I would hope so but nothing is certain in a battle of this sort. It may still be a very tough fight. I think the morale of the Argentinians on the garrison is low but they may well fight very hard and so I cannot be sure that we will not take further casualties. I sincerely hope not, but I cannot be sure.

LINDLEY: Do you believe that we shall reduce them to a minimum by moving as fast as we can?

NOTT: I think it's important we move fast, but as I said in the House today that kind of tactical decision is for the force commanders on the spot. They must make the decision
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NOTT: as to how they're going to move forward from here.

LINDLEY:

Mr Nott, thank you very much. We'll be coming back to you to talk to you again in a moment.

The high point in world support for Britain's position on the Falklands came right at the beginning of the crisis. A unanimous vote by our European partners to impose mandatory sanctions and a Security Council resolution calling on Argentina to withdraw its forces. But as time has ticked by and Britain has raised the military stakes so support has sometimes faltered. Last week, Common Market Foreign Ministers refused to renew their economic sanctions against Argentina for more than a week. Today in Brussels they thought better of it and decided — all except Italy and Greece — to maintain sanctions indefinitely. In America, the State Department is still firmly behind us but as Tom Mangold now reports even our closest NATO ally is becoming alarmed about where it's all leading. While in New York at the Security Council a chorus of mostly South American nations has been protesting at what seems to them not so much a defence of democracy but the reimposition of colonialism.

TOM MANGOLD:

Here at the United Nations in New York in the Security Council Britain, as anticipated, is losing the war of words in a debate on the Falkland Islands crisis that she neither sought nor wanted nor enjoys. Having originally and rather smartly steered resolution 502 through the Council — that's the resolution demanding the withdrawal of all Argentina's troops from the Falklands — Britain has wanted no more than its implementation. The resolution, a clear precise statement, was originally passed because the prevailing mood of the United Nations is always against the use of force. That's what the UN is about. It's for precisely this reason (and here logic is the casualty of war) that Britain now finds itself berated as an aggressor by many of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. So for three days the debate has veered from real concern to low theatre as the Council seeks desperately to find a resolution acceptable to the United Kingdom. Now according to the rules of the game if Britain is forced to use her veto, which she will, to prevent an inconvenient ceasefire being imposed then this will be seen as a small victory by her opponents. It's not regarded as good form to use the veto in the Security Council. However, any resolution acceptable to Britain will be far too anodyne for her Latin American opponents. One should not expect too much from the conclusion of this debate. Perhaps the most Britain expects is the continuing support of her most powerful friends, including, of course, the United States. I spoke earlier to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan himself a former American ambassador to the United Nations and asked him how he thought history would record the present crisis.

SENATOR MOYNIHAN:

History will first record that not enough attention was paid by either side. This is something that needn't have happened. History will secondly record that once again the British, facing an issue of principle, have been prepared to fight. And we honour them for that and on the floor of the Senate I was

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SENATOR MOYNIHAN: standing up at the very first day saying "we had no alternative but to stand with Britain". On the other hand Professor Butterfield the British historian....."when you go to war for principles and the actual fighting happens the end result is not usually what you hoped it would be and Britain went to war for the freedom of Poland and Poland's not free.

MANGOLD: There are those in the United States, including it is felt the present American ambassador to the United Nations who view the events in the Falkland Islands with great alarm and who believe that it has not been worth fighting and that the alienation of Latin America in the long-term could be disastrous for the United States. Do you have any sympathy with those views yourself?

MOYNIHAN: I'm aware of them and you have to respect them but the world doesn't always give you the choice you would most prefer or the easy choice or an option that is without cost. We had to choose between a basic principle of international relations for which we have fought and you have fought and which is in the charter and we had to choose between supporting an ally and a neo-Fascist government that had committed aggression against which we had voted in the Security Council. There are costs for doing both things. We have a saying in Tammy (phon.) politics up in New York where I come from: when in doubt do the right thing.

MANGOLD: Senator Moynihan's views about Britain's Falklands operation represent the consensus amongst American Senators and Congressmen. Where there is criticism of Britain it's not political but military and it's rooted in growing American concern over the absence of the Royal Navy from its crucial role in Europe. Seventy percent of all anti-submarine warfare patrols against Russian submarines in the North Atlantic are normally handled by the Royal Navy. Because of the Falkland Islands reoccupation that function has virtually ceased. Rear Admiral Mark Hill expresses increasing American nervousness about our absence.

REAR ADMIRAL MARK HILL: My major reservation is the dispersal of forces dedicated to NATO and the strength of the North Atlantic and particularly what we call GIUK gap — Greenland, Iceland, UK gap — in their anti-submarine forces down eight thousand miles from England in the South Atlantic and the degree to which those forces will be torn asunder for further use say in the months ahead. Already the Royal Navy has taken rather significant losses and I think that this is something that they're not only going to have to replace but they're going to have to be prepared to handle the situation even after they retake the Falklands and we assume that they will be successful in that regard.

MANGOLD: What important decisions have to be taken by Britain in the light of the military success in the Falkland Islands?

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HILL: Well, I think first of all we must recognise that both England and the United States are emotional people... emotional countries in reacting toward these kind of contingencies and after the euphoria dies down then they have to look at the long, cold, hard facts of the future. Is England prepared to restructure their fleet to keep it eight thousand miles from home. Are they prepared to set up the logistic lifeline, are they prepared to build new types of ships to do this and keep substantial forces in the Falklands? The Soviets that we're facing are not emotional, they're pragmatic and they are working for a specific end. In a sense this is almost like the Spanish civil war to them. It's far enough away that it can be controlled, they can see what happens to modern weapons systems, they can see the changes that they have to make themselves to protect their fleets against these things. And on that basis I think it behoves England with our support once they retake the Falklands to be generous with Argentina and make certain that those countries in South America do not fall in the Soviet camp.

MANGOLD: Americans believe the extent to which those are real problems depends on how quickly fighting can be stopped and on the terms of any eventual settlement between Britain and Argentina. At the moment neither side wants a ceasefire except on their own terms. The Argentinian Foreign Minister, Dr Costa Mendez, has come to New York and is speaking tonight. Despite all evidence to the contrary when I spoke to him this morning he was far from admitting that Argentinian troops on the islands were now facing defeat.

Mr Minister, would you agree that as far as Argentina is concerned there's now no military solution to the Falkland Islands crisis?

SEÑOR NICANOR COSTA MENDEZ (Argentinian Foreign Minister): No I wouldn't agree with that. Argentina will defend those islands. That Argentina believes firmly they belong to Argentina and they have belonged to Argentina for so many years with all its force as you would defend Brighton or would defend any part of the islands...of those islands that really I like so much.

MANGOLD: The reality is that the British troops are consolidating their hold. Now may I ask you what option.....(interruption)

COSTA MENDEZ: Excuse me. This is your reality it's not my point of view. It's not my information.

MANGOLD: You do not believe that British troops are consolidating their hold?

COSTA MENDEZ: No, not at all. This is not my information.

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MANGOLD: What option does Argentina now have other than withdrawing its troops from the islands in compliance with Security Council resolution 502?

COSTA MENDEZ: Well, that's a very good question... that's a very good question. Argentina will fight for its islands as long as there's one Argentine in the continent or in the islands. That's the first thing that the British must bear in mind. But we wouldn't like that problem. We would really like a peaceful solution. There's one thing and you know perfectly well. We have been seeking for a peaceful solution for seventeen years in the United Nations.

MANGOLD: The invasion of the islands is not a peaceful solution.

COSTA MENDEZ: It is, it is. It is a peaceful solution.

MANGOLD: If you want a peaceful solution why do you not accept resolution 502 which represents the will of the United Nations Security Council?

COSTA MENDEZ: My dear friend you are absolutely mistaken. We fully accepted resolution 502 from the very beginning... from the day the resolution was passed.

MANGOLD: But you've never withdrawn your troops?

COSTA MENDEZ: Because England came with forty warships.

MANGOLD: There was nothing in the resolution that prevented England coming with forty warships the resolution required that you withdrew your troops from the islands.

COSTA MENDEZ: The resolution was in a context for three points that were absolutely sort of a whole, if I may say.

MANGOLD: Mr Minister, you have not complied with resolution 502 from the moment that it was passed and people are anxious to know why not and if you will do so in the future?

COSTA MENDEZ: If we began this way we cannot continue. I say that we are fully disposed and despite it to fully comply with resolution 502. Now if you will let me one minute of explanation. Resolution 502 has three points. Negotiation, withdrawal of troops and of hostilities. Britain never never end hostilities. Began hostilities after resolution 502 and resolution 502 doesn't authorise Britain to be the hand of the Security Council to impose resolution 502 to Argentina. first point. Second point, withdrawal of troops means withdrawal of troops
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COSTA MENDEZ: of both parties from the position they have at the moment the negotiations began. And the third point, negotiations should begin at the same time withdrawal of troops takes place and hostilities are ended.

MANGOLD: What one concession or compromise on Argentina's part or on Britain's part could get the negotiations reopened?

COSTA MENDEZ: You know what? Perhaps I will sound a bit naive. Real goodwill, because Argentina and Britain have been very good friends for many many years. We have...Argentina has cooperated with Britain, Britain has really cooperated with Argentina's development, no doubt about that. It's really absurd that two countries like Argentina and Britain could really be in this war, killing so many people for two or three points that in a table with goodwill can be solved.

MANGOLD: Goodwill of course not helped by your invasion of the islands.

COSTA MENDEZ: All you're insisting in not discussing the real point for seventeen years in the United Nations.

MANGOLD: In view of the calamitous consequences of Argentina's decision to occupy the islands...they are calamitous...there has been great loss of life.

COSTA MENDEZ: And the calamitous consequences of the negative of Britain to discuss and to negotiate fairly the problem.

MANGOLD: When the fighting ends negotiations will have to start again.

COSTA MENDEZ: Yes.

MANGOLD: How do you believe they will start and what do you believe will be the consequence...the result of the negotiations?

COSTA MENDEZ: You know I'm an optimist. I have hopes...I have great hopes in the United Nations and I think that if both countries and the rest of the countries, members of the Security Council put some goodwill, some bona fide goodwill and really begin to discuss the problem could be ended very easily.

MANGOLD: How?

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COSTA MENDEZ: How? Because we will accept every right the islanders would like to have.

MANGOLD: Do you believe there will be concessions in the end from Argentina?

COSTA MENDEZ: Argentina made substantial concessions.

MANGOLD: Will there be any more?

COSTA MENDEZ: It is ready to make any concession that doesn't affect its essential aims concerning the islands.

MANGOLD: And the essential aims are?

COSTA MENDEZ: That the islands are part of Argentina.

MANGOLD: Ultimately you demand sovereignty?

COSTA MENDEZ: No, I don't. I demand to sit on the table where we can openly discuss our problem because I'm so sure of my rights. I'm so sure that a real just objective is attained if justice is made the islands will be given to Argentina. But I do not put this as a pre-condition. I want to discuss openly because I'm very sure of my cause.

LINDLEY: We had a short while ago that the Security Council unexpectedly adjourned. So in fact Dr Costa Mendez won't be addressing the Council until tomorrow. But from what he said to Tom Mangold there doesn't seem much change in Argentina's position despite British landings.

Given that it's Britain that wins the battle for the Falklands what then? It's an uncertain future. Last week when Mrs Thatcher gave the order to stop talking and start fighting she swept from the table the various concessions and compromises that our government had been prepared to agree to in the cause of a peaceful settlement. Until that moment, Mrs Thatcher had kept alive the idea long favoured by the Foreign Office of one day handing sovereignty over the Falklands to Argentina...of getting rid of the islands for ever. Now all bets are off or to put it another way, all the options are open again. And with every British soldier that dies in retaking the Falklands, ceding sovereignty to Argentina becomes more difficult. Certainly, British public opinion is against any such move. Our Panorama poll carried out yesterday confirms that. More than half of those questioned fifty four percent said that Britain should retain sovereignty over the islands for ever. So, giving the Falklands away to Argentina has become more difficult for
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LINDLEY: any British government. But going back to the situation that existed before the crisis began seems now more difficult still. Then we had sovereignty but at the same time close links existed between the islands and Argentina. The Argentine invasion and the fighting now going on have decisively broken those links the only thing that made living on the islands possible. So, in the immediate future at least Britain will have to provide an entirely new life support system for the islands. In a moment I'll be talking again to Mr Nott about the government's military commitments and longer term political aims. But first Peter Taylor reports on some of those options that make up the Falklanders' uncertain future.

PETER TAYLOR: The silent shadow of British Antarctica hangs over the battle in the Falklands. Some suspect these icy wastes rich in oil and minerals may be a hidden reason for the war. In the past the mere prospect of conflict has deterred all comers from exploiting the wealth.

Do you think that as a result of the invasion of the Falklands the oil companies will be more prepared to explore for oil in that region?

DR COLIN PHIPPS: Without a political settlement of course not. Basically it's not in the interest of oil companies to explore in areas where there's a political problem because if they find something they may have it taken off them later on. But equally they really need the Argentinian mainland logistically to develop the area.

TAYLOR: If the Falklands are recaptured, the Argentinians driven out, perhaps even the governor restored, the long-term problems far from being solved may be even more acute. The war in the Falklands has sharpened the issue, not driven it away. Political stability seems more distant than ever although many hope that it may return by simply turning back the clock.

RT.HON.JULIAN AMERY,MP: Well, clearly we shall have a British administration. There's already one established in Port Carlos and I hope to see the Union Jack flying over Port Stanley and the governor back as soon as possible.

TAYLOR: And how long would you expect those institutions to remain on the islands?

AMERY: Well, I think they could remain for a very long time. I don't see any hurry to change them.

TAYLOR: If the islands are successfully retaken what commitment would you like the British government to make to their future?

JOHN CHEEK (Member of the Falklands Legislative Council): Firstly I don't think there's any yet. We'll wait till the islands have been
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CHEEK: recovered. And secondly the British government have already made a commitment which they haven't changed that the people's wishes are paramount; that our right to self-determination under the United Nations charter...that's the main thing. We're not really a colony, we're just basically got our own self-government and we see Britain as our protecting power.

TAYLOR: Would you want the British government to give a guarantee that British sovereignty would remain over the Falkland Islands as long as the Falkland Islanders wished it?

CHEEK: I think they've already given that guarantee.

TAYLOR: For years the Falklanders were forgotten and neglected. A government report recognised the potential for development. Hutton could be exported as well as wool instead of throwing the carcass away. But nothing was done. Economically, the islanders were left to wither in the wind in the expectation, perhaps, that one day the wind will blow them to Argentina. If the islands are retaken, the potential for investment remains, and it's not just oil. The waters teem with fish. Factory ships from Japan and eastern Europe farm them at will. The islands could capture the rewards for themselves, again if political conditions were right. The shores are strewn with seaweed, source of alginates -- chemicals used in cosmetics and foods. Again, the political climate has to be right. But can Britain make a go of the islands without support from her Latin neighbours? Can she maintain and defend them in isolation, relying solely on a vulnerable chain eight thousand miles long. When Argentina withdraws her link with the Falklands can the islands exist on their own? Can they survive without an air link with Argentina? This link only started only a few years ago. Many islanders didn't want it, but necessity won the day. The Falklands have little infrastructure. There was pressure to extend the runway to take planes from Britain instead of Argentina, but nothing was done. Argentina filled the gap. Argentina also supplied the islands with oil. When the air bridge is gone can the islands survive?

LORD CHALFONT: I don't think they are viable entirely on their own. They have to have that kind of infrastructure. And, of course, they're not big enough in political terms to exist as an independent entity any way. They've got to be in association with someone.

TAYLOR: Could we support the Falkland Islands simply by an eight thousand mile chain from Britain?

CHALFONT: Well, we could. There is no reason other than the economic and financial one why we should not do that. It would be a very costly thing to do. It would be a very difficult thing to do if we have a constantly hostile Argentina within three hundred miles of those islands and able to disrupt an eight-thousand-mile line of FB

CHALFONT: supplies and communication.

TAYLOR: Britain can no longer rely on this link with Argentina. Could she look north to Uruguay and Montevideo or south to Chile and Punta Arenas? There's no guarantee that they will oblige.

Why do you think that Chile and Uruguay should support what Latin America sees as British imperialist designs on the South Atlantic?

AMERY: The idea that the Latin Americans are united is about as silly as the idea that the Arabs are united.

TAYLOR: You think that despite the political pressures either of those two countries might offer a base on the mainland?

AMERY: Well, I would guess that the main anxiety in Chile today is **if** the Argentines were to come out of this successful Chile would be the next victim.

TAYLOR: Under the circumstances if we do inflict a crushing defeat on Argentina would you expect any other Latin American country, like Chile or Uruguay, to offer us the mainland facilities that Argentina would consequently deny?

CHALFONT: No, not immediately. I think that one of the inevitable consequences of a really desperate fight with Argentina over this unless it were to end now in some kind of agreed position between us which is very unlikely I think that the Latin American view even that of Chile which has a long-standing feud with Argentina but I think we will find the whole of Latin America generally speaking become rather more hostile towards us.

TAYLOR: Average or not, the islands will have to be more heavily garrisoned than they were before. The Argentinians quickly overran the token presence of a handful of Marines. To prevent a repeat performance some kind of permanent garrison may have to be established perhaps several thousand strong. The islands may face the future as a military fortress.

If the British ^{forces} do capture the Falklands isn't Argentina going to have to reach a settlement on British terms?

DR PHIPPS: The Argentinians really don't have to do anything at all. They can just sit there knowing that the expense of keeping that garrison going is in the end just going to be impossible for British public opinion to swallow. They are the spider sitting outside of the web. Sooner or later they can pounce again.

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NOTT: Well, I can't be sure. I mean clearly there's a total rupture in relations between the Falkland Islanders and Argentines at the moment, but that need not necessarily be long-lasting. After this is over I think we must try and recreate good relations between Argentina and Great Britain and with the Falkland Islands. I think that's possible.

LINDLEY: Listening to what Dr Costa Mendez said there it does seem that Argentina is unlikely to abandon its claim to sovereignty over the Falklands. Can you imagine that they're going to forget about it and not try again?

NOTT: Well, you see the Argentine government wants to impose colonialism on the Falkland Islands. They talk about colonialism there. What they want is to deny the islanders their democratic rights. In the interim arrangements which we put to the United Nations totally in accordance with the United Nations charter for the elected council to continue they denied the right of the islanders to keep their democracy. Colonialism is what the Argentines want for the people of the Falkland Islands who are British and we are denying that to Argentina and will continue to do so.

LINDLEY: Well, that may well be so, but the point is that they are very determined to keep on pressing their claim however it is interpreted. They don't appear and I think the British government was at pains to point out, when the negotiations were finally rejected, that Argentina, whatever it might have said on the one hand continue to assert sovereignty it seems very hard to imagine that just because they've got a bloody nose this time, just because you've beaten them this time that they're going to go away and forget about it doesn't it?

NOTT: Well, we haven't beaten them yet. It depends what you mean by them. I'm merely seeking withdrawal of the occupying Argentine forces in the islands. You say they're determined but so are we. Senator Moynihan who's been a great supporter of ours throughout in the United States talked about principles and of course there is a principle here, that of defending your own people however few in number. And after all these islands have been British for a hundred and fifty years and the Argentines may have a claim over them but they've been British and the people of the Falkland Islands have said they wish to remain British and this is the central issue which the Argentines cannot accept.

LINDLEY: Do you ever see them accepting it?

NOTT: The people of the Falkland Islands?

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LINDLEY: Do you ever see the Argentines accepting that the islands will be anything but Argentinian.

NOTT: If one is to believe the Foreign Minister, no.

LINDLEY: That means, doesn't it then, that we are going to have to look after the islands for the foreseeable future. Have to garrison them, protect them?

NOTT: In the foreseeable future have repossessed them it seems probable that we will have to leave a garrison there, yes, and protect it.

LINDLEY: Any idea how much that would cost?

NOTT: I've no idea at all, but it needn't necessarily be particularly expensive. We would probably have to keep some submarines in the area and a garrison which was larger than the earlier one we would need to provide some air defence for the islands. It need not be extremely costly. If the Argentines suffer a defeat I think there's very much....s lot of exaggerated talk about the cost of defending the islands in the future.

LINDLEY: I've certainly seen one estimate that suggests that it might be as much as one thousand seven hundred million pounds to do the job properly over a three-year period. That's more than a million pounds per islander. Is that the sort of cost that we could consider...is it proportionate with Britain's other interests?

NOTT: Well, I haven't seen that figure. It's about what it costs us to....the British army on the Rhine...

LINDLEY: Are the Falklands that important?

NOTT: ...helping to defend Germany against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. I think it's a hugely exaggerated figure. But I must make the point that once we've repossessed the islands we will obviously try and create a peaceful environment in which the islanders can live in peace with their neighbours as was said on the television. That includes Chile and Uruguay and Brazil. I don't necessarily believe that because we have repossessed the islands the relations with the South American continent need remain bad. I don't accept it.

LINDLEY: Do you think we have the will to defend them as long as necessary?

NOTT: Oh absolutely.

FB

LINDLEY: I was looking back into history a little... I think it was in 1770 when the Spanish occupied the Falklands and the British fleet saw them off. Within four years we'd sailed away again because we couldn't afford to stay. You don't feel the situation is rather similar today?

NOTT: No, I don't at all. I'm sure that it will be essential for us to remain there and protect the Falkland Islands whilst the neighbour has an aggressive intention for the islands, but as I'm making clear we as soon as this is over we will want to get into discussions with Argentina and with Argentina's neighbours about the future. I prefer the word 'discussions' rather than 'negotiations'. Once we're back in control of British sovereign territory it is not negotiations we're talking about but discussions about the future of the islands which we'll be quite happy to talk about but subject of course to the wishes of the islanders themselves and they must remain paramount.

LINDLEY: How do you think we could ask or expect other nations in the area to help us to bear some of the defence burden of defending the Falklands against any revenge attack should Argentina decide to make one?

NOTT: Well, I don't think we could expect the other South American countries to help us defend the Falklands against Argentina but we would like to feel that we can come to a final long-term solution where the integrity of the Falkland Islands is guaranteed in an international way.

LINDLEY: By whom? America?

NOTT: Well, I think we haven't yet considered that matter. May be by the United States, may be by the United States in conjunction with other South American countries. But in the end it will be the wishes of the islanders that are paramount as we've said all along and that's in accordance with Article 72 of the United Nations charter. So why anybody should think there's something wrong or colonialist or undemocratic about the upholding of the principles of the charter I fail to see. The colonialism that's talked about is on the side of Argentina who wants to deny the democratic right to the Falkland Islanders.

LINDLEY: I think it's a little hard, though, for people to imagine how we can get others to defend a part of Britain as you suggest the Falklands really is at the other end of the world for us.

NOTT: Well, I'm looking...casting into the future. It may be we could bring the Falkland Islands into some general kind of arrangement. I mean the Antarctica is in some kind

NOTT: of general arrangement which guarantees its integrity. These are all matters that'll have to be the right about. In the short-term we are concerned with the military aim which is to repossess the islands and ensure the withdrawal of the Argentinians.

LINDLEY: Do you agree with your war Cabinet colleague, Mr Parkinson, that we've ruled out for the foreseeable future giving sovereignty of the Falklands to Argentina. Is that out of the question?

NOTT: Oh, out of the question. Out of the question. We wouldn't have sent a task force with twenty six thousand people involved eight thousand miles which is half way... equivalent to half way across the Pacific from these islands. We wouldn't have done this with the full support of the British people only to arrive there, having suffered tragic losses of our men only once we're there to say: "Well, thank you very much we're now going to sit down with you and discuss sovereignty". That's not what it's all about. We've had six weeks of negotiations with the Argentinians. They've steadfastly opposed every kind of concession that we have made. In fact they've gone backwards. Now we are being asked... now we're there and now we're winning and taking them back and re-establishing democracy for our own people on these islands we're now being told that we must cease firing that there must be a truce. The notion is absurd. I'm in favour of negot.... discussions about the long-term future of the islands as soon as we're back there. But let's achieve the restoration of British administration and then we can see what the islanders want.

LINDLEY: But during this period of negotiations...this six weeks...you've never once ruled out the possibility of handing sovereignty to Argentina. You've gone out of your way not to do that. Are you now saying that we never will?

NOTT: What I'm saying is that our immediate objective is now to repossess the islands. We tried for six weeks to get a reasonable peaceful settlement in accordance with the United Nations mandatory resolution, the Argentinians rejected it, we went through seven sets of proposals, now what I'm saying is there's a new situation and we're not going to talk about sovereignty at the moment that we're trying to retake the islands and free the Falkland Islanders from their occupation.

LINDLEY: I can see the logic of that, but there's another logic, too, isn't there? If it was right until two months ago for Britain to talk about handing over sovereignty to Argentina what in the long-term has changed about that once this emergency...once this crisis is over. If it made sense two months ago why doesn't it make sense now?

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NOTT: Well, in the short-term what has changed is that whilst we were discussing these issues with Argentina in good faith she invaded the islands. That is what has changed and that has changed the whole atmosphere and mood of the situation. It's a fundamental change. Once we have peace re-established, once the union flag is flying again in Port Stanley, once we have tried to arrive at a peaceful solution with Argentina and her neighbours which secures the future of the islands and the wishes of the islanders then of course we're prepared to have talks with Argentina.

LINDLEY: How long will all this take?

NOTT: I've no idea. We're pressing on as fast as we can.

LINDLEY: But can I just return to that point. If it made sense from British point of view to think about giving the Falklands to Argentina won't it make sense to go on thinking that in a month or two?

NOTT: It doesn't make sense from the British point of view. These are British people. They've been occupied by an aggressor and we are now freeing them and restoring democracy.

LINDLEY: It no longer makes sense?

NOTT: Not in the short term, of course not, it can't.

LINDLEY: You used the word 'never' yourself in an interview.

NOTT: I used the word 'never' in answer to a question which I thought was referring to the interim arrangements which we were then discussing and which have now been withdrawn from the table since we failed to achieve a peaceful solution with the Argentinians now we are trying to achieve our military aims.

LINDLEY: So it's still a possibility in the future handing sovereignty to Argentina?

NOTT: Well, I've said it's impossible at this stage to talk about sovereignty.

LINDLEY: The government has been very clear, firm, decisive in the action it's taken. I think public support for your action shows that, but you have been unclear about the long-term.
FB

LINDLEY: Don't you think now rather than just say "well, let's hear what the islanders have to say" it is about time you told us what status, what shape you think the islands should take in the future?

NOTT: I'm not going to tell the islanders what they should have.

LINDLEY: Shouldn't you have a view?

NOTT: There are eighteen hundred people and at the moment they're under occupation and we will get there, we will re-establish British administration and then we will talk to these people who are free, they have their own democratic, their own elected council and what Argentina wants and I repeat it again is to establish colonialism over British people on those islands. They charge us with colonialism but we want to restore the democratic freedoms which British people on the islands have.

LINDLEY: I've heard...very briefly....I've heard another member of the War Cabinet hoped that more British settlers will go to the Falklands. Is it really the government's hope that the islands could become a viable independent territory, a little Britain at the end of the

NOTT: Well, I noted that Lord Chalfont said that that was impossible. I don't think I rule it out as firmly as that. It may be possible. Of course there are very few people there for the Falkland Islands to be totally independent. But with some broad... some kind of broad international guarantee I think it's a choice that possibly (I don't know) possibly the islanders might take.

LINDLEY: Mr Nott, thank you very much, indeed.

NOTT: Thank you.

LINDLEY: That's all from Panorama tonight. We'll be watching events on the Falklands just as closely as anybody. Until we see you next on Panorama, good night.